

# **Self-agency and asylum**



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*A critical analysis of the migration patterns and processes of Hazara irregular maritime asylum seekers to Australia*

by

Marie McAuliffe

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at  
The Australian National University

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**Declaration**

This thesis is the original work of the author carried out during a PhD candidature at the School of Demography (formerly the Australian Demographic & Social Research Institute) at The Australian National University.

Where relevant work undertaken during the candidature has been published jointly with a co-author and drawn upon as part of this thesis—as referred to in the section below titled ‘peer-reviewed publications drawn upon for this thesis’—only work that involved the author of this thesis as the *primary and major contributor* has been included. Co-author declarations to that effect are included in Appendix A.

Marie McAuliffe

*There is an odd line in our national anthem—Our land is girt by sea—as if we need to inform ourselves and the world that our country is surrounded by water. It’s a rather prosaic observation. But then, perhaps we should make such an observation, because it reminds us that we are the most defined nation state on earth. We are the only country to occupy an entire continent – a unique continent long separated from the other land masses, with its own fauna and flora. It’s a land so ancient and unchanged it has been called the “timeless land”. Ours is a land so separate, so distinguishable, it needs no separation. Rather, it is a place of coming together, where threads of lives have come over the seas to stitch together here. The ocean, the blue strip on the horizon, is our connection to the world.*

*Like most other migrants and refugees, I arrived on this silver shore with nothing but my invisible suitcase of cultural heritage and dreams. At another time, another place, a traveller such as me might have been greeted with fear or hostility. But at that time, in this place, I was given the unfettered wish and opportunity to show gratitude. What greeted me was a remarkable generosity of spirit.*

Hieu Van Le AO  
Governor of South Australia &  
former refugee to Australia  
Annual address on immigration and citizenship  
Museum of Australian Democracy, Canberra  
16 June 2011

*...the journey [w]as frightening and something [I] will never forget. It was really very dangerous. We were crossing the borders and could see the soldiers had guns. We thought they might open fire because this is the border and they could kill us. From Thailand to Malaysia there was a wooden boat that could break up in the middle of the sea and we could die. It was all very horrible and dangerous. The smugglers insisted I would reach Australia. But smugglers just need money.*

Syed Zakariya  
Hazara asylum seeker  
Interviewed in Jakarta, Indonesia  
December 2015  
*Worldcrunch*

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**Awards, conferences convened, selected conference papers and presentations, visiting positions and committee memberships during candidacy**

*Candidacy details*

February 2013 to January 2015 part-time; February 2015 to July 2016 fulltime on a Sir Roland Wilson scholarship; part-time from July 2016.

*Awards*

Awarded a Sir Roland Wilson Scholarship by the Sir Roland Wilson Foundation Board in September 2014. Scholarship program participant from February 2015 to July 2016; leave from the scholarship program approved to enable me to work fulltime for the International Organization for Migration from August 2016.

*Conferences convened*

*Afghan Migration: Aspirations, Movements, Demography, Integration & Return*, School of Demography, Australian National University, 23 & 24 March 2016 – Co-convened with Professor James Raymer.

Selected papers from the conference were published in McAuliffe, M. (ed) (2016) Afghan displacement special issue, *Migration Policy Practice*, 4(3).

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'A long way to go: The demography of proactive asylum seekers', *European Population Conference 2016*, selected for presentation (unable to attend), Mainz, Germany, 31 August – 3 September 2016.

'Examining the nexus between forced and irregular migration: Insights from demography', *IASFM16 Conference Rethinking Forced Migration and Displacement: Theory, Policy, and Praxis*, Poznań Poland, 12-15 July 2016.

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Research findings on choice of destination country of refugees and asylum seekers, Demography Seminar Series, Hacettepe University, Ankara, 25 February 2016.

'International Irregular Migration: Evidence from refugees in Australia and potential asylum seekers in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan & Sri Lanka', National Institute of Population Research, Iran and the Population Association of Iran, Tehran, 24 November 2015.

‘Global forces shaping irregular migration flows and state responses: An Australian case study’, *Governing Irregular Migration: States, Actors and Intermediaries*, Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy and the European University Institute, Athens, 8–9 July 2015.

### *Visiting Positions*

Senior Fellow, Global Migration Centre at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, October 2016 to present.

Visiting Scholar, Institute of Population Studies, Hacettepe University, Ankara, September 2015 to present.

Junior Research Fellow, Global Migration Centre at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, May to July 2016.

### *Committee memberships*

Member of the Research Advisory Group of the Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection’s Irregular Migration and Border Research Programme, July 2015 to present (and a member of its predecessor, the Irregular Migration Research Advisory Group, from November 2012 to July 2015).

Member of the World Economic Forum Expert Network (Migration), August 2016 to present.

Member of the International Geneva Committee of the Swiss Network for International Studies, September 2016 to present. Elected member of the SNIS Scientific Committee, October 2016 to November 2017.

Member of the Editorial Board of the scientific journal *International Migration*, April 2017 to present.

Member of the International Advisory Board of the ‘Asia in Global Affairs’ research forum, May 2017 to present.

Co-convenor of IOM’s Migration Research Leaders’ Syndicate to support the 2018 United Nations Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration (please see <https://www.iom.int/migration-research-leaders-syndicate>).

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**Abstract**

In recent years, large numbers of people have embarked on high-risk sea journeys attempting to reach specific destinations, including Australia, Greece, Italy, Spain, Malaysia, Thailand and the United States. In 2015, for example, over 850,000 people crossed the Aegean Sea from Turkey to Greece, with many continuing their journeys to eventually reach other parts of Europe (mostly Germany, Sweden and Austria). Just over half were Syrian refugees who had been living in Turkey, with Afghans, Iraqis, Pakistanis, Iranians and a multitude of others making up the remainder. Thousands of people perish *en route* every year while undertaking irregular maritime migration, and many more are exploited and abused during their perilous journeys. Added to this are the long-distances some must cover, particularly those from the Middle East and South Asia travelling to Australia.

This study examines the nature and extent of self-agency of irregular maritime asylum seekers. In doing so, it focuses on a population of maritime asylum seekers who, at face value, were able to exercise agency and realise the goal of seeking asylum in Australia. Using survey and statistical data on irregular maritime asylum seekers who arrived in Australia over five program years (June 2008 to July 2013), the analysis finds strong complementarities among migration patterns of asylum seekers from different countries and ethnic backgrounds. The migration patterns and processes of a subset are examined more deeply in a case study on Hazara asylum seekers who travelled to Australia from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran.

Through the application of a multi-faceted model of asylum seeker agency, the study finds that a small but significant group of ‘proactive asylum seekers’ were far from passive, exercising considerable agency in determining when, how, where and with whom they migrated. However, considerable limitations on agency were evident—particularly for females and young Hazaras—resulting in highly skewed migration patterns and very specific and sometimes singular migration processes being manifested. The study also found indications that Hazaras had applied similar migration strategies that had been developed within the West Asia region during previous decades of displacement and migration.

## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ANAO	Australian National Audit Office
DIAC	Department of Immigration and Citizenship
DIBP	Department of Immigration and Border Protection
EPAS	Expert Panel on Asylum Seekers
EU	European Union
Frontex	European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union
GCIM	Global Commission on International Migration
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDP	Internally displaced person
IEP	Institute for Economics and Peace
IMA	Irregular Maritime Arrival
IMAS	Irregular Maritime Asylum Seeker
IOM	International Organization for Migration
NGO	Non-government organisation
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
OAD	Overseas Arrivals and Departures
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OSB	Operation Sovereign Borders
PICMME	Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe
RMMS	Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat
RSD	Refugee Status Determination
SAF	Solo adult female
SAM	Solo adult male
SIEV	Suspected Illegal Entry Vessel
UAM	Unaccompanied minor
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
VIDC	Vienna Institute for International Dialogue and Cooperation

### **A note on terminology**

I use the term ‘migration’ rather than ‘immigration’ to refer to the patterns and processes involved in *moving* from one place to another, which may require journeys taking months, possibly involving authorised and/or unauthorised entry to and through multiple countries or territories. ‘Immigration’, which is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as “the action of coming to live permanently in a foreign country” could equally have been used (Oxford English Dictionary 2015). However, in order to avoid potential confusion I chose to use ‘migration’ for three main reasons. Firstly, the term ‘migration’ is commonly used in academic and policy discourses—irregular migration, forced migration, international migration, internal migration, for example, are all common terms. Second, ‘immigration’ denotes a destination country perspective and ‘emigration’ an origin country perspective whereas ‘migration’ has the potential to involve both emigrating and immigrating so is a more useful term when examining journeys from migrants’ perspectives. It is also a more useful term when patterns and processes involved in moving from one place to another may not be direct, can be convoluted and dynamic—as can more often be the case with unauthorised, clandestine movement. Third, the term ‘immigration’, at least in the Australian context, is more commonly used where it denotes a formal process of entering and settling in a new country via a regulated program, and so implies authority to enter (as well as more direct and timely routes).

The terms ‘citizenship’ and ‘ethnicity’ are used throughout this thesis because of the greater level of precision they provide compared with other relevant and common terms, most especially ‘nationality’. The term ‘nationality’ is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as: “i) the status of belonging to a particular nation; and ii) an ethnic group forming a part of one or more political nations” (Oxford English Dictionary 2015). The use of this term with its two meanings could cause confusion, notwithstanding its inclusion in the *1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees* (the Refugee Convention), which concerns the first meaning.<sup>1</sup> The term ‘nationality’ is a common term and is widely used, however, it sometimes denotes the first meaning (such as in UNHCR reports and other publications), and sometimes the second meaning (such as in academic studies of ethnic populations).<sup>2</sup>

In order to minimise, and hopefully avoid, confusion the term ‘citizenship’ is used in this study where it applies to a person’s status in relation to a specific nation (i.e. the first (Oxford English Dictionary meaning), and the term ‘ethnicity’ is used where it applies to



a person's status in relation to an ethnic group (i.e. the second (Oxford English Dictionary meaning). This distinction is important. To illustrate, people of Hazara ethnicity may be citizens of a number of countries including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran or they may be stateless. Likewise, ethnic Tamils tend to be Sri Lankan citizens although they could be citizens of India. In addition, both Hazaras and Tamils have diaspora populations in developed countries and so could be citizens of, for example, Australia, Canada or Germany. Further, citizenship populations may be ethnically diverse. Afghanistan, for example, comprises ethnic populations of Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, Aimak, Turkmen, Uzbeks and Baloch (Lamer and Foster 2011), all of whom can be Afghan citizens.

Finally, the inclusion of ethnicity in the analysis is particularly relevant in this study of asylum seekers because of the possibility of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of ethnicity.

## Notes

- 1 Article 1 of the Refugee Convention states that the term 'refugee' applies to any person who "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country..."
- 2 UNHCR publications include *Global Trends* reports, *Asylum Trends* reports and statistical yearbooks. Examples of academic studies include: Jwaideh, W. (2006) *Kurds: The Kurdish National Movement: Its Origins and Development*, Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press; Shimin, G. (1984) 'On the fusion of nationalities in the Tarim Basin and the formation of the modern Uighur nationality', *Central Asian Survey*, 3:4.

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# 1 Introduction\*

Today, just as it happens every day, many thousands of people throughout the world are setting off on journeys in the hope of being able to forge safe and meaningful lives in a new country. Some will be carrying passports containing visas issued by the country they are heading to, many having gone through visa application processes to secure the right to start a new phase of their lives in another country. These people will most likely have been able to choose many aspects of this new phase: their new job or vocation; the city they intend living in; the mode of travel they will take; the timing and length of their journey; who they go with; and how long they intend to stay. They should be considered the luckier ones, and more likely than not, they will be citizens of developed countries, some of whom have grown accustomed to choice to the extent that they take it for granted, perhaps not realising that in many ways it is a luxury out of reach for most people.

Today, just as it happens every day, many others are setting off on journeys they know will be long and dangerous, so much so that they may allow themselves the realisation that they may be abused, exploited or even die *en route*. These people will most likely be facing considerable uncertainty about the journey ahead and, if they do make it to their destination, what awaits them in their new country. They will not have visas in their passports, and some of them won't have been able to get a passport or travel document. They will be likely to know in general terms how to get to various places along the way, who they can rely on to help them, how much different legs might cost and the modes of travel they will need to take. Equally, many things will remain unclear: the place they will end up living; the time it will take to get there; who they will travel with; whether they will be able to work; what job they will be able to do; and how long they will be able to stay. These are not the luckier ones, and more likely than not, they will be from developing countries and fragile states, some of whom having had their lives up-ended by civil conflict, persecution or various other forms of disaster.

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\* This chapter draws in part on a forthcoming book chapter: McAuliffe, M. & Koser, K. (2017) 'Introduction' in McAuliffe, M. & Koser, K. (eds) *A long way to go: Irregular migration patterns, processes, drivers and decision making*, ANU Press: Canberra (forthcoming).

These brief opening remarks are intended to remind us that while this study may refer to statistical data, survey findings, analysis, literature and scholarly contributions, it is fundamentally about people who migrate under stressful, sometime dangerous and often very challenging conditions. The starting point for this research has been migrants themselves, and one of the main motivations for undertaking this study has been the often paternalistic manner in which many people discuss, assume and at times opine about migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers. They are often characterised as passive, often as being ‘pushed’ or ‘pulled’ from or to places (Hovil 2007; Lebson 2013; Malkki 1996). These depictions tend to belie what I have heard from people considering or undertaking international migration under various circumstances over many years working as a migration practitioner in various parts of the world and subsequently as a researcher. And aspects of such assumptions are what I set out to examine in much greater detail empirically for a discrete but important group of migrants, specifically from migrants’ perspectives. This introductory chapter continues with a brief discussion of the relevance of the study, its main objective and poses the primary research question. It then provides an outline of the study’s main contributions to scholarly literature. A discussion of the focus on Hazara asylum seekers within the context of irregular maritime migration to Australia is then provided. Finally, an outline of the structure of the thesis is briefly presented.

### *Relevance of the study*

In modern Western history, for the most part, the prevailing governance of international migration has generally served many nations reasonably well, including Australia. Orderly movement has been largely the norm and has contributed to growth in economies, increased human development, the capacity to protect large numbers of people suffering persecution, and the ability of hundreds of millions of people to forge meaningful lives abroad. Concomitantly, there is a perception that other countries and regions, particularly some non-industrialised nations and peoples, have perhaps not fared as well and the benefits of international migration could perhaps be described as uneven.

Against this backdrop, there is growing concern that the more concerning aspects of international migration are increasing in significance and magnitude: a substantial increase in human displacement globally since 2003 due to conflict and disasters; a growth in irregular migration (including migrant smuggling and human trafficking); an



increasing sophistication and selectiveness of some countries' entry policies designed to restrict access to 'unwanted' migrants; a sense that national identities are being threatened (not just that they are changing); rising exploitation of migrants all the way along the migration pathway; and increasing harm to migrants, including substantial numbers of deaths during journeys (Brian & Laczko 2014, 2016). All of these can threaten the overall dividends of international migration, which are widely recognised as being enormously beneficial economically and socially (Castles et al 2014; Goldin et al 2011; Hugo 2012; Jaumotte et al 2016; Koser 2007; McKinsey Global Institute 2016; Willekens et al 2016).

Of particular importance is irregular migration. Irregular migration has in recent decades become a significant public policy issue and the focus of considerable human, financial, diplomatic, physical/capital, technological, operational and other resources. In part, many of the negative issues associated with irregular migration, and the pressing need to respond to it, perhaps stem from its scale as well as its potential scale. From the little we know about actual international irregular migration flows, the combination of increasing international movements and a perception that there is growing desire for international migration have the capacity to influence policy responses. In this sense, there is good reason to develop a better understanding of irregular migration flows—their scale, pace, diversity, demography, geography as well as the mixed motivations and multiple factors underpinning them.

Of ongoing relevance to irregular migration is the growing global population which has been displaced and is at risk of onward movement. Over recent years, we have seen a substantial increase in the number of displaced people facing extremely difficult or dire circumstances within their home or host countries. For example, there are around 21 million refugees, 3 million asylum seekers and around 41 million internally displaced persons globally (IDMC 2016; UNHCR 2016), which are all much higher than during the global low of 2003. There are many contributing factors, including the escalating number of conflict zones, and the reduction in global peace. The Global Peace Index score for 2016, for example, indicates that the last decade has seen a large reduction in global peace (IEP 2016, 22). Continued exclusion, marginalisation and persecution of some people continue to be underlying factors, including in relation to particular ethnic groups around the world such as Rohingya, Kurds and Hazaras. Overall, and in the absence of immediate geopolitical solutions, the future outlook strongly suggests that enduring humanitarian

issues resulting in irregular movements will continue to ensure a raft of complex public policy issues continue to challenge States and the broader international community.

### *Study objective*

The objective of the study is to increase understandings of asylum seeking through a prism of multifaceted self-agency, including to gain better understandings of who, how and why people undertake long and dangerous migration journeys. The principal research question is: *What is the extent and nature of Hazara asylum seeker agency?* This is important because at a superficial level, that people travel hundreds or thousands of kilometres through multiple transit countries in uncertain and sometimes dangerous conditions while paying thousands of dollars to do so would seem to indicate a reasonable degree of agency. It could be said that asylum seekers who made it to Australia irregularly by boat between 2008 and 2013 actively demonstrated that they are a resourceful, resilient and determined group of people. These people were not resettled out of refugee camps and provided visas and air travel, but took enormous risks and often lengthy and traumatic journeys to get to Australia sometimes in the face of extreme adversity. But such a conclusion risks being just as superficial as the quite common view that people who arrived by boat in Australia were simply fleeing for their lives (Doherty 2013; Philips and Spinks 2013; Zaher 2011). The reality is likely to be somewhere in between, and a multifaceted and systematic examination of the extent and nature of asylum seeker agency is intended to reveal a much more nuanced understanding of who, how and why people undertake long and dangerous migration journeys. Necessarily, and importantly therefore, this research recognises the *potential* for calculated rationality of asylum seekers and refugees.

### *Study contributions*

This study, with its focus on irregular maritime asylum seekers to Australia over a five-year period is intended to make several contributions to our understandings of self-agency and asylum, including by:

- providing an accurate account of the scale and composition of a complete 5-year flow of irregular maritime asylum seekers to Australia between July 2008 and June 2013;
- revisiting the concepts of ‘forced migration’ and ‘irregular migration’ with respect to asylum seekers who migrate irregularly;

- articulating a multifaceted model of asylum seeker agency, upon which the analysis is based;
- examining the migration patterns and processes of Hazara irregular maritime asylum seekers to offer a deeper understanding of the extent and nature of asylum seeker agency of an ethnic group widely recognised as in need of international protection;
- distilling the implications for data, research and policy.

Critically, and central to this study, is the need to apply an inter-disciplinary approach. While the study is primarily one of applied demography involving the analysis of secondary data, it necessarily draws on a range of other disciplines. An inter-disciplinary approach has been adopted in order to answer the research questions, and make the most useful and relevant contribution possible. To be able to answer the questions successfully the approach had to be squarely based in the academic literature on forced and irregular migration, particularly of Hazaras. This considerable and rich body of literature traverses many disciplines but particularly geography, sociology and anthropology. By undertaking a quantitative study employing analytical techniques from an applied demography perspective built on a disciplinary bedrock of research from other disciplines, a better account of the nature and extent of asylum seeker agency is able to be presented. A nuanced analysis of unique data situated within this small but significant body of literature is intended to be one of the study's major contributions.

*Hazaras: A rich and complex case of self-agency*

In order to answer the principal research question about the extent and nature of asylum seeker agency, a deep examination of a group of refugees who travelled as irregular maritime asylum seekers was considered essential because it offers the chance to de-link migration patterns and processes from international protection (i.e. refugee and/or complementary protection status). The intertwining of the concepts of 'forced' migration and 'refugee-ness' are, to a significant degree, able to be unravelled when the migration patterns and processes of an ethnic group—such as Hazaras—with an extraordinarily high recognition rate under the Refugee Convention are examined. Focusing on Hazaras allows for the careful setting aside of questions of Hazaras' claims to international protection in analytical terms, and provides the space for deeper analysis of their

migration patterns and processes, of their own views and of their demography as a means to assess the nature and extent of their agency.

In addition, the Hazara sub-population has been chosen because it is an ethnic minority in several origin countries (Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran), and is an enduring long-term maritime asylum seeker group, having arrived in all five years of the study (which also enables trend analysis to be undertaken). Importantly, Hazaras have not been displaced to Australia but have migrated. Displacement of Hazaras within their region of origin has occurred over several decades in the modern era and provides important context to the analysis. Further, Hazaras also arrived in the 1999 to 2001 irregular maritime asylum seeker flow to Australia, have sizeable diaspora communities in Australia and elsewhere, are recognised as having strong claims for international protection as reflected in their very high finally determined refugee recognition rates in Australia, which from 2009 to 2013 ranged between 95.9 and 100% (DIBP 2013: 30).<sup>1</sup>

### *Structure of the thesis*

This thesis consists of ten chapters, including this introduction. The chapters are presented in four parts covering: i) theory and concepts; ii) study design, data and context; iii) analysis of Hazara irregular maritime asylum seekers' migration patterns and processes; and iv) conclusions. In Part One on the theory and concepts related to self-agency and asylum, two chapters are included. These chapters are based on an extensive literature review on migrant agency, forced migration, irregular migration, irregular maritime migration, asylum seeker decision making, migration regulation and borders. Chapter 2 provides a critical examination of the concepts of 'forced migration', 'irregular migration' as well as the treatment of asylum seeker agency in the existing body of literature. This chapter then goes on to set out the analytical framework for the thesis, from which the analytical chapters (7, 8 and 9) all flow. Chapter 3 steps through the small but growing body of scholarly enquiry into irregular maritime migration with reference to borders, public visibility, illicit actors and impacts on those who migrate. It articulates a conceptualisation of irregular maritime migration as a distinct and discrete form of migration.

Part Two on study design, data and context includes two chapters. Chapter 4 outlines the study design with reference to the principal and subsidiary research questions as well as scope. A discussion on irregular migrant and asylum seeker data globally is provided before the data utilised in this study is described in detail, including its collection, access,

data storage and key variables used in the analysis. The chapter also provides a tabular summary of the core elements of the study, including as they relate to the research questions, analytical framework, thesis structure and data variables. Finally, this chapter also comments on the limitations of the study. Chapter 5 provides contextual background on irregular maritime migration of asylum seekers to Australia particularly as it relates to asylum seeking globally as well as historically. The chapter also provides an account of the scale and demography of the irregular migration flow over the entire study period with reference to the analytical framework developed in Chapter 2, most especially the temporal and spatial dimensions of agency. A brief summary of the key features of Australia's response to the increased arrivals of irregular maritime asylum seekers during and immediately following the study period is also provided.

Part Three presents the analysis of Hazara irregular maritime asylum seekers' agency and comprises four chapters. The first chapter (Chapter 6) describes who the Hazara people are, where they live, what we know about Hazara populations in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran as well as their migration and displacement histories and experiences. Chapter 7 provides analysis of Hazara maritime asylum seeker migration patterns specifically as they relate to the demographic and social dimensions of asylum seeker agency. Chapter 8 then outlines analysis of the temporal dimensions, and Chapter 9 the spatial dimensions. The analysis has been conducted using the analytical framework articulated in Chapter 2, and which builds upon the extensive literatures on forced and irregular migration. The analysis of Hazara migration patterns and processes draws on results of the 2013 survey of maritime asylum seekers to Australia who were found to be refugees, the administrative dataset of all maritime asylum seekers to Australia as well as the existing body of Hazara and Afghan migration literature. The final and concluding chapter summarises the study findings as well as outlines the implications for migration data, research and policy.

## Note

- 1 While finally determined grant rates are not available by ethnicity, the administrative dataset indicates that almost all Afghan irregular maritime asylum seekers were Hazara (93%). Official data show that annual final grant rates of all irregular maritime asylum seekers between 2009 and 2013 ranged between 88 and 98.8%, with rates for Afghans ranging between 95.9 and 100% (DIBP 2013: 30). This is in contrast, for example, to annual final grant rates of asylum seekers who sought asylum after arriving regularly in Australia on a visitor, student or other visa, which were between 43.4% and 51.1% over the same period (2009 to 2013) (DIBP 2013: 19).

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# **PART ONE**

## **Theory and concepts**





## 2 Conceptualising forced and irregular migration\*

The study of irregular maritime migration has to be understood within broader areas of academic enquiry and theory, including those related to international migration and its highly relevant and related subsets – forced migration and irregular migration. The basis for understanding and explaining irregular maritime migration is deeply rooted in the historical discussions on the theoretical underpinnings of international migration and the subsequent emergence of forced migration studies as a discrete but related area of academic enquiry. The concomitant rise of studies on irregular migration is also highly relevant.

In looking back at early texts on migration as well as analyses of the emergence and development of early migration theory—initially related largely to internal migration and urbanisation in particular—there are aspects that continue to resonate strongly today. Noting the feasibility limitations and challenges associated with a lack of data experienced by early researchers (Greenwood and Hunt 2003: 32), the foundations of the study of migration and its various aspects remain connected to the seminal works of Ravenstein (1885; 1889), notwithstanding the thinning of that connection as time passes. Ongoing theorising of migration principally involves the development of concepts to explain migration patterns as well as the structures and processes that influence and shape the movement of people from one place to another (both within a State and between States). The cumulative causation theory of migration, for example, seeks to explain migration by proposing that self-sustaining conditions, including specific social and economic structures, act to maintain migratory movements between two locations (Massey 1990; Massey et al 1998; Massey & Zenteno 1999). Underpinning the major migration theories, such as cumulative causation, neoclassical economics (Todaro 1969),

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\* This chapter includes parts of an article published in *International Migration*: McAuliffe, M. & Jayasuriya, D. (2016) 'Do asylum seekers and refugees choose destination countries? Evidence from large-scale surveys in Australia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka', 54(4), pp. 44 – 59. It also draws on a forthcoming book chapter: McAuliffe, M. (2017) 'The nexus between forced and irregular migration: Insights from demography' in Hugo, G., Abbasi-Shavazi, M.J. & Kraly, E.P. (eds) *The Demography of Refugees and Forced Migration* (Springer, forthcoming).

world system theory (Portes & Walton 1981), social capital theory (Massey 1987), new economics of labour migration (Stark & Bloom 1985) as well as social network theory (Boyd 1989), there is often an assumption of migrants' agency. All general migration theories require some consideration of agency (or a lack thereof), although the extent to which migrants' agency is accounted for varies. The differences then between migration theories is on the aspects that lead to or explain migration, and the way in which people interact with structural aspects (be they economic, social, spatial, and political) and engage in individual deliberations, postulations and (self) justifications before, during and after migration events.<sup>1</sup> In social network theory, for example, the migrant is in contact with several networks, which she or he can use rationally to migrate. The migrant, therefore, is central to the migration decision and to the process of migration, albeit within the confines of economic, social and political structures, some of which are set and regulated by the State. It is important to also acknowledge the smaller body of research on why people do not migrate, although this is much less of a focus considering that not migrating is assumed to be the norm, and migrating the exception—a reflection of the estimates of international migrants globally, which indicate that around 244 million people or 3.3% of the global population were born outside their country of residence (UNDESA 2016).<sup>2</sup>

Against this broader background, this chapter provides a critical examination of the theoretical and empirical literature related to this study of asylum seekers who enter a country irregularly (an exploration of the particularities of irregular *maritime* migration is provided in the next chapter). First, a brief discussion of early migration theory and self-agency provides a historical context. Following this, the contemporary concepts of 'forced migration', 'irregular migration' and 'asylum migration' are examined, all of which are commonly used terms in the scholarly literature as well as in policy discourses. The chapter then provides a deeper exploration of the various aspects of asylum seeker agency and how they have been conceptualised and researched in the literature. Finally, the chapter includes an analytical framework for the analysis of the extent and nature of Hazaras' asylum seeker agency presented in this thesis.

## 2.1 Early Migration theory and self-agency

As the industrial revolution gave rise to seismic shifts in social and economic organisation within cities, districts and countries, there were significant changes in labour demand and the concomitant movements of people (supply) from rural to urban areas. These changes sparked the minds of theorists and academicians, such as E.G. Ravenstein, who was motivated to write *The Laws of Migration* (1885) by “a remark made by the late Dr William Farr [1876], to the effect that migration appeared to go on without any definite law” (Ravenstein 1885: 167). Improvements in administrative data brought about by industrialisation enabled Ravenstein to undertake analysis of internal migration patterns in Britain. As a geographer, Ravenstein’s analysis focused on the spatial aspects of migration within the United Kingdom, although he did note that a lack of data limited his ability to delve into other aspects (Ravenstein 1885: 168). For example, there were limited demographic data, no qualitative or quantitative data on migrants’ motivations and no data on aspects of the migration journeys undertaken. His ability to examine migration patterns and processes from a migrant-centric perspective would have been extremely limited, if non-existent. He drew on 1871 and 1881 census data to formulate his laws of migration, which provided early foundations for thinking about migration from largely spatial and temporal perspectives.<sup>3</sup> In terms of the concepts of freedom and agency, Ravenstein makes only one direct observation on migrant agency, concluding that many temporary migrants are “migrants by compulsion not by choice” (Ravenstein 1885: 183). It is unclear from his paper, however, how he came to this conclusion, although it does accord with the broader thinking of the time and the move away from the *laissez-faire* approach toward greater State regulation to protect workers (Silver 2003; Atiyah 1979).

Subsequently, early migration theory rooted in the UK and US continued to focus on explaining contemporaneous events—episodes of droughts in the US, the Great Depression of the 1930s, increased urbanisation as well as the South-North migrations occurring within the US (Greenwood and Hunt 2003; Thomas 1938). Transatlantic geopolitical events, including the success of the “US labour movement in having open immigration outlawed” following the ‘mass migration’ of the late 1800s (Silver 2003: 27) also contributed to a greater focus on internal migration than international migration. In addition, and due partly to a lack of detailed data, the early research and development of

theoretical models in the US was inferential in tone and limited to descriptive analysis (Greenwood and Hunt 2013: 24)

It took some time before migration theory advanced significantly, and migrants' self-agency was contemplated to any significant degree. The impact of the great wars in the early part of the twentieth century contributed to this, as did the urgent need to develop responses to the mass displacement arising from World War II. The very significant geopolitical schism in Europe during and following World War II had a profound impact on the contemplation of international migration, and displaced persons in particular. The strong focus on responding to displacement in post-World War II Europe also flowed through into the development of theories of migration, including those posited by Petersen (1958) and Lee (1966), as discussed below. The aftermath of World War II resulted in (among other things) lengthy deliberations over the form and nature of the Refugees Convention (Martin 2014). The profound nature and scale of displacement called for an equally profound response from the international community. It is important, however, to note that unlike some areas of global governance, the Refugees Convention is a State-devised and State-centric form of regulation—refugees themselves were not involved in its development, and representation by civil society actors has not necessarily been representative.<sup>4</sup> Keely has argued that this resulted in the development of a refugee regime that protects “an international system of States that is threatened when States fail to fulfil their proper roles” and was not based on a sense of humanitarianism (Keely 1996, 1057). At a more practical level, it has been argued that when the Convention was devised, it was done so within a particular context that favoured States (McAuliffe 2016a):

One of the fundamental principles of the international refugee system is that people must have crossed a border in order to be refugees; there is also an implicit right to claim asylum in another country. When the Refugee Convention was finalized in 1951, industrialised states had significant control over media and public information...states largely controlled movements of people beyond immediate areas of displacement...the system that was developed made sense geopolitically...people could not in reality get very far. A system that incentivised movement when movement was very constrained and highly controlled was perhaps more about maintaining the status quo.

The establishment and role of Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe (PICMME) reflected the degree to which migrants needed assistance to move.<sup>5</sup> PICMME provided services to States and migrants as an intergovernmental organisation that was State-led and funded. Initially, PICMME assistance had been limited to Europeans displaced following World War II but this was expanded over time with a dual mission in mind: “to provide transport and logistical support for those migrants who had already been chosen for resettlement, and to help prepare the way for others to follow suit” (Martin 2014, 128). At the time of PICMME’s establishment telecommunications were limited and expensive, transportation slow, costly and inaccessible for many and once people had become displaced they remained largely isolated from their former communities in their homelands (McAuliffe 2016b). Onward migration often involved direct assistance from States, including via PICMME/IOM, most particularly mass migration of populations displaced by conflict, disasters and political upheaval. Between 1947 and 1953, for example, over 170,000 displaced person travelled to Australia on assisted migration schemes via ‘migrant ships’ (Mence, Gangell & Tebb 2015). At the time, the ability of people who had been displaced in Europe to migrate further afield was practically non-existent.

At around this time, scholarly enquiry naturally continued to critically examining impacts of and responses to migration, although the events and environment had changed dramatically meaning that there the study of refugees became more important. As such, there was much more focus on ‘force’ and ‘choice’ than there had been previously in migration theorising, although it was not until some years later that interest in ‘irregular’ migration would take hold.

## **2.2 Forced and irregular migration—Concepts and categories**

The use of language and concepts related to field of forced migration can be confusing, and sometimes imprecise. There exists some ‘flexibility’ in the use of language as well as complexity and diversity in concepts, which can result perhaps in people talking across one another if not entirely misunderstanding each other. Muggah (2003) and Turton (2003) have both been critical of the imprecise use of terms, which stem from legal

definitions but also from the “self-imposed boundaries of interest” (McDowell & Morrell 2010, 12). In other words, the language and concepts can be a reflection of interest, particularly as it relates to perceptions and presentations of information on a public policy issue of very high concern. As a means of framing the research and analysis undertaken for this thesis—with its focus on irregular asylum seekers—a critical examination of the overlapping concepts of ‘forced migration’ and ‘irregular migration’ (as well as ‘asylum migration’) are provided.

### **Conceptualising ‘forced migrants’ and ‘forced migration’**

Before embarking on an examination of the theoretical discussions of forced migration, it is worth reflecting on who we mean by forced migrants. There exist contested and overlapping categories of forced migrants, which further complicate examinations of concepts in the existing literature. The editors of a leading journal on the subject, the *Forced Migration Review*<sup>6</sup>, offer the following definition:

Forced migration refers to the movements of refugees and internally displaced people (displaced by conflict) as well as people displaced by natural or environmental disasters, chemical or nuclear disasters, famine, or development projects.

As partly reflected in the *Forced Migration Review* definition, readily recognizable populations of forced migrants are generally considered to include refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, environmentally or developmentally displaced persons and victims of trafficking (Betts 2009; Castles, de Haas & Miller 2014; Gallagher 2015).<sup>7</sup> The inclusion of trafficked victims is acknowledged as being slightly more controversial—trafficked victims, for example, do not appear in the FMR definition. In some cases, trafficking can be characterized as distinct from migration (see, for example, the ‘Migration versus Trafficking’ section in Martin 2014, 21–22), and is often omitted from the forced migration discourse (see for example Betts 2009, 4–10; Castles, de Haas & Miller 2014, 221–2). Other schools of thought, however, place trafficking squarely within the confines of forced migration (Chimni 2009; Gallagher 2015), and given the highly coercive nature of human trafficking this would seem appropriate. Likewise, the inclusion of ‘asylum seekers’—which again does not appear in the *Forced Migration Review* definition—could be said to sit uncomfortably in some respects under the ‘forced’ banner. For example, would an asylum seeker who lodges a claim for international protection toward the expiry of their three-year stay in a country as a student on a valid

visa be considered a forced migrant? If the refugee experience is diverse, as suggested by Stein (1981), then it could be argued that the asylum seeker experience is even more diverse. Some asylum seekers, for example, who undertake perilous maritime journeys to industrialised countries may have already been recognised refugees living in dire and dangerous host country situations—clearly these asylum seekers would fit more neatly under the broader category of ‘forced migrant’.

### *Conceptualising forced migration*

The short discussion of types of forced migrants above was provided in order to inform the examination of the concept of ‘forced migration’. Turton suggests that the emergence of the term forced migration was in response to the “narrowing down of the range of attribution of the term refugee to a legally defined category” through the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol (2003, 13). The more expansive categorisation of forced migrants, then, develops the concept of forced (vs voluntary) migrant beyond the much narrower term ‘refugee’, which has an everyday usage and meaning that is much broader than its legal definition.<sup>8</sup>

Notwithstanding the variations in specific categories of what constitutes a ‘forced migrant’, the concept of forced migration pivots on there being a lack of agency. Forced migrants do not choose to migrate but are forced to. Forced migration, therefore, strongly implies an act(or) other than the migrant to compel migration. Kirmayer (2013: viii) offers a reason for this conceptual approach as it applies to asylum seekers and refugees:

To the extent that refugees are viewed as having agency – making choices, planning their escape, seeking to secure asylum . . . – they may be suspect ... to the extent that refugees are agentic, strategic and future-oriented they are perceived as manipulative and less worthy of protection and support.

This sentiment, which is in many ways a cornerstone of the overly simplistic ‘economic migrant’ verses ‘genuine refugee’ public discourse, continues to persist in many parts of the world. For example, in modern day Hong Kong Vecchio found that “a staggering discovery made during the fieldwork was the widespread perception that dreaming of a better life is forbidden for asylum seekers in Hong Kong...seeking to improve one’s circumstances and happiness is deemed indicative of a non-genuine asylum claim ...” (Vecchio 2014, 214). This too, at times, has been a feature of the Australian discourse, where the pursuit of a better life is often linked to irregular maritime migration flows

(March 2012; Jayasuriya & McAuliffe 2013). Some scholars have sought to advance arguments that more clearly link asylum seeking (and irregular secondary movements) to longer-term well-being and livelihood strategies beyond temporary refuge, including to Australia (Crock et al 2006; McAuliffe 2013; Monsutti 2005; Zimmermann 2010; Zimmermann 2009).

One of the earliest discussions of forced migration was part of William Petersen's attempt to incorporate the concept of forced migration into broader migration theories. Building on Ravenstein's (1885) laws of migration, Petersen (1958) developed a typology at the macro-level, distinguishing between those who "retain some power to decide whether or not to leave (impelled migrants), those who do not have this power (forced migrants) and those whose will is the most decisive element in migration (free migrants)." However, he conceded that "often the boundary between the two [impelled and forced], the point at which the choice becomes nominal, may be difficult to set" (Petersen 1958: 261).

Everett Lee (1966) sought to further articulate aspects related to both macro-level migration patterning, with reference to (individual-based) decision-making and agency, including by expanding the factors driving migration articulated by Ravenstein (1885) to incorporate more fully the factors both at origin and destination. Lee argues that theoretical work had not adequately accounted for both forced and free migration (Lee 1966, 49):

...forced migration as the refugee movements of World War II and its after-math have not been grouped with the so-called free migration. It is the purpose of this paper to attempt the development of a general schema...

While Lee addresses aspects of agency in the decision to leave, he does not appear to consider other aspects of agency, such as the migration destination. Instead, he places strong emphasis on structural determinants affecting movements to destinations, including 'intervening obstacles', established migration pathways, economic factors (disparity and fluctuations), and so is more in line with Ravenstein's laws and their functionalist paradigmatic perspectives.

E.F. Kunz's early work on the theory of displacement focussed specifically on refugees, and proposed a conceptual framework that encompasses two scenarios (Kunz, 1973). First, "anticipatory" refugee movements involve "educated, alert and well-to-do" refugees who, under apprehension of future calamities, seek out a country that will provide entry and who generally "would have been voluntary migrants earlier" (Kunz,



1973: 132). In contrast, he defines “acute” refugee movements as involving refugees fleeing an immediate threat and whose primary purpose is to find sanctuary in a nearby country (Kunz, 1973). Kunz’s framework is limited to refugees, thereby excluding full consideration of asylum seekers who, following anticipatory (or acute) movements, may be found not to be in need of protection under the Refugees Convention (or complementary protection). While Kunz refers to what would in contemporary discourse be ‘refugee status determination processes’, he affords this only cursory reference, arguing that “the validity of fear for one’s safety, which is the creator of all refugees, can after all never be tested: it is the individual’s interpretation of events and self-perceived danger or revulsion, or role, which motivates the refugee and justifies his stand” (Kunz, 1973: 136). This may have been relevant at the time, however, the development of refugee status determination processes in more recent times to assess individual claims for protection render this assumption out of date. Kunz’s conceptualisation of ‘refugees’ is broadly consistent with Stein’s subsequent view in relation to agency as he seeks to explain the particular and distinct nature of refugee migration as it relates to broader theory on migration: “In the language of migration theory, it is common to think of the immigrant as pulled to his new land—attracted by opportunity and a new life. The refugee is not pulled out; he is pushed out.” (Stein 1981, 322).

Subsequently, over the last two or so decades, there has been greater recognition that a continuum of agency exists rather than a forced-voluntary dichotomy (Richmond, 1993). According to Richmond (1993) typical “proactive” migrants include professionals and entrepreneurs, whereas “reactive” migrants are those who are in need of protection under the Refugees Convention, although the “large majority of international migrants (including those generally regarded as ‘refugees’) fall somewhere between these extremes” (Richmond, 1993: 10). Richmond explains the phenomenon of reactive migration with reference to the interactive effects of multiple predisposing factors and precipitating events as they relate to movements across borders.

The literature is also evolving to more readily acknowledge that agency is important in decision making processes underpinning movement and immobility in conflict and/or persecution situations (Van Hear et al 2012; Betts 2009; Adhikari 2012; Jayasuriya & McAuliffe 2013). Carling (2002) proposed an aspirations-ability model whereby a person first has a wish to migrate and then realises that wish (or not). Carling’s ‘involuntary immobile’ reflected his finding that many people with a wish to migrate do not have the

ability to undertake migration and so remain in precarious situations. He notes that "...the problem of involuntary immobility is likely to be particularly acute in the case of refugee migration. In other words, even when the mobile are 'forced' those who stay behind could be involuntarily immobile." (Carling 2002, 8).

An extension of Carling's model is de Haas' argument that "people will only migrate if they perceive better opportunities elsewhere and have the capabilities to move" (de Haas 2011, 16). Through a range of dynamics (or 'enabling' factors), including diaspora and other migrant networks, de Haas argued that migrants' agency and counter-strategies can effectively undermine states' attempts to control migration. It is important to note that de Haas' theoretical discussion was not specific to forced migration, however, he argues that refugee and asylum flows also involve agency and that "the 'voluntary'/'forced' migration dichotomy is simplistic because it assumes that one category of migrants enjoys total freedom and the other category has no choice or agency at all" (de Haas 2011, 10). Turton too argues that agency is an important aspect of enquiry (2003, 12):

Different forced migrants, however they are categorised, have different areas of choice, different alternatives, available to them, depending not just on external constraining factors but also on such factors as their sex, age, wealth, connections, networks etc. This means that we have to understand the point of view and experiences of the people making the decision to move... We have to see them as agents, however limited, in a physical sense, their room for manoeuvre may be.

We can see then that the early forays into the conceptualisation of forced migration tended to focus on political acts and actors as the compellers (particularly after World War II), whereas more recent expressions of the concept have included natural disasters, man-made disasters and environmentally-related acts or changes (such as droughts). The fairly recent *Forced Migration Review* definition of forced migration has a strong leaning toward displacement, the exception being refugees, who may or may not be displaced (i.e. they could have migrated or been part of mass displacement scenarios). Mass displacement is an important issue in the context of asylum seekers' agency, and there exists an uneasy overlap between with the concept of 'forced migration' and 'displacement', which Turton suggests are different (2003, 11):

You can move people and displace people, but you can't 'migrate' them. 'To migrate', in other words, is an intransitive verb... 'to migrate' implies some degree of human agency while compulsion implies a lack of choice, a lack of any alternative. The best examples I can think of that might fit this description are the African slave trade and state-sponsored resettlement due to a development project - a dam, for example.

It is necessary and important to adequately allow for distinguishing between acute mass displacement (Johansson 1990; Kunz 1973; UNHCR 2015) and other migration, including irregular secondary movements or long-term protracted migration flows that may involve asylum seekers/refugees and other irregular migrants (Crisp 1999; Van Hear et al 2009; GCIM 2005; Koser 2005; Koser 2001). Acute mass displacement typically involves large numbers of people migrating together to avoid “conflict or generalised violence as opposed to individual persecution” (UNHCR 2015), and so has a strong spatial dimension. In other words, people moving en masse tend to move shorter distances, internally and/or internationally. Agency is considered extremely limited (if it exists at all), and in migration policy and practice this has been managed by *prima facie* recognition of refugee status of groups of people rather than via individual refugee status determination processes (UNHCR 2015). The movement of Syrians across borders into Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan is a recent example of international mass displacement caused by civil conflict. There are, of course, many thousands of people who remain displaced inside Syria (known as internally displaced persons).

Overall, and in summary, we can see then that early discussions of forced migration focussed on those compelled to move by political events (refugees/asylum seekers), and that exercising agency was considered non-existent. This has evolved to a point at which agency is acknowledged by some scholars as an important aspect of decision making of (some) forced migrants. But what exactly does agency entail as it relates to asylum seekers? Asylum seeker agency is discussed in detail below, and following a brief examination of the concept of ‘irregular migration’.

### **Conceptualising ‘irregular migrants’ and ‘irregular migration’**

A critical examination of the concept of ‘irregular migration’ is intended to underpin and inform the analysis in subsequent chapters, including because of the particular focus this term has in Australia. Unlike other parts of the world, most notably Europe, the United States and South-East Asia, the term ‘irregular migration’ in Australia is linked almost exclusively to: (i) irregular maritime migration (discussed in detail in Chapter 3); and (ii) the population that is examined in this thesis—so-called Irregular Maritime Arrivals (discussed in detail in Chapter 5). In Europe and elsewhere, however, irregular migration is often (and has historically been) linked to irregular migrants living (and working) in destination countries without proper authority (Carling 2007a; Ruhs & Anderson 2010).

An examination of ‘irregular migration’ is included because in practical as well as conceptual ways it overlaps with ‘forced migration’. This is particularly relevant to a study on irregular asylum seekers.

In a similar vein to ‘forced migration’, ‘irregular migration’ and ‘irregular migrant’ can have multiple meanings and diverse conceptualisations (Icduygu 2007, Koser 2010). Although perhaps unlike ‘forced migration’, the meaning of ‘irregular’ is perhaps not as readily apparent, and in fact the term ‘irregular’ has been used to represent quite different concepts over time. A brief summary of the categorisation of irregular migrants is outlined in the next section, before a critical examination of irregular migration is presented.

### *Who are irregular migrants?*

In current academic and policy discourses, ‘irregular migrants’ are people in a country who have entered a country or are living in a country in contravention of the authority of that country (de Haas 2008; Icduygu 2007; Jordan & Düvell 2002; Koser 2010; Martin 2003; Morehouse & Blomfield 2011). They may have several reasons for entering or remaining irregularly. They may be seeking to work in that country, or be reuniting/staying with family. They may be wanting to study and/or have protection reasons for doing so.

There are several ways people may become irregular migrants—some arrive without authorisation through irregular migration processes (discussed below) while others may arrive on a valid visa or entry permit and then become ‘irregular’ in one or more ways. Children can also be born into ‘irregularity’. The status of a person as ‘irregular’ is not necessarily stable and people may slip into and out of irregularity. Gordon, Scanlon, Travers and Whitehead (2009) provide a useful summary of categories of irregular migrants, as can be seen in Table 2.1.

TABLE 2.1 Irregular migrant categories

1	Migrants who have illegally entered the country by either physically evading formal migration controls or presenting false papers.	2	Migrants who legally entered the country for a fixed period but remain after the permitted period (unlawful overstayers).
3	Asylum seekers who legally entered the country to pursue a case for refugee status, but who remain despite a final decision refusing them a continuing right to remain.	4	People born in the country to 'irregular migrants', who also lack a right to remain although they are not themselves migrants.

Source: Gordon et al (2009, 3-4).

Note: In some situations, people born into irregularity (category 4) are, or can become, part of stateless populations, such as is the case of the Rohingya born in Myanmar, Bangladesh, Malaysia and elsewhere.

For the purposes of their study, Gordon et al excluded people lawfully entitled to reside in a country who are in breach of one or more conditions (typically by working in contravention of their entitlement). However, other scholars have included this category (Ghosh 1998; Icduygu 2007; Koser 2010; Ruhs & Anderson 2010). Ghosh proposes that migrants can be considered irregular in destination countries in three main ways: due to irregular entry; their irregular residence; and their irregular activity (all of which are identified in Gordon et al 2009). However, he also notes that irregularity can also stem from contravention of origin country requirements, such as age, sex or industry restrictions on emigrating for work, or failing to register with emigration authorities prior to departure (Ghosh 1998, 2-4). It is important to note, however, that Ghosh does not distinguish between irregular migrants and irregular migration but refers to the catch all 'irregularity', and so the blurring of the lines between the two concepts and the way in which people can move in and out of irregularity is not adequately captured. He also discusses asylum seekers' irregularity only in terms of people residing irregularly in communities after their applications have been rejected (Ghosh 1998, 7-8); there is no mention of asylum seekers' irregular entry.

As can be seen from the typologies of ‘irregular migrant’—or migrant stocks—the population the focus of this study (Hazara maritime asylum seekers to Australia) does not fit neatly into any of the five categories because in applying for asylum upon arrival (or shortly thereafter) they are afforded status as asylum applicants and so are not ‘irregular’ nor did they enter ‘illegally’ as asylum seekers (although they may only be afforded a ‘holding’ status such as on a bridging visa).<sup>9</sup> However, this population does fit within the confines of irregularity as it relates to irregular migration *processes* (or flows).

### *Conceptualising irregular migration*

Irregular migration refers to processes relating to entering a country or territory without the express permission of the authorities (Cvajner & Sciortino 2010; EU Clandestino 2012; GCIM 2005; Ghosh 1998; IOM 2015; Koser 2005; Koser 2010). Irregular migration processes can be characterised as resulting in a particular type of migration flow (Icduygu & Toktas 2002; Koser 2010).

Other possible terms include ‘unauthorised migration’ and ‘illegal migration’, although illegal migration does not encompass people who may enter a country without permission for the purposes of seeking asylum, which is provided for under the Refugee Convention (UNHCR 2010, 3). Some scholars suggest that ‘undocumented’ is another term of similar application (Ghosh 1998; Massey & Capoferro 2007), however, undocumented has a narrower and more technical meaning relating to people not having the correct official documents. It tends to be used more in the United States, specifically in relation to labour migration (Massey & Capoferro 2007). Again, it is problematic when referring to asylum seekers who may have difficulty gaining official documents from origin country authorities or who may have official travel documents (even if they are fraudulent or absent) but not necessarily those permitting exit or allowing entry. ‘Unauthorised’ migration has been described as being a sub-set of ‘irregular migration’ in that it involves the entry without permission and is different to “other forms of irregular entry, such as entry with forged passports or unlawfully obtained visas...[which] are in breach of immigration laws, but nevertheless “authorized” by an oblivious immigration officer” (Carling 2007b, 5). Technically, ‘unauthorised’ or ‘irregular’ could be applied equally to this study as both are correct and applicable. However, I have chosen to use the term ‘irregular’ given its strong links in Australia to the study population and their specific migration processes. To use ‘unauthorised’ runs the risks of reducing clarity as well as

accessibility, possibly resulting in a jarring effect on the reader—something clearly to be avoided.

Some of the earliest conceptualisations of ‘irregular migration’, however, had a very different meaning. Gould differentiated ‘irregular migration’ from that of ‘permanent migration’ whereby irregularity related to migration that was “...not wholly permanent, in that further movement is likely but neither the time nor the direction of such movement is presently known and both are beyond the control of those involved” (Gould 1974, 417). Unlike the current conceptualisation of irregular migration, which is (destination country) State-centric, Gould and Prothero’s concept of irregularity is framed from a migrant perspective—it is migrant-centric—within a temporal dimension. In other words, ‘irregularity’ is related to time, not legal/regulatory norms (Gould & Prothero 1975). While they noted links to Kunz’s kinetic migration of refugees, Gould and Prothero did not limit their discussion to categories or causes, and specifically mentioned people who migrate irregularly for multiple reasons such as natural disasters, climatic events and disease epidemics (Gould & Prothero 1975). Gould further argued that “...refugee movements are not isolated mobility phenomena, but can be considered as an integral part of the variety and complexity of population movement” (Gould 1974, 418).

Subsequent considerations of irregular migration shifted away from Gould and Prothero’s migrant-centric concept of ‘temporal’ irregular migration and toward State-centric regulatory conceptualisations. As part of this shift, the first sustained scholarly contributions focussed on irregular labour migration (Bohning 1982; Brennan 1984; Martin & Richards 1980). The emphasis on labour migration at this time has been attributed to the changes in international migration regulation, most pointedly following the oil crisis in the early 1970s and the related contractions of national economies in Europe and elsewhere (Moulier-Boutang & Garson 1984; Massey et al 1998). Greater emphasis in subsequent literature on irregular migration of asylum seekers came about in the 1990s, including because of a significant rise in the number of asylum applications lodged in Europe by people who had travelled there irregularly (Cornelius et al 1994; GCIM 2005; Koser 2005).

Concomitantly, a school of academic thought—The Copenhagen School—conceptualised ‘securitisation’ as the characterisation of danger and threat of a particular kind via a speech-act that moved security from the military realm to other realms, such as international migration (Waever 1995). Irregular migration became not only an issue

of migration management and border control but also of national security. Further, Faist argued that one of the effects of the events of 11 September 2001 was that it reinforced the trend towards securitising migration, which directly resulted in increased migration control, significant investment in border management systems and substantial institutional responses, most notably in the United States but more generally throughout the Western world (Faist 2004). To that end, conceptualisation of irregular migration processes has increasingly become State-centric and beyond the earlier bounds of economic national interest (i.e. labour migration) to also encompass border control and, more recently, national security. As Cvajner and Sciortino observe, this means that the “adjective ‘irregular’ does not belong to the descriptive domain of whole migration flows, but only to their interactions with states’ actions” (2010, 395).

### **2.3 Asylum migration—forced, irregular or both?**

In the contexts of forced and irregular migration, an important distinction is made in the academic literature (as well as in policy and law) in relation to asylum migration. The right to seek asylum is expressed in Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: “Every person has the right to seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.” The term ‘asylum seeker’ is derived from the Declaration and implied in the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol in that a refugee must be outside of her or his country, and so have moved across State borders.<sup>10</sup> An asylum seeker requests international protection outside her or his own country, and the status of an asylum seeker relates to the period between the lodgement of a claim for asylum with authorities and the final determination of that claim. UNHCR has described an asylum seeker as “someone who says he or she is a refugee, but whose claim has not yet been definitively evaluated” (UNHCR 2015). Wood describes asylum seekers as existing in a status pending category (Wood 1989). UNHCR also notes that mass movements stemming from “conflict or generalised violence as opposed to individual persecution” involve *prima facie* determinations rather than individual assessments, meaning that some refugees in effect bypass the asylum seeker stage (UNHCR 2015). Outside of mass movements (such as people escaping civil conflict in Syria), asylum seekers have their claims assessed individually by the UNHCR or the authorities of the country in which they sought asylum. Asylum migration, therefore, can be a sub-set of both forced migration and irregular migration, but not always. For example, a substantial proportion of asylum applications



are made by people who are already in a country on a valid visa (e.g. tourists, students, business visitors) (Crisp 1999, 4), some of whom may lodge asylum applications years after their initial arrival (McAuliffe & Koser 2017). These asylum seekers would not easily be captured by the concept of ‘forced migrants’ as examined earlier, and they would be considered regular migrants given their immigration status at the time of lodging an asylum claim. Examination of final grant rates of asylum seekers who undertake this approach also show that they have much lower finally determined grant rates than other groups from significant refugee-producing countries (see, for example, DIBP 2013). In some situations, and in particular where large delays between arrival and lodgement of claims for protection (such as some students who lodge an asylum application up to 1,000 days after arrival), motivations appear to be “somewhat divergent” from those of irregular asylum seekers (McAuliffe & Koser 2017).

There are also people who would more readily be considered ‘forced migrants’ and who may be found to be refugees (or in need of complementary or subsidiary protection) following refugee status determination processes but who enter a transit and/or destination country without permission of the authorities, and so engage in irregular migration. This applies also to what has been described as irregular secondary movements of asylum seekers and refugees, who having applied for asylum or afforded refugee status in one country, migrate to another (Koser 2005; Koser 2010; UNHCR 2003)—a scenario dramatically demonstrated in 2015 by the movement of many thousands of Syrian refugees from Turkey to Greece.<sup>11</sup>

Yet, there are other people who may be considered irregular migrants in one or more transit or host countries—including because of the particular policies of that country—and who may sit uncomfortably in the ‘forced migrant’ category, having passed through one or more safe countries in order to arrive in a destination country. And, in the end, these irregular asylum seekers may or may not go on to become refugees (or found to be in need of complementary or subsidiary protection). Indeed, there may be irregular migrants who resort to the asylum channel despite not needing international protection in order to gain a migration outcome.

It is useful, therefore, to separate refugee status determination outcomes and migration patterns and processes—which may variously involve irregularity, irregular secondary movements and/or regular migration. In other words, a person’s ‘refugee-ness’ is not related to the migration processes they undertook in order to reach a country and claim

asylum. This has important implications, of course, for refugee status determination processing but also for how we think about and talk about asylum seekers. As Koser argues, care needs to be taken with the convergences between asylum and irregularity given the potential for blurring of the lines in public discourse (Koser 2010). Language, therefore, is particularly important. Asylum seekers may in some cases arrive via irregular migration but framing them as irregular migrants may have the effect of masking their particular needs and rights as well as vulnerabilities. Conversely, some researchers have found that the framing of asylum seekers in destination countries can act to mask their abilities to exercise agency. In Vecchio's ethnographic research on asylum seekers living in Hong Kong he found that (2014, 10):

...while limited by negative representations of their motivation for seeking asylum, their needs homogenised, asylum seekers are exposed to practices, networks and risks that increase their vulnerability, however, not every asylum seeker ends up living in poverty...people whose lives might as well be said to be wasted (Bauman 2004) are not only able to secure a livelihood, but also strive ambitiously to take advantage of the structural conditions said to oppress them.

In the Australian context, the use of language is highlighted by a simple example. For many years successive governments referred to people who entered Australian territorial waters in an unauthorised manner to claim asylum as 'irregular maritime arrivals' (IMAs).<sup>12</sup> In its report to the Australian Government of August 2012, an expert panel appointed by the then Government chose to use different language to describe the same group of people referring to them as 'asylum seekers' first and foremost—hence the *Report of the Expert Panel on Asylum Seekers*—while also adopting both the terms 'asylum seekers' and 'IMAs' throughout its report. As to be expected, there has been considerable research on and analysis of the language used to variously describe this group of people in Australian public and political discourses (Clyne 2005; Every & Augoustinos 2007; Pickering 2001). How language and concepts are manifested and reinforced specifically in relation to statistical data collection and reporting on both irregular migrants and asylum seekers is discussed in Chapter 4.

#### **2.4 A closer look at force and choice: The different dimensions of agency**

In terms of explanations of irregular and forced migration, structural conditions have been argued to play a significant (if not the most significant) role (Castles, de Haas and Miller 2014; de Haas 2011; Koser 2007). Discussion of 'push' factors impelling or forcing migration has been a key feature of conceptualisations of both forced (and to a lesser

extent) irregular migration (Icduygu 2007; Kunz 1973; Stein 1981). Irregular migration with its firm grounding in labour migration has also been linked to structural ‘pull’ factors, such as prevailing economic conditions and destination country immigration and labour policies (Duvell 2006; Ghosh 1998; Icduygu 2006; Papademetriou & Terrazas 2009). There has been some focus on ‘enabling’ factors, such as telecommunications, transportation and capital flows although this has tended to be in the broader literature (de Haas 2011; Fleisher 1963; Massey 2012; McAuliffe 2013) as well as individual determinants, such as personal preferences and transnational social links (Koser 1997; Robinson & Segrott 2002; Jayasuriya 2014; McAuliffe & Jayasuriya 2016). There has been much less focus, however, on aspects related to the concept of agency such as migration decision making, as Koser (2010, 189) observes:

...most research to date seems to have ignored the migrants’ decision-making in the process. One reason might be that there is effectively no decision to be made – that people are forced into irregular migration... In their decision-making, it appears that irregular migrants lie somewhere between voluntary and forced migrants as usually conceived.

This is also reflected in Fussell’s 2012 examination of the development and evolution of migration theory, in which she argues that attempts to theorize migration (including forced migration) through the prism of volition have been “taken up and set aside by migration scholars but not since the 1980s.”<sup>13</sup> Fussell contemplates agency in terms of the “degree of volition a migrant can exercise over whether, when, and where to move” (2012, 22 of 43), arguing that there is a significant gap in theory on migrants’ volition and that “new theories and research methods used for studying migration make this a topic poised for growth” (2012, 43).

With this in mind, it is also important to acknowledge that the literature has evolved in a somewhat piecemeal fashion to more readily acknowledge that agency can underpin movement and (im)mobility in conflict and/or persecution situations (Betts 2009; Adhikari 2012; Donini et al 2016; Koser 2010; McAuliffe & Jayasuriya 2016; Triandafyllidou 2017; Van Hear et al 2012; Vullnetari 2012). However, this has not been brought together conceptually or empirically, and there has not been adequate consideration of the various aspects of agency and how they may apply to (irregular) asylum seekers. Nor have there been analyses of how people engage in irregular migration processes as asylum seekers in order to exercise agency, or of the demographic or other factors that may act to circumscribe or enable agency. Overall, the research and analysis

undertaken has been framed from a State perspective, with a particular focus on policy dimensions, rather than from a migrant perspective (Betts 2009; Hatton & Moloney 2015). That theory has been so policy-driven has been seen as a failure or weakness by some scholars (Betts 2009; Fussell 2012; Koser 2010; Triandafyllidou 2017; Turton 2003).

In addition to the theoretical gap referred to by Fussell, Koser, Triandafyllidou and others, the current literature has been hampered by a lack of data and research on asylum seekers' agency. There are considerable practical and ethical challenges involved in conducting research on the topic and collecting data (Duvell, Triandafyllidou & Vollmer 2010; Koser & McAuliffe 2013; McAuliffe & Mence 2014). Firstly, gaining the agreement of potential or actual asylum seekers who have or will engage in irregular migration to talk with researchers can be difficult. The sensitive and profound nature of their circumstances and experiences poses particular challenges, both practical and ethical. Secondly, the criminal aspects of irregular migration have meant that issues related to counter migrant smuggling, transnational criminal networks and disruption are often unable to be examined due to the inability to access information. Information and statistics are not readily available outside government, which poses limitations on academic enquiry (Koser 2010; McAuliffe & Laczko 2016; McAuliffe & Mence 2014; Monzini 2004).

There are many aspects of self-agency as it relates to migration, as highlighted by Fussell (2012), although I propose that a fuller consideration of agency includes demographic dimensions (who migrates), social dimensions (who to migrate with), temporal dimensions (whether and when to migrate), and spatial dimensions (where and how to migrate). In this thesis, all of these dimensions are critically examined in relation to the Hazaras who undertook irregular maritime migration processes in order to arrive and seek asylum in Australia. I recognise that these dimensions, while conceptually distinct, are inevitably linked, making migrants' considerations of different dimensions likely to be iterative, overlapping and non-linear. For analytical purposes, however, these dimensions are examined separately. The analysis in Part Three of this thesis draws on administrative data of all irregular maritime asylum seekers who arrived in Australia between mid-2008 and mid-2013 (n=38,847), of which Hazaras constituted the main ethnic group (n=12,136), as well as a survey of people who had travelled as irregular maritime asylum seekers and had subsequently been granted protection (n=1,008). In this way, what people did as well as what they said are encapsulated in the study. The study design and data used in the analysis are discussed in Chapter 4.

### **Temporal Dimensions—Whether to and When to Migrate**

Consideration of one of the temporal dimensions—whether to migrate—tended to dominate the earlier literature. As we saw from the early forays into the conceptualisation of forced migration, there was a strong focus on force versus choice. Petersen’s typology distinguished between free, impelled and forced migration (noting the continuum between impelled and forced) but considerations only went as far as leaving origin (Petersen 1958).

There has been greater recognition over time of the continuum that exists in relation to force and choice rather than the dichotomous explanations of the past (Betts 2009; Castles and Miller 1998; Hugo 1996; Massey et al 1998; Richmond 1993; Van Hear 1998; Vullnetari 2012), however, the macro-level ‘continuum’ discourse focuses on whether to migrate and under what circumstances forced migration occurs. According to Turton, “by trying to separate out categories of migrants along a continuum of choice - free at one end and entirely closed at the other - these schemes are in danger of ignoring the most important quality of all migrants and indeed of all human beings: their agency” (2003, 9). This has also been highlighted by Connor as part of her extensive work on Afghans in Pakistan, in which she highlights the risks of “ignoring critical diversities” of refugee populations, which show that “many individuals retain some personal autonomy” (Connor 1989, 904). In addition, much of the literature on movements of people in the face of conflict or persecution has focused on the causes or pre-migration experiences (Koser 2001; Thomas et al 2004). More specifically, some scholarship has relied on analysis of aggregate macro-level data, which has sought to determine the ‘push’ factors significant in movements (Hatton 2009; Hatton & Moloney 2015; Bocker & Havinga 1997). Scholars have differed in their views on the impact of various factors over others, although it has generally been found that origin country circumstances are the most significant determinants of mass displacement (Davenport, Moore & Poe 2003; Edwards 2009; Moore & Shellman 2004; Schmeidl 1995; Zolberg, Suhrke & Aguayo 1989). This is also reflected, for example, by the fact that the majority of the world’s refugees are located in neighbouring countries, many having been part of mass displacement due to conflict, instability or severe violence (UNHCR 2016).

Within this broader historical and theoretical context, research on asylum seekers’ decision making and agency on whether to migrate and when to migrate has been

somewhat lacking. This has translated into a body of literature on decision making by asylum seekers and potential asylum seekers that has been more focused on where to migrate (as discussed below), given that forced migrants are largely viewed as being at one end of the continuum and must migrate; the associated assumption being that asylum seekers lack agency, thereby effectively rendering research on this aspect of decision making largely irrelevant. This is highlighted by Koser (2010, 189)—a senior scholar of both forced and irregular migrations—in which he conceptualises the decision making of forced migrants on whether to migrate quite differently from other irregular migrants:

...it is the combination of its voluntary nature and the risks it entails that make the decision by migrants to move in an irregular manner so interesting and apparently different from other migration decision-making. Unless they are fleeing persecution, most migrants who pay smugglers are exercising a positive choice between staying and going. This choice characterises voluntary migrants and differentiates them from forced migrants who often have little option but to flee. At the same time, the choice to move in an irregular manner entails significant risks. This differs from the case of most voluntary migrants, for whom there is often no great risk at stake between staying or leaving, and actually has more in common with the case of forced migrants, for whom opting to stay at home is a high-risk strategy.

This gap in research on individual decision making and agency in relation to whether and when to migrate is further acknowledged by Koser and McAuliffe (2013) who commented that in addition to the presumption of forced migration, methodological challenges have made conducting research on asylum seekers' decision making, particularly in relation to people who do not have a regular immigration status and have engaged in irregular migration, an area of research that warrants greater attention and effort.

There has been some research conducted on the smuggling of asylum seekers with respect to the level of agency asylum seekers exhibit. However, these studies have largely focused on choice of destination (Herman 2006; van Liempt and Doomernik 2006; van Liempt 2007). For example, van Liempt and Doomernik explore "the individual migrant's role in the decision making process of identifying the final destination" (2006, 166). More on this aspect is discussed below.

Other studies have explored why some people remain in conflict zones while others migrate. Research conducted in Nepal by Adhikari (2012 and 2013), has found that there are multiple factors associated with the decision to flee conflict zones (2012, 602):

The results suggest that violent conflict is not the only factor affecting displacement. Even when life is under extreme threat, multiple factors affect people's choice. Beside conflict, there are considerable economic and social

factors, and physical barriers that likely affect people's decisions of whether or not to flee and thus help to explain the variation in the overall number of people displaced by conflict.

From this research, as well as the broader literature, we can see that deeper examination of asylum seekers' decision making and movements relating to both whether to migrate and when to migrate is likely to reveal useful insights into how agency is considered and manifested in practical terms. It is particularly salient given that asylum migration patterns and processes are necessarily separate and distinct from assessments of claims for international protection (i.e. a person's 'refugee-ness').

### **Demographic dimensions—Who migrates**

Overall, there is limited data on the demographic characteristics of asylum seekers globally. Reed, Haaga and Keely (1998), in their work on the demography of forced migration, argue that standard demographic collection processes are severely hampered in origin and host countries by the often unstable, dangerous and chaotic circumstances surrounding such movements as well as the fact that data collection is the least concern of people moving or of agencies and individuals supporting those displaced. Demographic data related to mass migration involving large numbers of people on the move are particularly difficult to capture.

Demographic data of asylum seekers in destination countries is equally rare. Robinson and Segrott (2002), for example, note the absence of reliable quantitative data on the socio-demographic characteristics of asylum seekers in the United Kingdom, citing it as a limitation of their research, which was unable to be representative of the underlying population (2002, 6). In more recent years, Eurostat has recently begun to publish data on asylum applications made in the EU, including by applicants' sex and age (5-part grouping) along with the main variable (citizenship), but not by other variables such as ethnicity, education level, or marital/family status. Eurostat's metadata reference material indicates that age has only been reported systematically since January 2014, and notes that age is that which is provided by EU members in the context of age determination policies and practices (Eurostat 2016). Information on the ethnic characteristics of asylum seekers in the EU remains anecdotal and piecemeal (VIDC 2016).

There is also little data on demographic characteristics of asylum seekers available publicly from UNHCR (discussed further in Chapter 4 on data). Attributes such as age,

sex, education level, marital status, citizenship, ethnicity, etc, may or may not be collected by UNHCR and/or State authorities in some locations. However, if such data is collected it is generally not reported, particularly if it involves irregular migration processes (Koser 2010). Conversely, there is a much greater focus on the demography of asylum seekers and refugees in destination countries as it relates to aspects of integration, mental health, and physical health (see, for example, Carswell et al 2011; Cleveland & Rousseau 2013; Cohen 2008; Laban et al 2004; Van Velsen et al 1996). This appears to be due (in part) to the availability of demographic data, which allows for deeper analysis, including quantitative analysis of the relationships between demographic variables and health and other outcomes.

In the last two to three years we have seen some small advances in the availability of demographic data of asylum seekers. Emerging data sources, including in the grey literature and from media reporting, have been constructed largely in response to demographic changes in irregular migration flows. These changes have been most notable in relation to sudden or largely unexpected increases in unaccompanied minors as well as women (with or without children) to Europe and the United States (Vervliet et al 2015; Lind 2014; Newland 2014). In addition, the very significant increase in irregular maritime migration to Europe in 2015 resulted in international organisations developing and reporting enhanced data on irregular migrants' demographic characteristics. UNHCR and IOM online reporting of demographic data have provided greater insights into who is moving. For example, UNHCR data indicate that in 2015 Syrians were more likely to be women and accompanied children than other irregular maritime migrants, and Afghans were much more likely to be unaccompanied minors (UNHCR 2016). However, this data was of a limited and narrow migration corridor (North Africa to Italy) and relied in part on Italian government data.

Small scale qualitative studies on asylum seekers have generally found that spontaneous asylum seekers who arrive in destination countries are young males (De Bruycker et al 2013; Havinga & Bocker 1997; Koser 1997; Carling 2007b), although in more recent years this has been increasingly questioned as more and more females and minors undertake irregular migration (and seek asylum). A prominent example was that of the interception of more than 66,000 unaccompanied children from Central America at the Mexican-US border in the spring and summer of 2014 (Donato & Sisk 2015; Seghetti et al 2014; US Customs and Border Protection 2014).



Notwithstanding the challenges in collecting and/or accessing demographic data on asylum seekers, its analysis has the potential to provide rich insights into the extent to which agency is able to be realised, particularly as it relates to the age, sex, family status, ethnicity, education levels, and employment status of asylum seekers.

### **Social dimensions—Who to migrate with**

There is a dearth of data and research on exactly who asylum seekers migrate with. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, there appears to be an underlying assumption that people seeking protection move in (family) groups, the rationale being that people with little or no choice about movement are forced to move *en mass*. Fussell argues that there is a distinct difference between forced and voluntary migration in that (Fussell 2012, 41):

...forced moves are associated with negative selectivity. This stands to reason, because forced moves produced by natural or human-made disasters, violent conflicts, or policies such as ethnic cleansing and genocide force all members of a group to move...

Other scholars have equally described the impact of forced migration as involving whole communities being uprooted (Colsen 2003; Oliver-Smith 1991). Again, the distinction between acute mass displacement and other forms of asylum migration is applicable. Acute, sudden onset situations are more likely to involve movements of whole communities and family groups, such as has been witnessed out of Syria into neighbouring countries. However, Fussell's assumption above needs to be carefully considered. Even in situations of long-term inter-generational marginalisation and persecution amounting to ethnic cleansing, such as the case of Rohingya in Myanmar, small-scale perpetual movements can occur over years, with many people remaining in the origin country for a number of reasons, including because of physical and non-physical barriers preventing movement from origin (Southwick 2015; McAuliffe 2016c). Carling's concept of the 'involuntary immobile' appears highly relevant to people caught in these types of situations (Carling 2002), and the more limited ability of people to move would render (collective/family) decision making extremely important and, in many senses, especially fraught, particularly for those who remain.

Secondly, information on who asylum seekers travelled with is virtually non-existent outside of small qualitative studies, and even then it is usually given cursory reference without being examined fully. Robinson and Segrott, for example, touch on the issue of

family migration in their study of asylum seekers in the United Kingdom, finding that while movements initially tended to involve whole families caught up in civil conflict, subsequent movements to the UK did not, including because of cost, risks of moving together and the family reunion options available in the future (2002, 40). Other scholars have suggested that most spontaneous asylum seekers who arrive in a given destination country (De Bruycker et al 2013, 3; Havinga & Bocker 1997, 86; Koser 1997, 596; Carling 2007b) or who seek refuge from conflict zones (Czaika & Kis-Katos 2009) are young males, but none examined aspects related to who asylum seekers travelled with.

In a recent data capture initiative (from December 2015), the IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix project along the Eastern Mediterranean route started to collect data on demographic characteristics of irregular migrants via non-random surveys as well as who people were travelling with (IOM 2016). Significant care, however, needs to be taken when interpreting this data, which is not representative, nor re-weighted to reflect the underlying population. Nevertheless, it indicates that there is emerging interest in this area of enquiry, and while only summary statistics are currently available, deeper analysis of survey data would be likely to produce interesting and relevant findings on this aspect of asylum seeker agency.

### **Spatial dimensions—Where and how to migrate**

There has been substantial literature on the spatial dimensions of asylum seeking involving (large N) macro-level studies in developed countries, which focus on movements to developed countries (particularly European countries). However, it is again useful to distinguish between acute mass migration and non-acute migration, including irregular secondary movements or long-term protracted migration flows that may involve asylum seekers/refugees and other irregular migrants. The findings of research on non-acute asylum migration overall suggests that respondents do choose destination countries and that several factors are involved. The issues of where and how are often intertwined, and there is wide recognition of the relationship between the increase in migration regulation by States and the rise in irregular migration (Castles, de Haas & Miller 2014; Moulner-Boutang & Garson 1984; Massey et al 1998). In this context, and in line with the related writings on mixed migration flows and the asylum-migration nexus<sup>14</sup>, the focus on how to migrate has sometimes assumed 'irregularity' (noting that there is particular emphasis on this category, perhaps including because of the policy issues it raises) and

increasingly focused on the use of smugglers or agents (Koser 2011; Salt & Stein 1997; van Liempt & Doomerick 2006; van Liempt 2007; Zimmermann 2010). Recent analysis of irregular maritime migration to Europe calls into question the veracity of the ‘mixed’ migration argument, suggesting that irregular maritime migration flows to Europe are highly specific in nature, with some flows comprising asylum seekers and other flows not (Bruycker et al 2013, 5-6).

When considering flows into Europe, Neumayer’s macro-level analysis of asylum applications in Europe (2004) shows that in order of importance, the stock of past asylum seekers, the country’s income level, the prominence of right wing populist parties, geographical proximity, language ties, colonial links and recognition rates are all determinants of asylum seekers’ destination. Keogh (2013) suggests that the most important determinants are GDP, recognition rates and asylum seeker stock. Moore and Shellman (2007), however, appear to disagree with Neumayer (2005) regarding why particular countries are chosen, using macro-level data to suggest “refugees flee violence, and their destination choice is overwhelmingly near-by, where others like them have gone”. The difference, they say, is due to their focus on refugees globally, while Neumayer (2005) concentrates on Europe. Theilemann (2004), Hatton (2005), Hatton and Moloney (2015), and Barthel and Neumayer (2015) also develop macro-level models that suggest there are determinants relating to country choice.

Findings from case-based qualitative empirical studies (n<100) are mixed as to whether or not asylum seekers choose a particular country. Bocker and Havinga (1998, 80) argue “asylum seekers do not have much choice...the country of destination is often accidental for asylum seekers”. Day and White concur, suggesting “very few respondents had any real choice in where they ended up” (2002, 1). Gilbert and Koser (2006) indicate that very few of the 87 refugees they interviewed had any knowledge of the UK prior to their arrival. Overall, case-study research in Europe generally contends that final destinations tend to be determined by smugglers (Bijleveld & Taselaar 2000; Bocker & Havinga 1997; Gilbert & Koser 2006). Barsky’s research in Canada, however, suggests that while asylum seekers often had little choice over destination because of ‘natural barriers’, such as visa restrictions, access to funds, and asylum policies, within these limitations asylum seekers did actively exercise choice about where they sought asylum (Barsky 2000).

Similarly, Robinson and Segrott’s research in the United Kingdom found that the asylum seekers they interviewed were able to select between destination countries, and their

choices were related to the presence of family and friends, language ability, cultural or historical ties and, in some instances, their preconceived perceptions of the country. They did find that asylum seekers assumed that all Western countries were democratic and affluent, so there was no differentiation outside of these countries when governance and economic factors were considered (Robinson & Segrott 2002, 62). In some studies, the importance of agents as well as the country's asylum seeker policy was significant (Koser 1997).

It is important to note that much of the research on asylum seeker destination decision making is European, so it is not able to adequately account for the particularities of the Australian situation, especially Australia's geography and lack of proximity to similar destination countries (McAuliffe 2013). It is prudent to be cautious about aspects of European research and its applicability to the Australia context. In the absence of Australian empirical research, there has been a tendency for researchers and commentators to apply European research findings. In a paper published by the Australian Parliamentary Library, for example, Spinks states that '...decisions about where to go are not always made by refugees themselves but rather are often determined, or at least heavily influenced, by others. In some cases the decision is made by a family member, but for many the destination is chosen by the 'agent' or people smuggler engaged to get them to a place (any place) of safety' (2013, 9). In addition to not accounting for spatial dimensions and differing contexts, Spinks' secondary research findings also contradict findings of other researchers, such as van Liempt (2007), who found that asylum seekers to the Netherlands exercised agency in engaging with smugglers to determine where to migrate. Destination choice in the Australian context is particularly relevant given Australia's isolation and distance, and that to reach Australia many asylum seekers must transit multiple countries, often using smugglers or agents, making the issue of choice of destination a particularly salient one (Koser & McAuliffe 2013).

There are many aspects associated with *how to migrate* in order to seek asylum. From a migrant's perspective there are likely to be a myriad of issues involved, including funding, physical travel, passports/visas, accommodation, the use or assistance of agents/smugglers, etc. Partly because of the largely state-centric and policy-centric focuses on asylum seeking and irregular migration, there is little research on these aspects, and very little critical analysis has been conducted. This has recently been recognised by some scholars, including BenEzer and Zetter who argued (2015, 299):

...there is a very significant lacuna in research on refugee journeys. The research that exists is, we suggest, fragmentary, unsystematic and lacking in conceptual and methodological clarity.

Discussion in the literature that is available is often descriptive, and usually as background to another topic, such as migrant smuggling or refugee protection (Andreas 2001; Collyer 2010; Koser 2007; McAuliffe & Laczko 2016; Schuster 2011; van Liempt 2006; Zhang 2016). Scholarly enquiry into how asylum seekers (and irregular migrants) undertake migration has also fallen under the banner of ‘transit migration’, and some countries tend to be described as ‘transit countries’, having been situated between origin and destination countries—physically but also economically, developmentally, and in protection terms (Collyer 2007; Collyer, Düvell & de Haas 2012; Hugo, Tan & Napitupulu 2014). Studies of transit migration have sought to add an additional layer to the ‘destination-origin’ linearity, and have emerged in response to changes in migration patterns and processes of migrants in moving from one country to a final destination country, and as part of bigger migration systems (Collyer & de Haas 2012; Düvell 2014; Hugo, Tan & Napitupulu 2014; Papadopoulou 2005). While there is no agreed definition of transit migration, it tends to be a form of ‘assumed’ knowledge, inevitably from a destination country perspective, which may or may not reflect migrants’ perspectives. Research into transit country decision making about onward movement, for example, has revealed a level of fluidity in how migrants think about what may constitute both ‘transit’ and ‘destination’, with fluidity relating primarily to time in transit, policy aspects in destination, livelihood/economic circumstances in transit, and security/safety in transit (Brekke & Brochman 2014; Hugo et al 2014; Koser & Kuschminder 2016; Pickering et al 2016). This ‘transit’ characterisation tends to downplay the significance of the journey from migrants’ perspectives, depicting it only as a transitory stage, rather than a practically and symbolically important process; journeys that BenEzer and Zetter depict as “profoundly formative and transformative experience[s]” (BenEzer & Zetter 2015, 297).

Efforts to move away from the language of ‘origin’, ‘transit’ and ‘destination’—which can be simplistic and misleading in some circumstances—are positive, although categorisation can be difficult to neatly and crisply articulate.<sup>15</sup> Scholarly enquiry into migrants’ experiences *en route* are a significant research gap, as argued by BenEzer and Zetter (2015). This is particularly so in relation to agency, most especially for groups and individuals who have demonstrated considerable determination in reaching ‘transit’

countries but who then become stuck. New thinking, research methodologies and policy approaches are required to help support a more nuanced conceptualisation of migrant journeys and agency, which is likely to remain a highly topical subject well into the future.

## **2.5 Multifaceted asylum seeker agency: A framework for analysis**

The following analytical framework for analysis of asylum seeker agency is based on the existing literature on forced and irregular migration, including the gaps in the literature (Table 2.2). Two aspects stand out. Firstly, the framework is migrant-centric, rather than state-centric, which is both deliberate and important. Deliberate because the aim of this study is to examine migration patterns and processes, not migration policies and practices of States. Much of the focus of existing scholarly enquiry on the topic of asylum seekers and refugees places States' policy responses at the centre, as has been discussed above. This is critically important research, some of which has strong policy utility, but it is not the focus of this study, which places migrants at the centre and (among other things) analyses their views of aspects of policy within the broader prism of agency. This analytical approach is important because it allows for much greater account of self-agency of irregular asylum seekers, and so fills an important theoretical gap—a gap with significant implications for how we understand the migration and mobility of asylum seekers who undertaken irregular migration globally.

The second aspect is that the analytical framework better accounts for the range of aspects or characteristics that contribute to the extent of asylum seekers' agency, including structural, cultural and individual factors. Economic aspects, for example, may be structural or individual in that economic incentives or disincentives may be created through policies or existing macro-level settings (such as wage differentials). But economic factors may also be relevant at the individual or household asylum seeker level, impacting on how people travel and with whom. Likewise, the recognition of agency in the theory of cultural evolution places emphasis on how individual and collective action can shape and transform cultures and practices (Bandura 2002; Dietz & Burns 1992). The social aspects of agency are particularly relevant to asylum seeker agency, and the related development of migration practices within cultures that are ethnically or geographically centred. The analytical framework, therefore, incorporates both the various dimensions of agency (and their components) as well as the main aspects or characteristics involved.

TABLE 2.2: Analytical framework: Multi-faceted asylum seeker agency

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Components</b>	<b>Aspects/ characteristics</b>
Temporal	i) Whether to migrate	Security; economic; social; legal/regulatory
	ii) When to migrate	Security; economic; social; legal/regulatory
Demographic	Who migrates	Sex; Age; Citizenship; Ethnicity; Education; Employment; Marital status
Social	Who with	Migrating family status; Friends and other networks
Spatial	i) Where to migrate (transit and destination)	Security; economic; social; legal/regulatory
	ii) How to migrate	Security; economic; social; legal/regulatory

Resulting in actions that are:

***Effective***

***Intentional***

***Unconstrained***

***Reflexive***

The extent and nature of agency can be assessed according to Dietz and Burns’ four criteria of agency (1992). Dietz and Burns’ criteria of what constitutes agency within the evolution of cultures is particularly applicable to migration, which involves a range of dimensions, relies on social processes and is dynamic. Importantly, Dietz and Burns argue that actors can be individual and collective, such that collective actors are able to change cultural rule settings through agency (1992, 194):

Agency requires that actions be effective in changing material or cultural conditions, that they be intentional, sufficiently unconstrained that actions are not entirely predictable and that actor possesses the ability to observe the consequences of an action and be reflexive in evaluating them. There is little doubt that individual humans possess these capabilities to some degree, or that for individuals these abilities are subject to constraint. The greater the constraints, the less scope for agency.

In assessing asylum seekers’ agency the extent to which actions are effective, intentional, unconstrained and reflexive provide the ability to formulate a judgement as to the nature and extent of asylum seeker agency. This is important because at a superficial level, the obvious fact that people travel several thousands of kilometres through many transit countries in dangerous conditions and costing many thousands of dollars would seem to

indicate a reasonable degree of agency. It could be said that asylum seekers who made it to Australia irregularly by boat actively demonstrated that they were a highly resourceful and determined group of people. These people were not resettled out of refugee camps and provided visas and comfortable air travel, but took enormous risks and often lengthy and traumatic journeys to get to Australia, sometimes in the face of extreme adversity. But such a conclusion risks being just as superficial as the quite common view that people who arrived by boat in Australia were merely fleeing for their lives (Philips 2011; Zaher 2011). The reality is likely to be somewhere in between, and a multifaceted and systematic examination of the extent and nature of asylum seeker agency is intended to reveal a much more nuanced understanding of who, how and why people undertake long and dangerous migration journeys.

It is important to note that for analytical purposes, the various dimensions in the framework are treated separately, although I recognise that they while they may be conceptually distinct, they are inevitably linked. Characterisations of linear decision making, such as Robinson and Segrott's general model of asylum seeker decision making (Figure 2.1) are likely to mask the complexities of migration-related decision making. This is particularly so for people living in fragile states, who are motivated to migrate because of a range of problems they face, including persecution, discrimination, insecurity and community violence, poverty, relative deprivation, poor civil governance affecting education, health and other services. Protracted asylum flows, which may have followed periods of mass displacement, necessarily involve people assessing and re-assessing their migration and non-migration options (McAuliffe 2013). The case study on Hazaras—a people with a strong and cohesive ethnic identity living mainly in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran—presented in Part Three of this thesis contains an analysis of the nature and extent of agency incorporating all of the dimensions in Table 2.2.



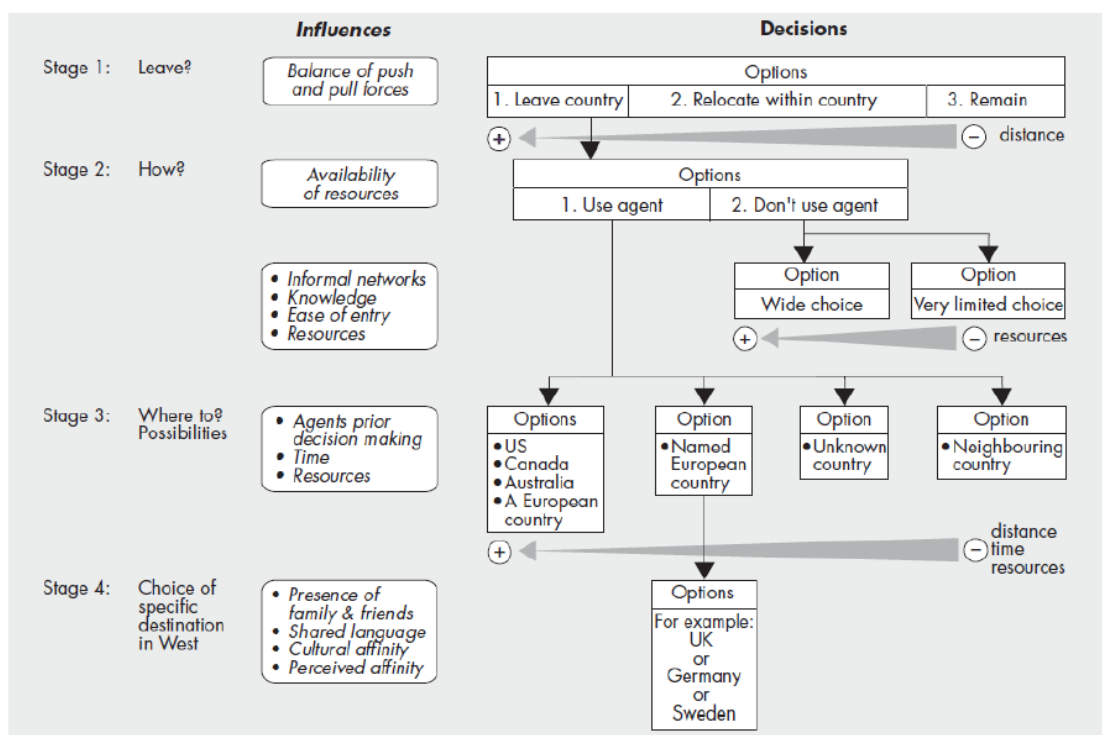


FIGURE 2:1 Robinson and Segrott’s Generalised model of asylum seeker decision-making (Robinson & Segrott 2002, 61).

One of the limitations of the analytical framework is that it focuses on agency as it relates to irregular migration of asylum seekers. It does not account fully for non-migration, and there are likely to be a number of separate but related components that would support analysis of agency as it relates to sedentariness or, as Carling refers to, ‘involuntary immobility’ (Carling 2002). In this study, with its focus on who, how and why people travelled to Australia as irregular maritime asylum seekers, critical examinations of the populations who remained in home and host countries—and the extent and nature of their agency in doing so—is beyond scope.

## 2.6 Conclusions

This chapter presents the findings of an extensive literature review on ‘forced migration’ and ‘irregular migration’ with particular reference to the treatment of asylum seeker agency. It is a complex topic and one that is worthy of scholarly enquiry, including because of its implications for people undertaking irregular migration as asylum seekers in order to realise safe and meaningful lives as well as for policymakers as they attempt

to manage an increasingly complex set of issues related to asylum migration. Its main contribution, however, is to develop better understandings of asylum seeker agency that are able to build on and integrate the considerable body of academic thought on the topic.

This chapter also sets out the analytical framework for the thesis, from which the analytical chapters all flow. The analytical chapters comprise Chapters 7, 8 and 9 on Hazara irregular migration patterns and processes according to the multi-faceted framework of asylum seeker agency—the demographic, social, temporal and spatial dimensions are all considered and addressed in detail in these chapters. Some more limited analysis of the entire irregular maritime asylum seeker population to have arrived during the study period is presented in Chapter 5, with particular reference to demographic, temporal and spatial aspects.

For the purposes of this thesis, with its focus on a small but significant group of asylum seekers who entered Australia irregularly by maritime means, the examination of the concept of forced migration was necessarily focused much more on asylum seekers and refugees. There is a substantial and growing body of literature on other forced migrants, particularly those migrating (and at risk of displacement) for environmental reasons. Considerations of agency are relevant beyond asylum seekers, and further research along these lines would undoubtedly contribute to the academic and policy discourses on other manifestations of displacement and migration, although these are well beyond the scope of this study. Considerations of the particularities of irregular *maritime* migration, however, are highly relevant to this study, and it is to the small but important body of literature on this specific topic that we now must turn.

## Notes

- 1 I have deliberately used the term ‘explain’ rather than ‘cause’ in relation to migration theories. In doing so I agree with de Haas’s approach to critical examination of migration theory, in which he argues that “...the very term ‘cause’ in social sciences refers to explanations that are time-space independent; and often independent from people’s perception and interpretation. Hence, conventional understandings of causality might preclude migration studies from developing new theories. Research has shown that migration is a patterned process, not a random one, and is also (historically and structurally) contingent. For example, functionalism may try to see how migration realize some social functions. This also raises the question whether the available theories on ‘causes’ can be readily used or if we need new to elaborate new understandings of causality and behaviour that can accommodate agency and contingency. Therefore, strictly speaking, it may seem more appropriate to refer to ‘theories that attempt to explain migration’ than to ‘theories on the causes of migration’, because there are different forms of explanations and only some of them refer to causes. Furthermore, ‘causes’ convey a rather universalistic, static and ‘sterile’ view which largely rules out agency and contingency.” (de Haas 2011, 7-8).
- 2 The research that explores communities and populations who do not migrate, even under extreme conditions, is also important. In these studies the existence (or otherwise) of migrant ‘agency’ is also pivotal. Research explaining why a person may decide to remain sedentary (Adhikari 2012) features the concept of ‘agency’.
- 3 Ravenstein’s seven ‘laws’ related to migration distance (that shorter migrations are greater in number and proportion; the greater the distance travelled the higher the likelihood that the urban centres are the destination), macro-level migration patterns (that absorption and dispersion occurs over time; that absorption areas are also affected by dispersion or ‘counter-currents’), and migration demographics (that rural residents were more migratory than urbanites, females more migratory than males).
- 4 This State-centric approach is at odds with global governance of labour standards, for example, which was negotiated and formulated on a tripartite basis involving States, employers and trade unions.
- 5 The Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe (PICMME) later became the International Organization for Migration (IOM).
- 6 The *Forced Migration Review* is published by the Refugee Studies Centre in the Oxford Department of International Development, University of Oxford - See more at: <http://www.fmreview.org/#sthash.pcUV4XxB.dpuf>.
- 7 For the purposes of this thesis, with its focus on a small but significant group of asylum seekers, the examination of the concept of forced migration is limited to asylum seekers and refugees.
- 8 The Oxford Dictionary definition of ‘refugee’, for example, is “a person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster” (English Oxford Dictionary 2016).
- 9 In the Australian system, bridging visas are granted to allow people to remain in Australia while waiting for an application to be processed, or to provide lawful status while making arrangements to depart the country.
- 10 No State, however, Plender contends “is obliged by current international law to admit to its territory a person who establishes that he is a refugee” (1988, 415). Martin (1989) describes the obligations on States as therefore more a ‘soft’ constraint not to stray from the norms of civilized conduct in the community of States.
- 11 It should be noted, however, that because of Turkey’s geographic limitation on its ratification of the 1951 Refugee Convention (meaning that only those seeking refuge in Turkey as a consequence of events occurring in Europe can be given refugee status), Syrian refugees are considered ‘guests’ in Turkey and are afforded temporary protection. The UNHCR, however, has afforded them refugee status, and so they are captured in UNHCR official statistics on refugee populations (see, for example, UNHCR’s 2015 Global Trends report).
- 12 The Australian *Migration Act 1958* (Section 5AA) refers to ‘unauthorised maritime arrivals’, a legal term that replaced ‘offshore entry person’ in 2013 (McCluskey 2013). In September 2013, following

a change of government, ‘irregular maritime arrivals’ changed to be instead known as ‘illegal maritime arrivals’.

- 13 The Oxford English Dictionary meaning of ‘volition’ is “the faculty or power of using one’s will.” It could, therefore, be considered a synonym of ‘agency’.
- 14 The concept of ‘mixed’ migration flows, involving both forced and voluntary migrants who undertake irregular migration, was developed in part as a means of advocating the need to *prima facie* operate on the basis that such flows involve forced migrants. It provides the rationale for practices and procedures to assume migrants to be asylum seekers in the first instance, not irregular migrants seeking to enter another country undetected. In addition, UNHCR has highlighted that even though its formal mandate is limited to certain populations, it “recognizes that the phenomenon of mixed movements raises broader human rights and humanitarian concerns ... as a rights-based organization, UNHCR considers it appropriate to join with other actors in drawing attention to the plight of people who, in the course of their journey, find themselves in distress” (UNHCR 2007: paras 17-18).
- 15 See, for example, McAuliffe, Weeks & Koser (2015), which draws on the Human Development Index categories ‘very high human development’, ‘low human development’, etc in an attempt to move beyond origin-transit-destination, which is highly problematic for geographically pivotal countries that fit one or more such categories, e.g. Pakistan, Morocco, Thailand and Turkey.

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### 3 Irregular maritime migration\*

In this chapter I examine the conceptualisations of irregular maritime migration as well as some of its more practical implications from regulatory and migrant agency perspectives. This follows on from the examination of the concepts of ‘forced’ and ‘irregular’ migration, and continues to outline a theoretical and conceptual context to the analysis of irregular maritime asylum seekers to Australia. In this chapter I argue that irregular *maritime* migration is a distinct and unique form of migration that often provides a last but highly risky migration option for some irregular asylum seekers, including because of the considerable challenges States face in regulating and responding to it as well as the ability of smugglers to exploit this. As background to the analysis of Hazara irregular maritime asylum seekers it is useful to continue an examination of the concept of agency particularly as it relates to a phenomenon that has increasingly emerged as a focus of State action and scholarly enquiry.

The aim of this chapter is twofold. Firstly, a critical examination of the literature on irregular maritime migration adds to the basis of the analytical framework of asylum seeker agency articulated in the previous chapter. The chapter is also intended to make a broader contribution by drawing together existing understandings of irregular maritime migration so that it may be recognised more readily as a distinct form of migration with particularities unlike other forms and manifestations. In meeting these two aims, the chapter first includes a brief overview of the salience of this specific (sub)topic in migration research and policy spheres. It then provides a discussion of the various conceptualisations, prisms and analytical frameworks applied to irregular maritime migration, including as it relates to migration processes, borders and migrant smuggling. A brief section on the public visibility of irregular maritime migration is then included, followed by a summary of the implications for irregular migrants. Finally, the conclusion outlines the importance of the depictions and manifestations of irregular maritime migration to this study.

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### 3.1 The salience of irregular maritime migration

Irregular maritime migration could be broadly described as the processes by which people gain unauthorised access to territorial waters and/or land through the use of water-borne vessels for the purposes of migrating internationally. It presents a specific way of accessing territory that does not necessarily require access to territorial land, involves crossing often ambiguous and dynamic maritime borders that cannot be easily fortified, making it extremely difficult for authorities to refuse (further) entry. Its unique aspects are becoming more pronounced over time and, while still relatively modest numerically, it is becoming an increasingly significant form of irregular migration in terms of its increasing (or fluctuating) scale, the pace of change and diversity of migrants it involves—as demonstrated by the 2015 irregular maritime migration flows from Turkey to Greece in 2015. Large increases can and do occur quickly and its particular features ensure that it will continue to be a small but highly significant form of irregular migration.

Its importance as a migration research and policy topic is underpinned by the convergence of several separate but related trends, which include: (i) the highly risky journeys involved that can involve scores of people dying *en route* in single events; (ii) the increasing regulation of both visa regimes and borders; (iii) immutable geographies involving maritime borders that cannot be ‘secured’ fully by states; (iv) the role of migrant smugglers in facilitating irregular movement; and (v) the high visibility of maritime movements, which lends itself to greater media coverage and heightened public interest. The combination of these aspects has translated the phenomenon of irregular maritime migration into an enormously challenging issue—for migrants, for border authorities, for those assisting with rescue and relief, and for the public, who may question the appropriateness and adequacy of responses. It is placing pressure on the international protection regime and risks further undermining its effectiveness, particularly in light of hundreds of thousands of refugees embarking on irregular secondary movements via maritime means from Turkey to Greece in 2015. The intersection of irregular maritime migration with the protection system, and that thousands of refugees and asylum seekers globally undertake such migration each year, highlights that it has become a fault-line in international migration governance.



### 3.2 Conceptualisations of irregular maritime migration

Within the broader literatures on international migration and borders, there has been some focus on irregular maritime migration but mostly in relation to operational and policy responses once people have arrived (or are attempting to arrive). Considerations of the distinctive migration processes involved in irregular maritime migration, and undertaken by migrants, have been fairly limited and there has been a lack of conceptual contemplation of the phenomenon as a discrete and distinct form of migration. In this section irregular maritime migration is examined through two dominant prisms: as it relates to international migration research; and its intersections with sovereignty in the form of border constructs.

In the migration literature, much of the discourse on, and research into, this manifestation of irregular migration has been on the deterrence and treatment of people who make up these irregular flows—migrants (including refugees and asylum seekers) as well as smugglers and/or crew. In this respect there is a considerable body of literature and commentary on the critical areas of human rights, normative frameworks, mental health, settlement and integration, international relations and (in relation to migrant smuggling) transnational crime. These areas of research and scholarly enquiry are extremely important—they are also fairly mature. Enquiry into the migration patterns and processes involved in irregular maritime migration, however, has been more subdued.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the concepts of ‘forced migration’ and ‘irregular migration’ in the literature in recent decades have evolved largely in response to geopolitical upheavals, and the related expectation that the international community should and must protect people who cannot be protected by their own States. The various conceptualisations have provided ways in which particular manifestations of international migration can be thought about, including in relation to how they link or overlap with other forms of migration. While related to the concepts of ‘forced’ and ‘irregular’ migration, to date there has been limited theoretical or empirical enquiry into irregular *maritime* migration, and attempts at conceptualising this discrete phenomenon have been rather lacking. There are at least three reasons for this. Firstly, much of the academic enquiry into irregular maritime migration is focused on policy responses by States, including in relation to deterrence (Hathaway 2006; Howard 2003; Pickering &

Lambert 2002), restricting access to territory (Collinson 1996; Hyndman & Mountz 2008; McAdam & Purcell 2008), immigration detention (Gill 2009; Kalhan 2010; Steel et al 2004), refugee status determination policy and processing (Hugo 2001; McAdam 2013), and voluntary and involuntary return migration (Andrijasevic 2010; Helton 1992; Koser & Kuschminder 2015). Research and analysis of policy responses are critically important. The lack of focus on the *migration process* aspects of irregular maritime migration and how migrants engage in such migration, however, is pronounced and has been noted by the few scholars working on the topic, including Carling (2007a, 2007b) and Godenau (2012, 2014). The challenges of conducting such research is a significant limiting factor, and a recent IOM global review of migrant smuggling research and data found that much of the research on smuggling in origin and transit countries (including of maritime routes) is qualitative and small-scale in nature, and tends to be conducted by early career researchers (McAuliffe & Laczko 2016, 16).

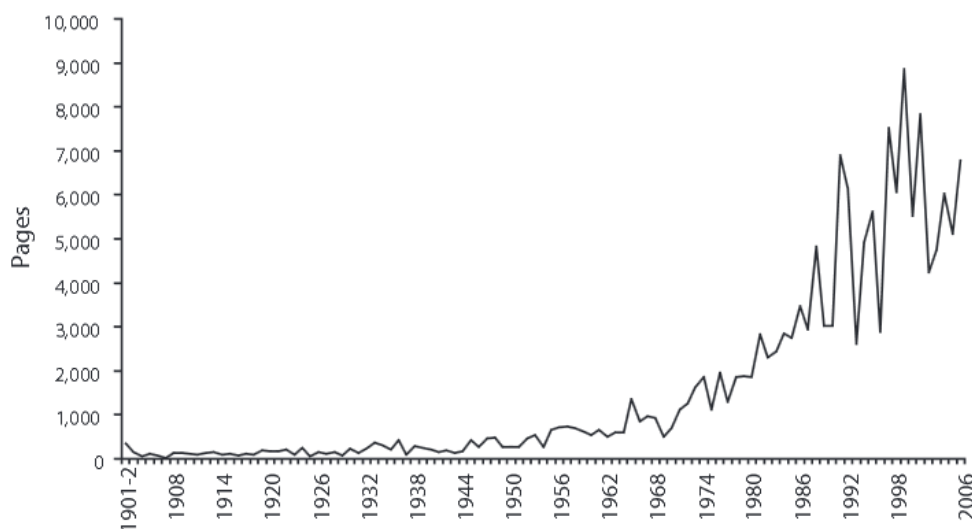
Second, the small scale of irregular maritime migration compared with other forms and manifestations of irregular migration (such as ‘overstayers’ for example) is often seen at odds with its depictions in the media and broader public discourses (Koser 2010a; O’Doherty & Lecouteur 2007; Pickering 2001). For example, the estimated irregular migrant population in the United States in 2012 was around 11.7 million (Passel et al 2013) whereas total maritime interdictions were less than 2,000 in 2012 (U.S. Coast Guard 2014); in Italy there were estimated to be around 651,000 irregular migrants in the country in 2008 (EU Clandestino Project 2012) and just under 40,000 irregular maritime migrants were interdicted while attempting to enter Europe via the Central Mediterranean route to Italy or Malta in the same year (Frontex 2010, 18). Nevertheless, the topic incites vigorous and contested views and opinions, including in academia, and considerable energy is understandably expended to explain the apparent disconnect between the rhetoric and the reality of irregular maritime migration vis a vis irregular migration more broadly.

Third, and in a similar vein to the study of ‘forced migration’, there is a sense that irregular maritime migration is assumed to be inevitable. In some respects this is perhaps true—the combination of aspirations to migrate, a small probability of getting a visa (for many groups), that many people are forced migrants seeking asylum, there are many agents/smugglers willing to assist migrants with their journeys, and convenient (or at least accessible) geographies have led to irregular maritime migration as a natural

consequence. Yet, there are many aspects of irregular maritime migration that warrant further analysis. The fluctuations in arrival numbers, changes in maritime routes, variations in the composition of flows, which have been anything but constant (let alone predictable), highlight that there are many dynamics involved. In turn, this suggests that migrants are required to negotiate a range of processes and take into account many factors in embarking on irregular maritime migration with its inherent risks and considerable danger. Critical examination of irregular maritime migration as a distinct and unique form of migration is not only warranted but increasingly important.

### *Intersections with border constructs*

In examining irregular maritime migration patterns and processes, it is useful to briefly review how this specific phenomenon is situated within the broader scholarly discourses on territorial borders and border control. Irregular maritime migration needs to be viewed in the context of increased regulation at the national level, which has seen areas of economic and social life that had long been regulated by nation States (and kingdoms, empires, tribes, etc before them), such as taxation of citizens and residents, expand to cover areas previously unregulated, such as telecommunications, media and broadcasting, environmental protection/conservation, etc. In the Australian context, this is illustrated powerfully in Figure 3.1; similar growth has been documented in other national jurisdictions, including the United States (Crews 2012).



**FIGURE 3.1** Number of pages of federal legislation passed in Australia, 1901 to 2006.

Source: Berg (2008)

As part of this regulatory growth, international migration—immigration and (in some countries) emigration—has become increasingly regulated, with regulation involving the formulation of new legal-policy frameworks as well as the growing complexity of those frameworks. In Australia, for example, the original *Migration Act 1958* was 35 pages long and provided significant discretion to delegated decision makers (although delegations were highly restricted). By 2005, the *Migration Act 1958* had expanded to 744 pages with the additional regulations comprising nine volumes totalling an additional 1,993 pages (Kelly 2005). Consequently, areas that had previously been left to the discretion of decision makers were increasingly prescribed, significantly curtailing discretion under the legislation and adding greater and greater complexity.

One of the consequences of increased regulation of migration has been the strengthening of border control, both technological (virtual) and physical, in developed countries globally (and in developing countries, including with the assistance and support of developed countries). This approach is evident in the ‘virtual border’ model developed by Australia in relation to air travel, which has been progressively enhanced since the introduction of the universal visa regime in 1975 (ANAO 2006, 37-8). With the aid of technology, integrity and other checks occur well before people board planes, and commence when a visa application is submitted outside Australia. The layered border processing model requires considerable technology and airline industry agreement, including multiple IT systems such as TRIPs, E-Visa, ETA, PACE and APP (ANAO 2006, 36).<sup>1</sup> Similar advances have been made in other parts of the world, with border processing systems and regulation becoming increasingly sophisticated, particularly since 11 September 2001 (Faist 2004; Jeandesboz 2008; Miggiano 2009; Neumayer 2006). The extension of borders well beyond the physical border through the increasing use of technology has caused some commentators to raise concerns about the ‘relocation’ of sovereignty (Gammeltoft-Hansen 2008; Godenau 2012; Godenau & Lopez-Sala 2016; Neumayer 2006).

There has also been an increasing propensity of States to erect barriers to entry of non-citizens who have not gained prior permission. This has included the erection of physical barriers, such as increasingly sophisticated fences that can be found in 65 countries globally, including Saudi Arabia, Spain (i.e. the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in Northern Morocco), Macedonia, Israel, India, Hungary, the United States and Norway (Carling 2007b; Osborne 2016; Vallet 2014).

*Geography and maritime borders—practical implications*

Geography plays a fundamental role in irregular maritime migration flows. The physical proximity of source, transit and destination countries as well as the nature of their geographic position—land borders, sea/ocean channels—is a significant factor in irregular maritime migration. The ease (or otherwise) with which people are able to travel irregularly using different modes of transport is an important factor. For example, around 266,000 Mexicans are estimated to have been apprehended trying to enter the United States overland in 2012 (Passel et al 2013), whereas 79 Mexicans were intercepted by U.S. Coastguards in 2012 (U.S. Coast Guard 2014).

One of the more difficult aspects specific to irregular *maritime* migration has been the difficulty in fortifying maritime borders. Unlike land or air borders, the increased fortification of which has involved physical and/or virtual barriers, maritime borders are extraordinarily difficult to fortify so as to prevent arrival. From a border management perspective land, air and maritime borders are intrinsically different, as can be seen in Table 3.1.

TABLE 3.1 Air, land and maritime border management

<b>Air travel &amp; irregular movements</b>	<b>Land travel &amp; irregular movements</b>	<b>Maritime travel &amp; irregular movements</b>
Limited ability to influence 'transit' travel prior to point of departure	Limited ability to influence 'transit' travel prior to point of departure	Limited ability to influence 'transit' travel prior to point of departure
Corrupt border and other officials' likely to facilitate movement	Corrupt border and other officials' likely to facilitate movement	Corrupt border and other officials' likely to facilitate movement
Smugglers/agents exploit opportunities to facilitate irregular movement	Smugglers/agents exploit opportunities to facilitate irregular movement	Smugglers/agents exploit opportunities to facilitate irregular movement
Bilateral cooperation required for some aspects but not all	Bilateral cooperation required for some aspects but not all	Bilateral cooperation required for some aspects but not all
Reliance on visa system (prior checking of migrants)	Reliance on visa system (checking of migrants at the physical border)	Subverts visa system (limited ability to check)
Highly regulated carriers	Mix of regulated and unregulated carriers	Mainly unregulated carriers
Heavy reliance on IT border systems	Reliance on IT border systems	More limited reliance on IT border systems
Reliance on intelligence reporting	Reliance on intelligence reporting	Heavy reliance on intelligence reporting and surveillance
Known/limited departure points	Known & unknown (but limited) departure points	Known & unknown/unlimited departure points
Ability to not board potential irregular migrants	Inability to not board potential irregular migrants	Inability to not board potential irregular migrants
Ability to prevent/refuse entry of irregular migrants (e.g. passport control at airports)	Ability to prevent/refuse entry of irregular migrants (e.g. border checkpoints, physical barriers)	Extremely limited ability to prevent/refuse entry (i.e. no border checkpoints) – requires physical turnbacks

Source: Based on McAuliffe & Mence (2014a)

Notwithstanding areas of commonality (shaded in Table 3.1), there are substantial differences in air, land and maritime borders and their intersections with irregular migration. The key points of difference pivot on the inability to regulate carriers as well points of departure and entry in respect of maritime movements, which translates into the inability to assess/check and ‘filter’ people and carriers well before the physical border. Maritime borders tend to be the most difficult to monitor and regulate, and much more so compared to air arrivals. Air travel has posed different border management challenges, including the difficulties of refusing entry given that the physical land borders, to which people need to be returned, are often large distances from the point of arrival. However, these difficulties have been largely overcome through the development of agreements between governments and airlines, including about the physical return of people refused entry at airports after arrival (and related financial penalties imposed on airlines). This has meant that airlines (in conjunction with authorities) impose much stricter checks prior to passengers boarding flights at the departure destination, lest the airline is fined and required to accommodate a passenger on a return flight (Taylor 2008). In her analysis of Australia’s advanced passenger processing and airline liaison officer systems, Taylor finds that (2008, 100):

The fear of having their profit margin eroded by such penalties is supposed to encourage carriers to deny passage to Australia to those who are inadequately or irregularly documented. The fact that the number of infringement notices actually served on carriers has been dropping markedly from year to year indicates the sanctions have had their intended effect.

Maritime borders, on the other hand, have proved extremely difficult to manage. Unlike land borders, there is no simple way of fortifying maritime borders, making the prevention of unauthorised border crossings extraordinarily difficult to implement. Maritime borders are also very difficult to monitor, although the detection of unauthorised crossings by surveillance is likely to be easier in open waters (Godenau 2012, 3).

The fundamental role of physical geography is arguably a more important aspect now compared to 15 to 20 years ago, and prior to the significant increase in screening of air travellers (Faist 2004). It is likely with the recent advances in border control and identity verification technology, air travel offers fewer opportunities for irregular migrants seeking to enter destination countries. It is likely that, overall, the tightening of air travel has had an impact on irregular migration via other modes (land and sea).

There is no doubt that irregular migration by land border crossing and maritime ventures are viewed as viable options by migrants and smugglers where available, and particularly given that many citizenships that travel irregularly are unable to access regular migration pathways. In recent years in Europe (and more dramatically in 2015), maritime transport for irregular migration has become more frequent than land transportation, which in turn is used more often than air travel (Monzini 2004; Pugh, 2000: 13). Further, as Monzini argues, there are specific groups who are more susceptible to travelling via maritime routes, including because of the higher costs involved in obtaining high quality identity documents enabling regulated air and land travel (2004, 3):

...an important component of the phenomenon of maritime crossings is made up of the migratory flows which originate in areas hit by serious political and social crises, or ethnic groups which are persecuted. In fact, the status of the migrant strongly influences recourse to the sea route.

It would appear that perhaps a strong focus on geography in thinking about policy responses is in part due to the nature of the modern-day development of immigration policy as a critical component in the ongoing evolution of the concept of the nation state (Torpey 2000; Casey 2009). There is a sense that immigration (and for less liberal-democratic states, emigration) is deeply intertwined, and perhaps becoming even more pronounced, with the notion of the sovereign state, particularly as control over other aspects of 'nationhood' continue to diminish alongside an increase in transnational behaviours, sometimes without any state or international regulation.<sup>2</sup> The physical territory, therefore, has become central in the tussle for control, and ever-increasing regulations on entry and stay (including the dismantling of freer access) reflect this focus. There has been a discernible increase in states' attempts to restrict irregular maritime migrants' access to their territory.

Irregular maritime migration also invokes a range of international norms and conventions—including in relation to human rights, law of the sea, including rescue at sea, and criminality associated with people smuggling and trafficking—that intersect with national border operations to make for a complex mix (Miltner 2006; De Bruycker, Di Bartolomeo & Fargues 2013; Newland et al 2016). Reconciling state practices to stem the flow of irregular maritime migration with international legal responsibilities and obligations is complicated by conflicting interests, blurred lines of responsibility and overlapping issues (Mallia 2003). For example, in Europe confusion and



disagreements over territorial boundaries at sea and state responsibility for search and rescue have proven difficult to resolve. There are concerns that the confusion over who has responsibility among states undermines international cooperation to protect life at sea, seen by many as a fundamental humanitarian consideration (Annan 2014; Mallia 2003). In recent years we have seen a mix of (temporary) national-level responses (e.g. Italy's 12-month Mare Nostrum search and rescue response) and regional-level responses (e.g. EU's Triton search and rescue operational response), which have sometimes overlapped, or have left other maritime areas more exposed. This confusion has translated into unclear, fragmented and/or inconsistent responses of states that have specific responsibilities or interests in a maritime region, which can result in poorly coordinated and incoherent responses to irregular maritime migration crises. This has enabled smugglers to exploit weaknesses in regulatory environments and operate transnationally to great effect, particularly in situations involving desperate migrants including refugees and asylum seekers (McAuliffe & Koser 2015; Triandafyllidou & Maroukis 2012; UNODC 2011).

### **3.3 Migrant smuggling and irregular maritime migration**

The existing body of literature on migrant smuggling, which emerged in earnest in the mid-1990s, has variously conceptualised migrant smuggling as part of the illicit migration sector, as economic and social processes in response to increased migration control, and an altruistic service underpinned by human rights and protection needs.

Salt and Stein's seminal work on migrant smuggling in 1997 involved the depiction of smuggling as one aspect of the illicit side of international migration business. Smuggling is conceptualised as a profit-driven activity within a broader business system, whereby the smugglers' main motivation is profit and the common point of intersection with migrants is financial (Salt and Stein 1997). Salt and Stein's model heavily favours the depiction of smugglers who are involved in delivering a service through the "exploit[ation of] legal as well as illegal methods and channels of entry" (Salt and Stein 1997, 484). Smugglers are described as 'helping', 'servicing', 'facilitating', and 'providing', although Salt and Stein note that "little information is available on whether it is more common for migrants to seek out [smugglers] or vice versa" (1997, 479). Financial motives are central to the business model concept proposed by Salt and Stein (1997), and are consistent with the final formulation of the

*Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air*, which was finalised in 2000. This has the effect of excluding those who assist people to gain illegal entry into a country without financially (or materially) benefitting. Indeed, some argue that a broader definition of smuggling incorporating those who operate without personal gain is required to adequately encompass refugee smuggling (Doomernik 2001; van Liempt and Doomernik 2006). Rather than a law enforcement framing or the business model concept, this broader definition would also incorporate the altruistic smuggler who helps people to safety (Salt and Hogarth 2000). The ‘altruistic’ smuggler is a common theme in the literature, especially in so far as it relates to the smuggling of asylum seekers and refugees. There also exists an uneasy tension conceptually when the smuggler acts to profit from forced migrants. As Koser notes (2011; 258):

Helping people escape violence can be considered an invaluable service for which it is justifiable to charge a fee. From another perspective, charging a fee might be viewed as exploiting the situation of a desperate person.

Migrant smuggling research and analysis has, in large part, remained either generic in nature incorporating all modes of transport (Gallagher 2001; Salt & Stein 1997; Tamura 2010; Triandafyllidou & Maroukis 2012) or highly specific examining one mode of transport in a particular corridor/region (Andreas 2001; Antonopoulos & Winterdyk 2006; Gathmann 2008; Icdyugu & Toktas 2002; Koser 2008; Smith 1997; Spener 2004). There has been little research into irregular maritime migration as a discrete phenomenon, with some notable exceptions. Monzini, for example, has argued that from a transnational crime perspective maritime smuggling of migrants pivots on two main points: the much lower cost of maritime smuggling services compared with land and air; and the service gap it fills for those with more ‘urgent’ irregular migration needs, particularly those caught up in social or security upheavals (Monzini 2004, 3). Monzini applies Salt and Stein’s analytical model of smuggling as a business, arguing that maritime smuggling is lower in cost thereby enabling people with more ‘urgent’ migration needs to access routes. Monzini refers to ‘clandestine’ and ‘open’ landings—the ‘clandestine’ landings involve migrants entering a country via a maritime border crossing undetected, and ‘open’ landings involve abandonment of vessels in territorial waters (Monzini 2004, 3). Monzini does expand on his comparison with smuggling via air and land routes other than in relation to cost, although we can see that outside of cost and in relation to border management practices, Monzini’s differentiation between clandestine and open landings highlights the particular issues that maritime borders

pose. It is possible (and for air travel, relatively easy), for example, for authorities to refuse entry of a detected irregular migrant who arrives by air or land. Borders along a land-based geography facilitate non-entry and the physical border allows a person refused entry to remain in the initial country—the main issues, therefore, are focused on prevention of undetected land border crossings, such as through the use of physical barriers, which may prove extremely difficult (such as in remote jungle or mountainous terrain).

While Monzini argues that there is a link between the ‘urgency’ of migration and ‘lower cost’ irregular maritime migration, this is at odds with the application of migrant smuggling as a business, as ‘urgent’ services in both licit and illicit sectors necessarily involve increased fees to clients. In contrast, I propose that irregular maritime migration involves to a very significant degree a shift away from ‘clandestine smuggling’ in order to achieve undetected landings and therefore entry to a destination country, and much more to a model of irregular maritime migration that involves more straightforward ‘delivery’ of asylum seekers to authorities of a destination country—smuggling to gain *entry*, unlike for land and air, is desirable but not crucial. In many irregular maritime migration corridors, interception by authorities rather than evasion is preferred including because it is easier for smugglers and necessary for migrants, lest they perish on remote and hostile coastlines. That migrants are asylum seekers or refugees is an important aspect that has been exploited by smugglers, who have relied on destination countries accepting people *prima facie* as asylum seekers—abandonment of vessels by smugglers is not only based on the assumption that people will be rescued by authorities but smugglers have sought to emphasise that entry will be permitted (and asylum claims processed). This exploitation of aspects of a complex interaction of various national and international systems has been recognised in the context of rescue operations in the Mediterranean Sea. Gallagher argues that “a state that is willing to do a bit better than others, for example by rescuing migrants in distress at sea, will inevitably incur a disproportionate burden” (Gallagher 2015, not paginated).

The definition of smuggling is particularly relevant to the evolution of irregular maritime migration as a form of ‘illicit delivery’ rather than ‘clandestine smuggling’, particularly as international law and academia discourse turns on *entry*. For example, the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air defines smuggling as “the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other

material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident” (Article 3). Equally, migrant smuggling in the academic literature assumes entry to a country. Examples include:

...individuals need to hire a smuggler if they wish to migrate, e.g. the destination country has very restrictive immigration policies so that migrating individuals cannot enter it legitimately. Our analysis is limited in the sense that migrants do not choose between illegal entry by themselves and entry arranged by smugglers. (Tamura 2010, 542)

[smuggling] ought not to be considered simply as a form of illegal migration, for traffickers clearly exploit legal as well as illegal methods and channels of entry...(Salt & Stein 1997, 484)

...the border control strategy implemented since 1993 has raised the cost of illegal entry for a large proportions of migrants. Fees charged by coyotes—the professional people-smugglers who guide migrants across the border...—have doubled, tripled or quadrupled, depending on the entry corridor and the services offered. (Cornelius 2001, 667).

In the case of migrant smuggling by maritime means, however, entry is not necessarily a required outcome, including because of the international obligations on States in relation to rescue at sea. The exact relationships between irregular maritime migration, migrant smuggling and asylum seeking are further limited by a lack of data that accounts for conceptual overlaps. For example, EU’s Frontex reports on the number of people intercepted in the Mediterranean Sea (disaggregated by different corridors or routes) but does not provide information on the number or proportion who were smuggled, nor the number or proportion who sought asylum. Likewise, UNHCR, Eurostat, the US Office of Immigration Statistics and others provide data on the number of asylum applications lodged and/or granted (including in some cases by the claimants’ country of origin, age, and/or sex) but information on the number or proportion of those smuggled, those who arrived irregularly and/or the number or proportion who lodge claims at the border are not provided—these data issues are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

While not wishing to over-generalise, and noting that all forms of irregular movement would involve considerable challenges and difficulties for migrants, the ability to undertake land border crossings (however perilous) is likely to involve a reduced level of organisation and logistical support compared to maritime migration. Firstly, maritime migration usually involves groups of people rather than individuals and so requires at least a basic level of organisation. Secondly, infrastructure in the form of a

sea-worthy vessel is required to make the journey, involving logistics and cost. Land border crossings, on the other hand, can be undertaken by individuals and do not require the same level of infrastructure and organisational support. Smugglers, therefore, are particularly important in many irregular maritime migration corridors (Hugo et al 2014; McAuliffe & Koser 2015; McAuliffe & Laczko 2016; Triandafyllidou & Maroukis 2012). In addition, and as discussed above, a certain level of organisational capability needs to be in place to support irregular maritime migration, and while this may act as a constraint, it may also enable/encourage the expansion of unregulated actors (e.g. organisers, smugglers and corrupt officials). That said, proximity clearly dictates the type of vessel used—small inflatable boats have been commonly used in the short journeys between Turkey and Greece in 2015 whereas large migrant ships transporting hundreds of people have been used for long journeys open sea journeys between, for example, Sri Lanka and Canada as well as between Turkey and Italy (Danai & Triandafyllidou 2016; McAuliffe & Koser 2015; Watson 2009).

### **3.4 Visibility, media coverage and impacts**

Irregular maritime migration presents an undeniably highly visual manifestation of irregular migration. It often provides much more powerful imagery than irregular air or land-based arrivals. The ability to capture real-time footage and photos involving many migrants *in the act of migrating or arriving* is often much greater than other forms of irregular migration, which may not be visually distinct from regular migration (as is the case for air arrivals) or can be much harder to secure (e.g. night time crossing of the Southwest border between Mexico and the United States or clandestine arrivals by truck). Most people would be familiar with photos of migrants arriving to southern Mediterranean countries, as can be seen in Figures 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4.



FIGURE 3.2: Migrants shortly before being intercepted on 28 October 2007.  
Photo: CSDP EEAS under creative commons.

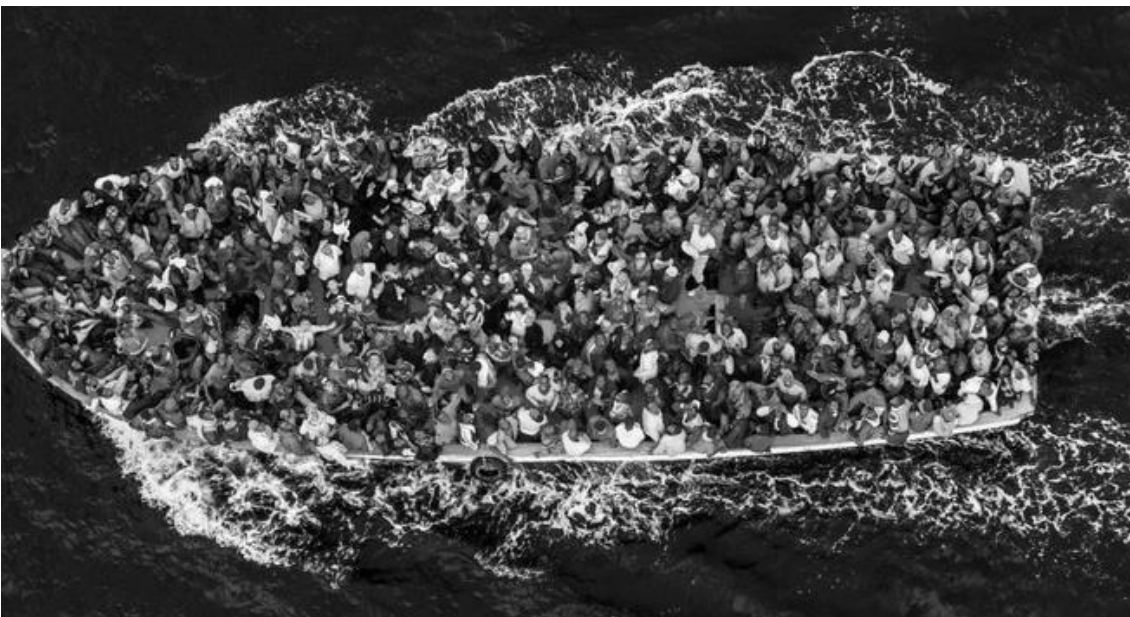


FIGURE 3.3: Migrants shortly before being intercepted on 7 June 2014.  
Photo: Italian Navy / M. Sestini.



FIGURE 3.4: Migrants following interception by Italian Navy in March 2014.  
Photo: UNHCR / A. D'Amatao.

Dramatic and stressing footage of vessels sinking has also been captured, making the real-time aspects even more pronounced, potentially having a profound impact on the public as well as on potential migrants. The sinking of Suspected Illegal Entry Vessel (SIEV) 221 off the coast of Christmas Island in December 2010 resulted in powerful images that had a strong impact (Figures 3.5 and 3.6)—this is discussed in Part Three on Hazara asylum seekers' migration processes.



FIGURE 3.5: Rescuing survivors during the sinking of SIEV 221 on 15 December 2010  
Photo courtesy Channel 9 News



FIGURE 3.6: SIEV 221 breaking up on the shore of Christmas Island on 15 December 2010  
Photo courtesy Channel 9 News

Such images often trigger political and policy concerns relating to states' international protection obligations, sovereignty, border control, security, and as such they demand the attention of governments (Koser 2010b; Watson 2009). These images are in stark contrast to those depicting (irregular) air arrivals, who are more able to blend into crowds comprising both citizens and non-citizens. Separation of air passengers into immigration-related status only occurs at passport control points for entry processing (Figures 3.7 and 3.8). The contrast between irregular maritime and (irregular) air arrival images assists in supporting the idea that irregular maritime migrants are part of the 'other', which in turn can become part of the media and political constructs of irregular maritime migration as a phenomenon to fear (Neve & Russell 2011; Slattery 2003).



FIGURE 3.7: Passengers queuing at Heathrow Airport  
Photo courtesy K. Anderson (creative commons flickr).





**FIGURE 3.8: Passengers waiting to go through passport control at Honolulu Airport**  
Photo courtesy Honolulu International Airport Authority.

The potential and actual impacts of such visual imagery on bilateral relationships as well as regional and broader international relationships are also key considerations for governments. These impacts can be heightened considerably when media coverage of an irregular maritime migration event or response occurs. Media reporting on sudden flashpoints or hot spots is triggered, more often than not, by tragic incidents such as boats sinking, loss of life at sea or a sudden and unexpected upsurge in movement. Extensive media reports, for example, indicate that since the dramatic increase in inter-ethnic violence in Rakhine province in Myanmar from mid-2012, there has been a substantial increase in the maritime migration of Rohingya from Myanmar and neighbouring Bangladesh to Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and beyond. This flow became a humanitarian crisis situation in May 2015 when thousands of Rohingya and Bengali migrants were stranded at sea having been abandoned by smugglers. Footage of stranded migrants ensured that coverage was widespread and gained international media and political attention for many months after authorities, international organisations and civil society actors responded (Chia 2016; Newland et al 2016; Newland 2015). The visual impact of abuse, exploitation, harm, danger and death stemming from irregular maritime migration can be profound. The response to the publication of the photo of drowned Syrian toddler, Aylan Kurdi, washed up on a Turkish beach on 2 September 2015, for example, drew widespread condemnation of inadequate responses to the plight of displaced Syrians and resulted in policy shifts in key countries, including commitments to increase refugee resettlement places for Syrians globally.

### 3.5 Impacts on migrants—a double-edge sword

As we have seen in the literature, there has been a great deal of focus on the impact of irregular maritime migration on States, including in relation to border management as well as foreign and asylum policy and practice. Historically, the impacts on migrants have tended to focus on the benefits to migrants of accessing a destination country dominating public discourses. This has been depicted in both positive and negative terms: positive in the sense that humanitarian protection is available in destination countries for those in need (Feller 2006; Koser 2005; Moreno-Lax 2011; McAdam 2013); negative in the sense that access is also portrayed by some as undermining sovereignty and regulated entry procedures, such as refugee resettlement programs (Millbank 2000; Moles 2012; Vogl 2015).

In more recent years, there has been increasing research into, and statistical data collection on, the negative impacts on people undertaking irregular maritime migration. The negative aspects have been most prominent in relation to deaths *en route*, and migrant fatalities have become a more common theme in the media and research literature (Brian & Laczko 2014; Brian & Laczko 2016; Carling 2007a; Spijkerboer 2007). They have also entered the policy sphere, for example, with the drowning of 964 asylum seekers *en route* to Australia between October 2001 and June 2012 being part of the evidence to support a range of recommendations to government by the Expert Panel on Asylum Seekers (2012, 75). In addition, and following the mass drowning of 360 people off the coast of Lampedusa Island, Italy in October 2013, the IOM established the Missing Migrants Project to systematically collect and report the numbers and locations of migrants who have died or gone missing globally during migration journeys. The IOM states that counting the dead is one way of gaining greater recognition of migrant fatalities (IOM website, <http://missingmigrants.iom.int/methodology>):

By counting lives lost during migration, even if the result is only an informed estimate, we at least acknowledge the fact of these deaths. What before was vague and ill-defined is now a quantified tragedy that must be addressed. Politically, the availability of official data is important. The lack of political commitment at national and international levels to record and account for migrant deaths reflects and contributes to a lack of concern more broadly for the safety and well-being of migrants, including asylum-seekers. Further, it drives public apathy, ignorance, and the dehumanization of these groups.

There has also been increasing research into abuse and exploitation experienced by migrants while undertaking irregular maritime migration (Carling et al 2015; Horwood 2015; Newland 2015; Triandafyllidou & Maroukis 2012) as well as the extent of potential migrants' understandings of the potential for abuse and physical hardship (such as exhaustion, dehydration, starvation and sleep deprivation) (RMMS 2014). A study in Ethiopia of people planning to go to Saudi Arabia by boat via Yemen, found that 80% of survey respondents indicated that they were aware of the possibility for abuse and/or physical hardship *en route*; tolerance of such abuse during migration was found to have ranged from between 1% (sexual abuse) to 44% (degrading treatment and verbal abuse) (RMMS 2014, 32). There has also been research into the psychological mechanisms people utilise when contemplating and undertaking high risk irregular maritime migration. Carling and Hernández-Carretero, for example, examined how potential migrants in Senegal related to the risks of maritime migration to the Spanish archipelago (2011). They found that in the face of high risk journeys people adopted several psychological mechanisms, including forms of avoidance, discrediting negative information and harm minimisation. The ability to reach a desired destination via irregular maritime migration, which would otherwise be out of reach, appears to invoke resignation to the 'pain' of such migration as well as some psychological strategies to lessen the pain. Abuse, exploitation and trauma during migration journeys, however, remains an under-researched and perhaps not well understood facet of irregular maritime migration.

### **3.6 Conclusions**

The small but, in some corridors, increasing scale of irregular *maritime* migration belies its significance to States (as a notoriously difficult phenomenon to manage), to migrants (as a particularly high risk, and sometimes deadly, form of irregular migration) and societies (who are polarised by the multitude of issues it raises). In this sense, irregular maritime migration encapsulates one of the most contentious fault-lines between State sovereignty and international humanitarian obligations and responsibilities. Strong links tend to be made by States between migration control, border protection and state sovereignty. States are often concerned to demonstrate that they have a firm grip on the movement of people across borders—a sovereign right that tends to be jealously guarded (Brouwer & Kumin 2003; Van Selm & Cooper 2005). It is understandable

then that irregular maritime migration has been described as what Rittel and Webber term a ‘wicked problem’—one that is complex, multi-faceted as well as dynamic and difficult to adequately conceptualise and respond to (McAuliffe & Mence 2014b, 26; Newland et al 2016; Rittel & Webber 1973). This is demonstrated by a more thorough account of migrant smuggling via maritime means, which strongly indicates that a far easier feat of migrant ‘delivery’ is involved compared to the much more difficult migrant ‘smuggling’ involved in needing to gain entry via air or land.

For asylum seekers in pursuit of international protection from countries without easy access to visas, it may represent a last resort and highly risky option. One that is facilitated by migrant smugglers, who operate without regulation and are able to exploit and abuse migrants with impunity. For many potential migrants irregular maritime migration represents a double-edged sword, providing the opportunity to exercise agency by undertaking international migration but coupled with the ultimate risk of never reaching the destination and dying *en route*.

## Notes

- 1 E-Visa means electronic visa; ETA means electronic travel authority; TRIPS means the Travel and Immigration Processing System; PACE means the Passenger Analysis Clearance and Evaluation System; APP means Advanced Passenger Processing.
- 2 A well-documented and researched example is the rise of the internet, which largely emerged in a regulatory ‘free’ zone.

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## **PART TWO**

### **Study design, data and context**



## 4 Study design and data\*

This study aims to answer the principal research question: *What is the extent and nature of asylum seeker agency, and of Hazaras in particular?* Necessarily, and importantly, this research recognises the potential for calculated rationality as an integral part of asylum seeker agency, as articulated in the analytical framework developed and outlined in Chapter 2. From reviewing the literature, this study's starting point is that not only is agency an important aspect to explore, it is a legitimate one. This is supported by compelling evidence. In 2015, for example, many of the more than one million people who arrived in Germany irregularly travelled through multiple transit countries *en route*, including European Union countries such as Greece and Hungary, many of whom were asylum seekers (Koser 2015; McAuliffe 2016). In relation to this study, lengthy transit migration is evident suggesting that asylum seeker agency exists to some degree. More than 38,000 asylum seekers arrived by boat to Australia during the study period, the vast majority of whom travelled through multiple transit countries, and some of whom travelled through seven transit countries and over 6,000 kilometres to make it. In addition, and as outline in Chapter 2, the governance of international protection presupposes at least some form of agency in conceptual and practical terms, most clearly in the right to seek asylum by crossing a border. The aim of the research is therefore not to find out if some asylum seekers can exercise agency through undertaking irregular maritime migration but to answer the following principal research questions on the *extent* and *nature* of such agency:

- (1) How are the various dimensions of agency manifested by asylum seekers through irregular maritime migration?
- (2) To what extent is agency of asylum seekers realised or constrained, and to whom do such limits apply?

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\* The section of this chapter on global irregular migration data draws on a forthcoming book chapter: McAuliffe, M. & Mence, V. (2017) 'Irregular maritime migration as a global phenomenon' in McAuliffe, M. & Koser, K. (eds) *A long way to go: Irregular migration patterns, processes, drivers and decision making*, ANU Press: Canberra (forthcoming).

- (3) Are there noticeable variations in the extent of agency by ethnicity of asylum seekers from the same region, including Hazaras and other major ethnic groups?
- (4) What are the implications of asylum seeker agency for both research and policy?

In answering these principal research questions, the analysis presented in this thesis draws primarily on two main types of data—survey results and statistical administrative data—on irregular maritime asylum seekers who arrived during the five-year study period, including in relation to a reference group of refugees resettled to Australia under the Humanitarian Program (discussed below). The analysis also draws on the existing body of research literature on displacement and migration, particularly of Hazaras.

The main aim of this chapter is to outline the study design, including the data used in the analysis, and provide a schematic overview of the analysis presented in Part Three. Before doing so, however, a brief description of the existing data available globally on irregular migrants and asylum seekers is provided. The chapter then concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the study. The following chapter in Part Two (Chapter 5) provides contextual background on irregular maritime migration to Australia, including in relation to its demography, scale and changes over time.

#### **4.1 Global data on irregular migrants and asylum seekers**

According to the latest United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) report on international migrants, in 2015 an estimated 244 million people, or 3.3 per cent of the world's population, were international migrants, compared with 175 million in 2000 and 154 million in 1990 (UNDESA 2016). In terms of the proportion of migrants that are thought to have travelled irregularly or become irregularly after entry, only broad estimates are available. UNDESA, for example, has estimated that globally there are approximately 30 to 40 million irregular or undocumented migrants, a number that equates to between 15 and 20 percent of all international migrants (UNDESA 2003).

Some commentators question the utility of attempting to quantify irregular migration, citing the practical difficulties as well as the underlying rationale for collecting and citing such statistics, which can amount to alarmism (Castles 2002; Clarke 2000). There are, however, clear benefits in attempting to quantify irregular movements, including from the perspectives of migration researchers, national governments, regional and local governments, international organisations, and service providers assisting migrants.

Understanding the scale and nature of irregular migration is important, not only in national and regional contexts but also in a global context, as a means of identifying trends and patterns for a range of policy, economic and geopolitical reasons. There are, however, significant challenges in establishing reliable estimates upon which meaningful analysis and useful comparisons can be made (Koser 2010). A summary of these challenges articulated by Koser is included in Table 4.1, which highlights the inherent difficulties in accurately placing the quantum of irregular migration in a broader context.

TABLE 4.1 Difficulties in measuring irregular migration

Aggregating data	Aggregate data disguises the complexity of irregular migration, e.g. 'mixed flows' consists of economic migrants and those leaving because of persecution  Lack of comparable data over time and between locations
Media	Media tendency to focus on the highest available estimate  Statistics may be used more to alarm than inform
Confusion in definitions	Irregular migration covers a range of people who can be in an irregular situation for different reasons, and people can switch from a regular to irregular status, or vice versa
Stocks and flows	Difficult to differentiate between the two and discern what is actually being counted  Flows usually only focus on entries, not exits or return flows  Stocks assume permanence, when migrants may leave, change their status or die  Impossible to combine both stocks and flows to gain a total estimate
Data accessibility	Often collected by enforcement agencies and not made publicly available
Sensitivities concerning human rights	There may be some non-disclosure of irregular migrants by various parties (e.g. employers) making quantifying the number of irregular migrants difficult

Source: Koser (2010)

Part of the difficulty in capturing and analysing data on irregular migration is related to definitional issues, which may differ by jurisdiction, as well as the blurring of irregular migrant stocks and irregular migration flows. Irregularity can result, for example, from people entering countries undetected through sophisticated smuggling operations as well

as from minor administrative issues that have the effect of rendering a person's legal status as 'irregular'. Difficulties in quantifying irregular migration notwithstanding, it can be an important exercise, not least because it highlights the very substantial differences in estimates. In this regard, the imprecise nature of the task of quantification becomes apparent, and the need to treat data on irregular migration with caution is underscored. For example, estimates on the number of irregular migrants in Europe (stocks) has varied widely from two to eight million (Koser 2005). Recent reports estimate that there are around 12 million in the United States (Hoefer, Rytina and Baker 2011). Some reports estimate that there are several million irregular migrants in South and Southeast Asia, and between three and five million in South Africa (Koser 2005; UNDESA 2004), which would have equated to between 6.4 to 10.7% of South Africa's population at the time. In contrast, irregular migrants in Australia is estimated to be small both numerically and as a proportion of the population at 58,400 people or around 0.25% (ANAO 2013, 39).

#### *Data on irregular migrant movements and arrivals*

Data on irregular migration flows globally is rare, highly fragmented and, where it does exist, difficult to access (Koser 2010; McAuliffe & Laczko 2016). Kraler and Reichel have argued that 'wild assumptions, estimates and number games are made in regard to irregular migration flows' (2011, 97). Part of the problem rests with the illicit nature of irregular entry. People entering countries irregularly can arrive by air, land or sea, for example, and border operations and management practices are often challenged and tend to differ according to physical location and type of transportation (as discussed in Chapter 3). Overall, it is evident that the numbers of irregular *maritime* migrants moving from poor, less developed and/or conflict ridden countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East to developed countries, such as the flows heading for the US, Europe and Australia, are relatively well documented. One of the reasons that this movement is monitored so closely is that it is highly visible. It also tends to be a focus of intense public interest. As a consequence, there has been in more recent times the development of highly regulated border management processes that have increased the capacity to count and report on the scope of irregular maritime flows. This is especially the case for specific geographic maritime migration smuggling 'hotspots', such as across the south-west border between Mexico and the United States, the Mediterranean Sea route from Libya



to Italy or the Aegean Sea routes between Turkey and Greece. These routes are high profile and data on interdictions is routinely collected by state authorities including, for example, the United States Border Patrol, the Italian coast guard, the Turkish Coast Guard and the Greek Ministry of the Interior (Sheldon 2016; İçduygu and Akcapar 2016; Angeli and Triandafyllidou 2016). Data on the irregular maritime arrival of people in these locations has increasingly become publicly available over time at the aggregate level, and particularly following mass movements. The US Coast Guard, for example, reports figures going back to 1995, following very large irregular maritime migration flows of Cubans and Haitians to the United States in 1994.

Even if data is collected and stored, it may not necessary be reported or be only partially reported (Koser 2010; Gallagher & McAuliffe 2016). EU's Frontex does, for example, report on interdiction and detections of irregular migrants, including by a number of variables, such as route, border area, citizenship, quarter/year. The only variable related to the migrant is citizenship—demographic data on age, sex, ethnicity, education, family status, religion, etc (even if it is collected) is not reported. The focus of Frontex reporting is squarely on scale and location, noting that there are multiple sea and land routes for irregular migration flows to the EU. One of the reasons Frontex reports are very high level and do not provide granularity or detail is that they are based on data supplied by multiple governments, which is often inconsistent making aggregate reporting challenging (Angeli & Triandafyllidou 2016). While it is difficult to ascertain the extent and nature of data that are collected by individual governments on the composition of irregular migration flows, in more recent years it has become more common for such data to be reported. Irregular migration flow data between North Africa and Italy, for example, provides detailed information on the composition of the flow, including by citizenship, sex and minors' family status (accompanied; unaccompanied)—see for example the discussion of Afghan unaccompanied minors through to Italy via the Central Mediterranean route in Chapter 7. Sizeable gaps still remain, however, such as in relation to key demographic characteristics of people who arrive irregularly (e.g. ethnicity, education, as well as their transit routes and prior residence).

The monitoring and reporting of particular routes are typical of the focus on 'South-North' movement, and highlight the interest in monitoring irregular maritime migration to the North. There is also an issue of capability. Highly industrialised, richer destination countries, as opposed to poorer, less developed destination countries, have greater

capacity to monitor and report on irregular maritime migration. UNODC has found, for example, that “in many countries and regions of the world, information about irregular migration and migrant smuggling is simply not collected and analysed” (UNODC 2011, 11). Many government authorities do not know who is entering (and departing) irregularly, including because of capacity to collect and record data but also due to corrupt officials, who undermine the systematic collection of data while facilitating irregular movements (McAuliffe & Laczko 2016).

Perhaps the largest, most significant flows of irregular maritime migrants occur well outside the ‘South-North’ hotspots. Estimates of the Indonesia-Malaysia irregular maritime migration flows, for example, as well as those between North Africa and the Middle East are considered to be substantial, notwithstanding the lack of reliable statistics (Majidi & Oucho 2016; Djafar & Hassan, 2012). Much of what is understood about irregular maritime migration flows in these regions is piecemeal and anecdotal, or is derived from examination of irregular migrant populations in key destinations, such as Malaysia.

It is also important to note that data on irregular maritime migration flows tends to capture interdictions/detections, and so clearly does not capture all attempts (successful or otherwise). It is likely that there are successful undetected maritime ventures in all contexts, but arguably this is less likely in some circumstances. For example, it is possible that failing to be intercepted off the North West coast of Australia by authorities may result in irregular migrants perishing in the very harsh and isolated coastal regions; the need to be detected by authorities is a genuine one.

Some scholars also argue that it is important to distinguish asylum seekers from others within irregular the migration flow statistics that do exist given their specific vulnerabilities and possible protection needs (Crisp 2008; Koser 2010; Koser 2005). Koser, for example, stresses that (2010, 183):

Asylum seekers and refugees may resort to migrant smugglers, and they may undertake ‘irregular secondary moves’. At the same time, people not in need of international protection may resort to asylum channels in the hope of gaining temporary or permanent stay abroad. As a result of these sorts of convergences, the line between irregular migrants and asylum seekers and refugees has become increasingly blurred...

Koser’s point is a valid one, including when asylum seeker statistics are taken into account, as it would seem that while there is an obvious overlap between irregular migration flows statistics and asylum seeker applications in destination countries, the two

types of data are generally not linked (or reconciled). This can have the effect of masking protection needs, and some language may not adequately reflect the situations irregular migrants are in (Clyne 2005; Every & Augoustinos 2007; Pickering 2001). Given the specific focus of this study on *irregular maritime asylum seekers*, a short overview of asylum seeker statistics is relevant and is now provided.

#### *Asylum seeker statistics*

Unlike irregular migration data—both stocks and flows—aspects of asylum seeker data are collected and reported at the global level. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) collects and reports on populations of concern directly related to its mandate, including refugees, asylum seekers, returned refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and stateless persons. These populations do not include irregular or unauthorised migrants who do not intersect with the international protection system or UNHCR's mandate—for example, people who enter a country clandestinely in order to work illegally, or people who are trafficked across borders into indentured labour.

UNHCR data on populations of concern are generally reported against two key variables: country/territory of residence/asylum; and origin country (UNHCR 2014). Limited demographic data are also collected—age and sex—although completeness has been patchy over time, varies by population of concern (with the most complete being for refugees), varies by geographic location, and are usually more complete if collected by UNHCR directly rather than governments or others (UNHCR 2014; 61-63). A summary of UNHCR data variables is in Table 4.2.

TABLE 4.2 UNHCR Population Statistics—Data Variables

Population of concern	Country of residence	Origin country	Sex <sup>^</sup>	Age <sup>^</sup>
Refugees	Pakistan	Afghanistan	Female	0-4
Asylum seekers	Iran	Syria	Male	5-11
Internally displaced persons (IDPs)	Turkey	Pakistan		12-17
	Jordan	Iraq		18-59
Stateless persons	Lebanon	[+ many others]		60+
Returned refugees	[204 countries or territories]			

Sources: UNHCR (2014); UNHCR Statistical Online Population Database.

Notes: <sup>^</sup> Sex and age data is not available for all populations, including asylum seekers.

Statistics on asylum seekers is collected in relation to people who apply for asylum, and datasets maintained by UNHCR comprise statistics collected by a number of organisations: UNHCR; governments; non-government organisations (NGOs); UNHCR's operational partners. Asylum seeker statistics in destination countries are generally reported to UNHCR by government authorities. Some disaggregation of UNHCR data is available publicly, namely by population of concern, country of residence/asylum and origin country. Data on age and sex, however, is only available at the aggregate level, not by individual populations of concern, such as asylum seekers.

Importantly, the statistics on asylum seekers (and other populations) are on 'stocks' and do not relate to the entry or movements of asylum seekers. UNHCR data on asylum seekers is related to their status as applicants in a given country without reference to immigration status at the time of claiming asylum. This means, for example, that the data does not capture whether asylum seekers arrived in a destination country on a visa (and then lodged an asylum claim), whether they arrived by land, sea or air, whether they entered a country without prior authorisation or who they travelled with. Over time this has meant that the UNHCR data on asylum seekers has not been able to offer any insights on whether and how migration patterns and processes of asylum seekers (and other groups) may have evolved. Understandably, the main prism through which UNHCR

statistics is viewed and analysed is that of protection, including the outcome of asylum claims—see for example, the online UNHCR population statistics database on asylum seeker populations, which provides statistical tables that include the following headings: ‘country/territory of asylum’, ‘country of origin’, ‘refugee status determination type’, ‘applied during year’, ‘recognised’, ‘rejected’, ‘otherwise closed’, and ‘total decisions’.<sup>1</sup> The data is aggregated and reflects programmatic priorities, including RSD processing outcomes.

In the Australian context, national aggregate data on asylum seeker applications has been published by the DIBP at various times but principally between 2011 and 2014, mainly in the form of a publication titled *Asylum Trends*. The aggregated data provides information on citizenships of asylum seekers as well as asylum claims processing (e.g. ‘primary grants’, ‘primary refusals’, ‘final grants’ ‘on hand or otherwise finalised’). The reporting is split by arrival type: ‘irregular maritime arrivals’ and ‘non-irregular maritime arrivals’. The DIBP also provides statistical data to UNHCR on asylum applications made in Australia, which is published in the UNHCR population statistics database and in its annual reporting of asylum applications lodged in industrialised countries (also called *Asylum Trends*).

## **4.2 Study design**

In order to answer the principal research questions and develop a better understanding of the nature and extent of asylum seeker agency, the study was designed to ensure three aspects were incorporated: the views of asylum seekers in the study population; the detailed demographic characteristics of all asylum seekers in the study population; and the migratory behaviours of all asylum seekers in the study population. Given that the underlying paradigm of this research was deliberately ‘migrant-centric’ rather than policy-focussed, seeking the views of people in the study population was considered essential in answering the research question and developing a much more nuanced understanding of asylum seeker agency. The views of people who had travelled as irregular maritime asylum seekers were sought via a sample survey conducted in mid-2013 (n=1,008). Views and opinions, however, do not necessarily neatly reflect human behaviour and so relying solely on the analysis of asylum seekers’ views was considered important but inadequate. Central to the study design is, therefore, detailed information

on who the study population comprises and the migration patterns and processes they undertook to reach Australia. This information was available in the form of administrative data.

It was also important that the scope of the study population be substantial enough in size and length to support a detailed examination of asylum seeker agency, including the various dimensions outlined in Chapter 2 and summarised in Table 2.1, namely the demographic, social, temporal and spatial dimensions. In this study, the population comprises all irregular maritime asylum seekers who arrived in Australia between 1 July 2008 and 30 June 2013, which totalled 38,847 people. This study population is a substantial proportion (83%) of an entire irregular maritime migration 'wave' to Australia that commenced in July 2008 and ended in December 2013. A total of 7,783 asylum seekers arrived between 1 July and 31 December 2013, and so are out of scope of this study. The main reason for the five-year scope is data availability approved by the Australian Government, which extends over the five-year study period but not beyond. Despite this limitation, detailed examinations of a high proportion of those in the irregular maritime asylum seeker flow offer a unique opportunity to provide an accurate and robust analysis of the scale and composition of the population over a reasonable period in order to answer the principal research question. Discussion on the administrative data and their analyses is provided below.

The research findings presented in this thesis, therefore, are based on analysis of data in the form of two large datasets: results of a 2013 sample survey of former irregular maritime asylum seekers (n=1,008), herein referred to as the 'irregular maritime asylum seeker survey dataset'; and administrative data of all irregular maritime asylum seekers to have arrived during the study period (n=38,847), herein referred to as the 'irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset'. While the analysis is technically of secondary data, it is important to note that I was responsible for the 2013 survey design, data collection and analysis as director of the Australian irregular migration research program in the Department of Immigration and Border protection (McAuliffe 2013a, 2013b), and that this survey was undertaken during my candidature.<sup>2</sup>

### *Migrant-centric research*

This study places asylum seekers at the centre of the research and examines agency from their collective perspectives, rather than from a policy perspective, through normative

frameworks or through the prism of international relations and geopolitical constructs. Also, and importantly, the act of seeking asylum—of exercising and realising some level of agency—through migration is necessarily separate and distinct from whether or not a person (or group of persons) is determined to be in need of international protection. This research focuses, therefore, on the extent of realising agency through examination of migration patterns and processes but not on the outcome of asylum seekers' protection applications or the normative frameworks within which this occurs, nor on immigration detention, integration, settlement or social cohesion aspects. These areas of academic research and enquiry continue to be critical and there is a considerable focus on these topics in the literature, including as they relate to Australia (Crock & Ghezelbash 2010; Hodge 2014; Koser 2015; McAdam 2014; McNevin 2011; Markus 2013; Palmer 2008; Pennington-Hill 2015; Pickering and Weber 2014). These topics are not, however, a focus of this study.

In order to answer the main research question about the extent and nature of asylum seeker agency, without it becoming conflated with the extent of the asylum seekers' 'refugeeness', a deep examination of Hazaras was considered essential because it offers the chance to de-link asylum seeker migration patterns and processes from international protection (i.e. refugee and/or complementary protection status). The intertwining of the concepts of 'forced' migration and 'refugeeness' are, to a significant degree, able to be unravelled when the migration patterns and processes of an ethnic group—such as Hazaras—with an extraordinarily high recognition rate under the Refugee Convention is examined. Focusing on Hazaras allows for the careful setting aside of questions of Hazaras' claims to international protection in analytical terms, and provides the space for deeper analysis of their migration patterns and processes, of their own views and of their demography as a means to determine the nature and extent of their agency. In addition, the Hazara sub-population has been chosen because it is an ethnic minority in several origin countries (Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran), and is an enduring long-term maritime asylum seeker group, having arrived in all five years of the study (which also enables trend analysis to be undertaken). Further, Hazaras also arrived in the 1999 to 2001 irregular maritime asylum seeker flow to Australia, have sizeable diaspora communities in Australia and elsewhere, are recognised as having strong claims for international protection and (as mentioned) have very high finally determined refugee recognition rates in Australia (Fazal 2001; Maley 2001; DIBP 2013; DSS 2015).

Critically, and central to this study, is the need to apply an inter-disciplinary approach to the overall design, methodology and analysis. While the study is primarily one of applied demography involving the analysis of secondary data, it necessarily draws on a range of other disciplines. An inter-disciplinary approach has been adopted in order to answer the research questions, which are not only highly specific but are highly topical, and make the most useful and relevant contribution possible. To be able to answer the questions successfully the approach had to be squarely based in the academic literature on forced and irregular migration, particularly of Hazaras. This considerable and rich body of literature traverses many disciplines but particularly geography, sociology and anthropology. By undertaking a quantitative study employing analytical techniques from an applied demography perspective built on a disciplinary bedrock of research from other disciplines, a better account of the nature and extent of asylum seeker agency is able to be presented. A nuanced analysis of unique data situated within this small but significant body of literature is intended to be one of the study's major contributions.

### **4.3 Data used in this analysis**

The analysis presented in this thesis draws on two main types of data— survey data and statistical administrative data—as well as the findings of existing research relevant to the study population undertaken during or since the study period, including in the origin countries of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran (Abbasi-Shavazi et al 2016; Bjelica 2016; Linke 2016; McAuliffe & Jayasuriya 2016; van Bijlert 2016), transit countries Indonesia, Turkey and Greece (Fleay et al 2016; Hugo et al 2014; Koser & Kuschminder 2016; Pickering et al 2016) and in Australia (Correa-Velez et al 2014; Fleay et al 2016; Nadone & Correa-Velez 2015). The survey data analysed are the results of a quantitative survey of refugees who had previously been irregular maritime asylum seekers that was undertaken in Australia in mid-2013. The statistical administrative data analysed comprises Australian government data on irregular maritime asylum seekers and refugees resettled to Australia. The data have been analysed using the statistical software package STATA. This data is now described in detail before a tabular summary of the analytical approach is provided. Details of multivariate analytical techniques is provided in Part Three.



*Survey data on irregular maritime asylum seekers' views and experiences*

The views and experiences of former irregular maritime asylum seekers were sought via a sample survey conducted in mid-2013. Results of survey have been used in this analysis to answer specific research questions on aspects of agency addressed in Chapters 7, 8 and 9. A tabular summary of the survey data variables used in the analysis and how they relate to the research questions is provided in Table 4.8.

The main survey dataset is of results of a survey of 1,008 refugees who travelled to Australia as irregular maritime asylum seekers, which was conducted in June and July 2013. The scope of the survey was all adult irregular maritime asylum seekers who had been granted a protection visa between 6 July 2011 and 31 December 2012 (inclusive), and were based in Sydney, Melbourne or Brisbane. This population totalled 4,725 irregular maritime asylum seekers; 1,008 of whom were surveyed (for details of the survey sampling scheme see McAuliffe 2013b, pp. 20). The population was defined in order to minimise, as far as possible, problems of recall by limiting the scope to people who had recently travelled as irregular maritime asylum seekers. That said, issues of recall necessarily remain for this type of research.

Irregular maritime asylum seekers who had not been granted a permanent visa during this period were out of scope. This approach ensured that all people in the survey had certainty about their status in Australia. The scope did not include people found not to be in need of protection, noting that merits and judicial review processes may take considerable periods of time, and a negative primary decision may not reflect a person's final status. In addition, the survey population did not include any persons under the age of 18 due to particular sensitivities concerning interviewing minors. People who were under the age of 18 at the time of travel but had since turned 18 were in scope.

The survey fieldwork was undertaken by McNair Ingenuity Research on behalf of DIBP; I led the survey within DIBP, including overall project management, the development of the survey instrument, survey testing, and summary statistical analysis (McAuliffe 2013a; McAuliffe 2013b). The survey instrument was approved by the DIBP's Irregular Migration Research Advisory Group, comprising senior migration academics, senior officials from across government and NGOs (see <https://www.border.gov.au/about/reports-publications/research-statistics/research/live-in-australia/irregular-migration-border-research>). The survey received ethics approval from a National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) accredited human

research ethics body (Bellberry Human Research Ethics Committee). Bellberry conducted a multi-stage review of the study in accordance with NHMRC's National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (NHMRC 2007; McAuliffe 2013b). The data was de-identified by McNair Ingenuity Research prior to being provided to DIBP for reporting and analysis. DIBP approved access to the survey dataset for the purpose of this study, and it has been safely stored in accordance with DIBP requirements. The survey comprised 44 multi-part questions on decision making, diaspora networks, protection and non-protection factors underpinning migration, information sources, experiences of migration journeys, and perceptions of Australia (pre and post arrival). The main demographic variables used in the analysis are outlined in Table 4.3.

**TABLE 4.3 Irregular Maritime Asylum Seeker Survey—Demographic Variables**

<b>Citizenship</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Country of birth</b>	<b>Travelled with</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Current work</b>
Afghan	Hazara	Female	Year	Afghanistan	Spouse/ partner	Primary	Fulltime
Iranian	Persian	Male		Pakistan	Child/ren	Secondary	Part-time
Pakistani	Arab			Iran	Other family	Tertiary	Seasonal
Sri Lankan	Kurdish			[+ others]	Friend	Religious	Ad hoc
Stateless	Pashtun				None of these	None	Voluntary
[+ others]	Tamil						FT student
	Tajik						No work
	Azeri						
	[+ other]						

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker survey.

Key findings of the survey, in the form of summary statistics, were published as part of DIBP's peer-reviewed irregular migration research programme's occasional paper series during the candidacy (McAuliffe 2013a). The results were reported at the aggregate level and by citizenship but not by ethnicity. The detailed survey methodology is presented in McAuliffe 2013b and summarised in Appendix A. A copy of all survey questions can be found as an appendix to McAuliffe 2013a.

*Data on irregular maritime asylum seekers*

Administrative data on the irregular maritime asylum seeker population is statistical data that was collected by government authorities at the time of the asylum seekers' arrival. The data is self-reported, meaning that asylum seekers provided the information to authorities themselves shortly after arrival. It was not provided as part of refugee status determination processing, which would typically commence months after arrival. The administrative data relates to demographic characteristics and movement patterns but does not relate to aspects concerning claims for international protection. Some data have been reported publicly in statistical reports (e.g. departmental *Asylum Trends* reports) or through Australian Federal Parliamentary processes (e.g. regular Senate hearings or Parliamentary inquiries).<sup>3</sup>

The dataset used in this analysis comprises unit-level statistical records of 38,847 irregular maritime asylum seekers who arrived during five program years of the flow (i.e. between 1 July 2008 and 30 June 2013). It is important to note that almost all who arrived via irregular maritime migration (other than Indonesian crew) raised asylum claims. The irregular maritime asylum seeker population dataset analysed comprises asylum seekers—this population does not include crew members who did not make protection claims.

This data is highly unique, not just within the Australian context but also globally. As outlined above, there is very little data available on the movement of irregular migrants, including irregular maritime migrants, and what is available is aggregated. Likewise, asylum seeker statistics are reported at aggregate levels. Research has, therefore, had to rely on data that combines migration processes (e.g. arrival by land, sea and/or air), migrant categories (e.g. asylum seekers and non-asylum seekers), and irregular migrant populations (e.g. irregular entrants/arrivals and those detected in the community) (see, for example, De Bruycker et al 2013; Carling 2007), which necessarily impacts and limits analyses. The variables analysed for this thesis include demographic variables as well as statistical information on movements. The demographic variables are set out in Table 4.4.

TABLE 4.4 Irregular Maritime Asylum Seeker Statistics—Main Demographic Variables

Citizenship	Ethnicity	Sex	Age	Migrating family status	Education	Occupational grouping	
Afghan	Hazara	Female	0-4	Family member	Nil	Higher skilled occupations	
Sri Lankan	Persian	Male	5-9	Solo adult male (SAM)	Primary	Other occupations	
Iranian	Arab		10-14		Secondary		
Pakistani	Kurdish		15-19	Solo adult female (SAF)	Tertiary	Unemployed / Unknown	
Iraqi	Pashtun		20-24	Unaccompanied minor (UAM)	Religious		
Stateless	[+ many others]		25-29		Language / Literacy		
[+ many others]			30-34				
			35-39				
			40-44			Unknown	
			45-49				
			50-54				
			55-59				
			60-64				
			65+				

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker dataset.

Notes: For the variable *Migrating family status*, “solo” is used rather than “single” as men and women who are travelling without family maybe married. The variable *Occupational grouping* is a derived variable based on reporting of main occupation with ‘higher skilled’ including those employed in the following occupational industry categories: ‘Government and Defence’, ‘Professional, Scientific and Technical Services’, ‘Personal and other services’ and ‘Telecommunications’.

The examination of demographic characteristics, temporal migration patterns and spatial migration patterns of the entire asylum seeker study population (Chapter 5) include some analysis by key citizenship groups (namely Afghans, Iranians, Iraqis, Pakistanis and Sri Lankans). In terms of citizenship groups, the largest over the study period was Afghan (11,723 or 30.1%) with the remaining citizenships being: Iranian (8,669 or 22.3%); Sri Lankan (7,290 or 18.8%); Iraqi (2,368 or 6.1%); Pakistani (2,273 or 5.9%); Vietnamese (783 or 2.0%); Bangladeshi (630 or 1.6%); Sudanese (327 or 0.8%); other (878 or 2.3%). Stateless persons totalled 3,906 or 10.0% of the population.

Examination of the population by citizenship provides useful insights, however, it could be argued that it has its limitations, particularly where a single citizenship group may be ethnically diverse. Afghanistan, for example, comprises ethnic populations of Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, Aimak, Turkmen, Uzbeks and Baloch, as well as many others (Lamer and Foster 2011). Analysis by ethnicity in the study of asylum seeker and refugee populations is particularly relevant, given that persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution may be for reasons of ethnicity rather than citizenship (as articulated in the

1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees in terms of race and/or nationality) as is the case for Afghan (Hazaras) (Koser & Marsden 2013; Maley 2001). Further discussion of the terms ‘citizenship’, ‘ethnicity’ and ‘nationality’ are set out in the Note on Terminology.

Ethnicity was one of the main demographic variables collected by authorities at the time of arrival. A table showing ethnic groups comprising 100 or more irregular maritime asylum seekers is below. The subject of this study is the largest ethnic group present in the asylum seeker population: Hazara.

TABLE 4.5 Major ethnic groups—irregular maritime  
asylum seeker population, 2008–2013

<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Hazara	12,136	31.24
Tamil	6,651	17.12
Persian	5,174	13.32
Arab	4,126	10.62
Kurdish	2,844	7.32
Rohingya	1,720	4.43
Pashtun	1,186	3.05
Kinh	782	2.01
Bengali	655	1.69
Sinhalese	577	1.49
Turkish	540	1.39
Azari	390	1.00
Tajik	377	0.97
Turkmen	134	0.34
Punjabi	133	0.34
Other	254	0.66
Unknown	1,168	3.01
<b>Total</b>	<b>38,847</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014) (n=38,847).

Other key variables used in the Hazara analysis are related to migration/movement data, and are set out in Table 4.6. Last country of residence is also used to examine the entire irregular maritime asylum seeker population who arrived during the study period (Chapter 5).

**TABLE 4.6 Hazara Irregular Maritime Asylum Seeker Statistics—  
Migration/Movement Variables**

<b>Arrival Date</b>	<b>Country of birth</b>	<b>Last country of long-term residence</b>	<b>Transit country</b>
Program year	Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Afghanistan
Quarter	Pakistan	Pakistan	Pakistan
Day	Iran	Iran	Iran
			Indonesia
			Malaysia
			Thailand
			UAE

The Australian Government approved access to this statistical administrative data for the purpose of this study. The data was de-identified by DIBP prior to being provided and has been stored securely in keeping with DIBP requirements.

This data is used in Chapters 7, 8 and 9 in the analysis of the demographic, social, spatial and temporal dimensions of Hazara asylum seeker agency. A tabular summary of the data variables used in the analysis and how they relate to the research questions is provided in Table 4.8.

#### *Data on resettled refugees*

Statistical administrative data on the arrivals of the refugees resettled to Australia under the government's Humanitarian Program is a useful and relevant reference group for comparative analysis against the irregular maritime asylum seeker population data set. The resettled refugee population comprises people who lodged a claim for refugee status with UNHCR or Australian authorities outside of Australia, were subsequently granted a refugee visa to enter Australia and arrived in Australia on that visa.<sup>4</sup>

A dataset on arrivals of refugees resettled who arrived in Australia between 1 July 2008 and 30 June 2013 was created from the much larger datasets on all Overseas Arrivals and Departures published by DIBP on the data.gov.au website. The statistics on overseas arrivals and departures are based on administrative data collected and compiled by DIBP, the main source for which is incoming and outgoing passenger cards. The data is on movements, not individuals, so that one individual who arrives and departs Australia is

counted per movement meaning that it is not possible to deduce a population from the OAD. However, in the case of resettled refugees, their circumstances are much more likely to preclude them engaging in significant travel from (and back to) Australia so the risks of over-counting are minimal. In addition, it is important to note that there is no overlap between the resettled refugees granted visas overseas and irregular maritime asylum seekers who were granted protection in Australia (see note 3 on different visa subclasses). The dataset comprises statistical records of 46,596 resettled refugee arrivals during the same period as the irregular maritime asylum seeker population (i.e. between 1 July 2008 and 30 June 2013). The variables include demographic variables as well as arrival date (see Table 4.7).

**TABLE 4.7 Resettled Refugee Arrival Statistics—Data Variables**

<b>Citizenship</b>	<b>Arrival date*</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>
Afghan	2008–09	Female	0-4
Sri Lankan	2009–10	Male	5-9
Bhutanese	2010–11		10-14
Iranian	2011–12		15-19
Iraqi	2012–13		20-24
[+ many others]			25-29
			30-34
			35-39
			40-44
			45-49
			50-54
			55-59
			60-64
			65+

Sources: Overseas arrivals and departures dataset (2015).

Notes: \*Also recorded by month and quarter.

The dataset is used specifically in the next chapter, which provides background and context to all irregular maritime asylum seekers to Australia during the study period. The OAD arrivals data is available by citizenship (not ethnicity) so has been used to provide a comparison between the study population and refugees resettled to Australia. This is particularly relevant to the examination of demographic characteristics, which show stark differences between the two groups.

### *Other information sources*

Other sources of information include: academic journal articles; books published by academic publishers; departmental and other Australian government publications, speeches, parliamentary reports and other documents (including Parliamentary Hansard); reports and other publications by international organisations; reports and other publications by policy think-tanks, NGOs and advocacy groups; newspaper and other media reporting; and other published material. Of particular relevance are the findings of research on Hazaras, including studies on their asylum seeking intentions, decision making processes and information sources. References are provided at the end of each chapter. A combined bibliography is included at the end of the thesis.

### *Summary of data used to answer the research questions*

To help guide the presentation of the next Part, the table below provides a tabular summary of the structure of the analysis, including how research questions, data sources and variables are related.

**TABLE 4.8 Summary of analytical approach**

<b>Dimension (Chapter)</b>	<b>Components</b>	<b>Research questions</b>	<b>Data utilised to answer questions</b>	<b>Dataset variables / survey questions</b>
Demo-graphic (Ch 7)	Who migrates	Were some demographic groups more likely to exercise agency and be irregular maritime asylum seekers than other groups?	IMAS data (n=38,847) Relevant research literature	IMAS dataset: CoB; last country of LT residence; ethnicity; citizenship; age; sex; marital status; migrating family status; education; occupational grouping
Social (Ch 7)	Who with	Who did Hazaras travel with, and how did this compare with other groups from the region?  To what extent did Hazara asylum seekers undertake migration in family groups?  Were Hazaras more likely to travel without family, including as unaccompanied minors?	IMAS data (n=38,847) 2013 survey (n=1,008) Relevant research literature	IMAS dataset: CoB; last country of LT residence; ethnicity; citizenship; age; sex; marital status; migrating family status  Survey Qs 6, 42, 43 on travelling companions, experiences of the journey, plus demographic questions (independent variables).



Dimension	Components	Research questions	Data utilised to answer questions	Dataset variables / survey questions
Temporal (Ch 8)	i) Whether to migrate	<p>Were maritime asylum seekers themselves active decision makers when deciding whether to migrate?</p> <p>Was collective decision making a feature of Hazara migration decision making processes?</p> <p>For those found to be refugees, were both protection and non-protection factors significant in the decision to migrate as an irregular maritime asylum seeker?</p>	<p>2013 survey (n=1,008)</p> <p>Relevant research literature</p>	<p>Survey Qs 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 28, 41 on previous migration experiences, proximity to migration, decision making processes, factors in origin and reasons for migrating plus demographic questions (independent variables).</p>
Temporal (Ch 8)	ii) When to migrate	<p>What factors were significant in determining when they travelled to Australia as asylum seekers?</p>	<p>2013 survey (n=1,008)</p> <p>IMAS data (n=38,847)</p> <p>Relevant research literature</p>	<p>Survey Qs 27 on migration triggers plus demographic questions (independent variables).</p> <p>IMAS dataset: CoB; last country of LT residence; ethnicity; citizenship; age; marital status; migrating family status</p>
Spatial (Ch 9)	i) Where to migrate (transit and destination)	<p>Were irregular maritime asylum seekers themselves active decision makers when deciding where to migrate?</p> <p>Was collective decision making a feature of Hazara migration decision making processes?</p> <p>Was the perceived acceptance of asylum seekers and refugees a factor in irregular asylum seekers choosing Australia as a destination?</p>	<p>2013 survey (n=1,008)</p> <p>IMAS data (n=38,847)</p> <p>Relevant research literature</p>	<p>Survey Qs 24, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35 on decision making processes and factors, information and assistance and reasons for migrating plus demographic questions (independent variables).</p> <p>IMAS dataset: CoB; last country of LT residence; ethnicity; citizenship; age</p>
	ii) How to migrate	<p>Did Hazara asylum seekers apply similar migration processes and strategies developed within the region (Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran) to the much longer migration corridor to Australia?</p>	<p>IMAS data (n=38,847)</p> <p>2013 survey (n=1,008)</p> <p>Relevant research literature</p>	<p>IMAS dataset: CoB; last country of LT residence; ethnicity; citizenship; age; transit country</p> <p>Survey Qs 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 42 on experiences of the journey, plus demographic questions (independent variables).</p>

#### 4.4 Limitations of the study

The limitations of the survey methodology for the 1,008 person survey of former irregular maritime asylum seekers are outlined in McAuliffe 2013b. However, one limitation that is relevant across all data sources is that data analysed are those that have been provided by asylum seekers themselves (survey and administrative). To some extent, some information such as age, citizenship and ethnicity may be based on fraudulent documents or misinformation for the purposes of attaining a protection visa, however, the extent of misinformation is likely to be insignificant, including in light of DIBP's improvements to its data matching and other capabilities (ANAO 2014). It should also be noted that the high final protection visa grant rates of maritime asylum seekers would indicate that the level of misinformation provided by the population overall is likely to be small given the visa processes undertaken, which involving assessing protection claims as well as the health and character of the applicant (including the provision of false and/or misleading information or documents). It is also worth noting that some information is likely to be much less open to the making of false claims. Sex, for example, would prove very difficult to falsify, requiring determined and difficult social and physical changes over a substantial period of time. Ethnicity, at least for some groups, would prove hard to falsify compared with others, including because of distinctive physiology and/or ethno-linguistic traits. It is difficult to assess whether a person from Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh is Rohingya or Bengali, for example, given their similar appearances and linguistic similarities (Jahan 2014; Parnini 2013). However, the distinctive appearance and dialect of Hazaras, while not singular in totality nor incapable of copying, would prove much more difficult to falsify, including because of a sizeable Hazara community in Australia available to act as interpreters.

Another limitation of the study is that it is not able to explore directly the decision making processes and factors associated with 'involuntary immobility' (Carling 2002) or 'immobility by choice' (Adhikari 2013). While the examination of administrative data on all irregular maritime asylum seekers who arrived in Australia during the study period sheds light on the people who were left behind as well as those who travelled to Australia as resettled refugees, it does not encompass decision making processes and factors of those who remained. The analysis presented in the thesis does, however, draw on empirical research conducted in 2014 in origin countries with Hazaras (and other groups) on reasons for migrating and not migrating and related decision making processes (McAuliffe & Jayasuriya 2016; Jayasuriya, McAuliffe & Iqbal 2016).

Another limitation is the heavy focus on quantitative data. Consideration was given to further data collection and options were examined in detail during the study design phase, including through seeking advice from the supervisory panel, a range of other researchers and with the broader research community as part of the research proposal seminar in July 2014. Overall, the quality, quantity and high relevance of the quantitative data available to support the analysis to answer the research questions was considered a significant strength of the study. In some migration-related studies, triangulation involves semi-structured interviews with members of the study population and/or those working with, supporting, analysing or in some way connected to the study population and/or research topic (see, for example, Correa-Velez et al 2015). This can be a valid and useful research technique, however, it is often related to feasibility and becomes more important in the absence of other information, such as detailed census data on a study population. In the case of this study, with its focus on asylum seeker agency, semi-structured interviews with former asylum seekers may have allowed for a deeper analysis of some specific but limited aspects. Given the census data on demographics, migration patterns and processes that provided deep insights into the behaviour of the study population, together with the survey data on decision making and migration experiences, additional data was determined to be excessive. While it is a natural tendency of researchers (myself included) to want more data, it is equally important to recognise the value of existing data as well as its utility in supporting valid and robust research. Ultimately, the ability to answer research questions, develop more nuanced understandings of specific issues and present robust and meaningful findings must dictate research design and methods.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has sought to outline the study design, scope, data and analytical approach adopted in this research, including in the context of the existing paucity of data and information on irregular migrant flows. The chapter also detailed the main statistical dataset utilised and discussed the key limitations of the study. The study has aimed to analyse unique data on irregular maritime asylum seekers, and in particular a group (Hazaras) widely recognised as being in dire need of international protection, as a means to generate new knowledge on the extent and nature of irregular maritime asylum seekers' agency.

## Notes

- 1 Country of origin is used by UNHCR rather than citizenship or nationality including because it is more able to account for statelessness.
- 2 Analysis of the survey summary statistics were published by the DIBP (McAuliffe 2013a, 2013b), and approval to use the survey results for coursework components of the PhD program as well as the research undertaken for this thesis was also provided by the DIBP. In addition, access to administrative data on the study population for this PhD research was also provided by the DIBP.
- 3 Some limited data cleaning rectified minor coding mistakes (e.g. a 6-month old child incorrectly coded as an adult); the effect of this is that there may be some minor differences compared to official statistics.
- 4 These visas include Refugee visas (subclass 200), In-country Special Humanitarian visas (subclass 201), Global Special Humanitarian visas (subclass 202), Emergency Rescue visas (subclass 203), Women at Risk visas (subclass 204). Irregular maritime asylum seekers in Australia are not able to apply for these visa subclasses but instead apply/are granted subclass 866 (Protection) visas.

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## 5 Irregular maritime asylum seekers to Australia in context\*

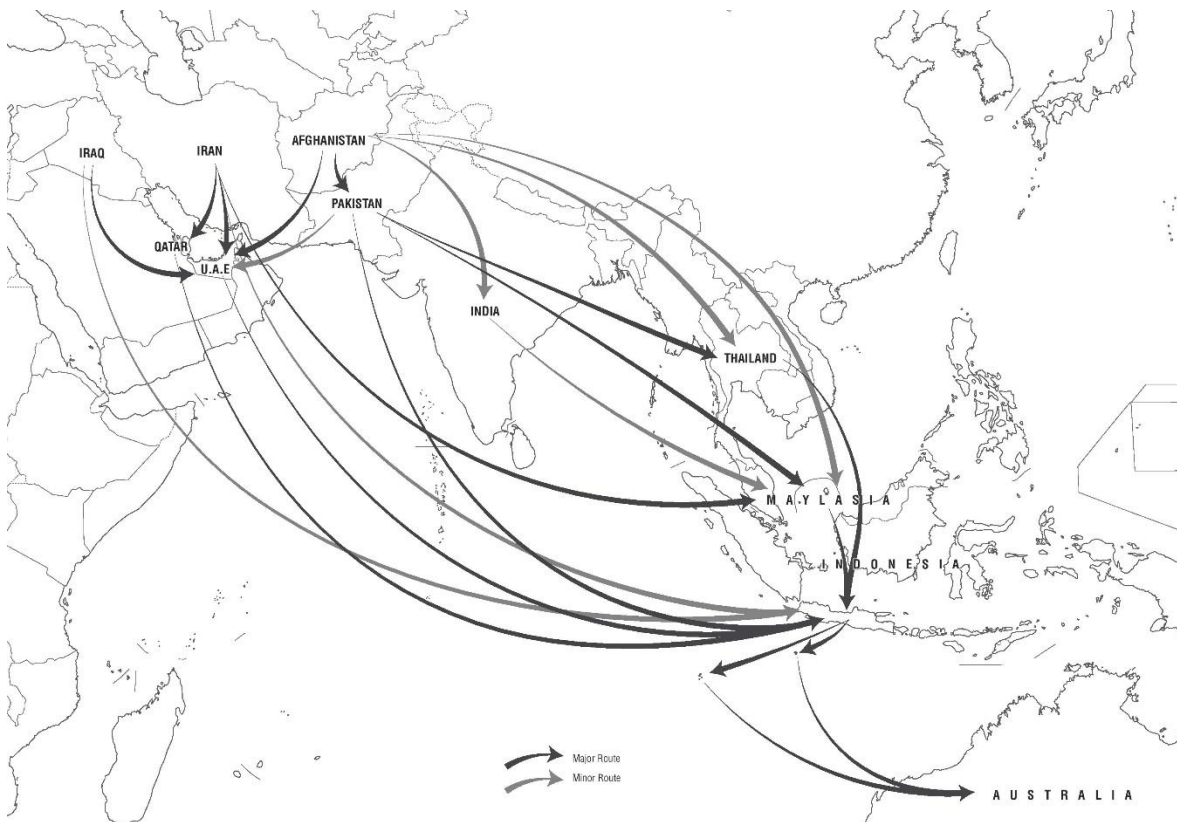
As we saw in Part One, the developments of migration theory and empirical research and analysis have been contextually-bound and heavily influenced by both the prevailing philosophical and intellectual discourses of the time as well as the pressing migration regulation and policy aspects—be those pressing upon the national, regional and/or international levels of governance and regulation of migration. The availability of data (or lack thereof) has also played a role in limiting or shaping analyses that have contributed to migration theory, concepts and discourses, including as they relate to ‘forced migration’ and ‘irregular migration’. In a similar vein, analysis of the migration of Hazara irregular maritime asylum seekers to Australia should ideally be analysed within broader contexts. Some context was provided in Chapter 1, and so I do not propose to repeat it here and background on Hazara displacement and migration is provided in the next Part. The aim of this chapter, therefore, is to provide contexts relevant to the analysis presented in Part Three on the extent and nature of Hazaras’ agency as it relates to migrating to Australia as irregular maritime asylum seekers. These contexts include: i) a historical overview of irregular maritime migration to Australia; ii) Australia’s standing globally in terms of asylum claims, iii) a summary of the key features of the entire irregular maritime asylum seeker flow for the five-year study period (including its demography, temporal and spatial dimensions); and iv) a short summary of key responses to the significant increase in arrivals.

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\* This chapter draws on a book chapter to be published by ANU Press: McAuliffe, M. & Koser, K. (2017) ‘Introduction’, in McAuliffe, M. & Koser, K. (eds) *A long way to go: Irregular migration patterns, processes, drivers and decision making*, Canberra: ANU Press (forthcoming). It also draws on a paper presented at the *Governing Irregular Migration: States, Actors and Intermediaries Conference*, Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy and the European University Institute, Athens, 8–9 July 2015 titled *Global forces shaping irregular migration flows and state responses: An Australian case study*.

### 5.1 Historical overview of irregular maritime asylum seekers to Australia

Since at least the mid-1970s, asylum seekers have travelled to Australia via irregular maritime means sporadically, with a noticeable peak/lull dynamic occurring over time (sometimes referred to as ‘waves’). Up until 1999, irregular maritime asylum seekers to Australia had originated predominantly in Southeast Asia. In the 1970s it was Vietnamese; the mid-1990s saw mostly Chinese and Cambodians; the 1999-2001 peak was mainly Iraqis and Afghans who transited countries in Southeast Asia, including Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand. A map showing the main transit routes to Australia for irregular maritime asylum seekers is in Figure 5.1.



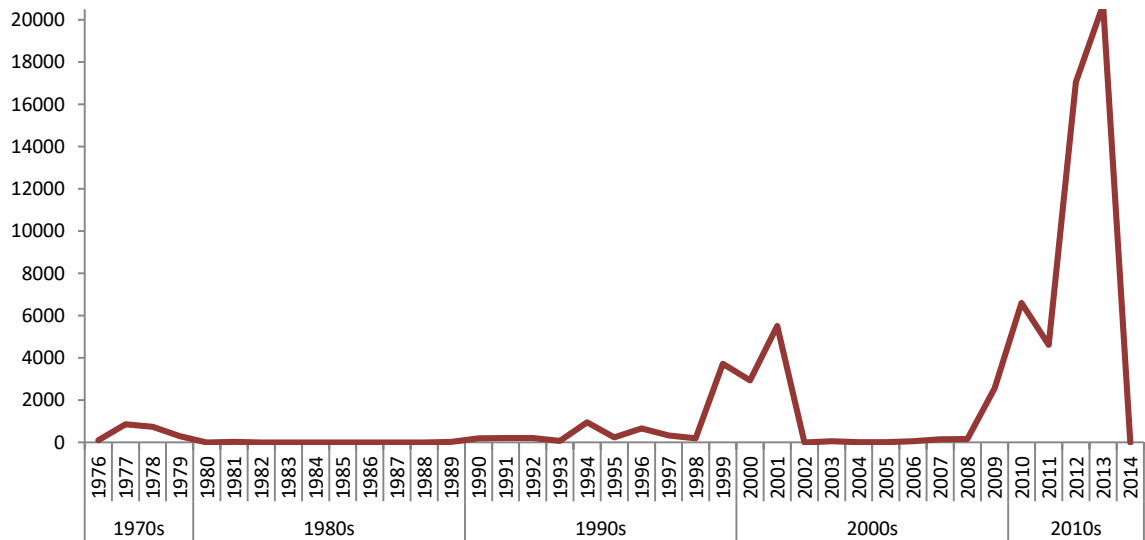
**FIGURE 5.1: Maritime asylum seekers routes to Australia: 2008 to 2014**

Source: Based on irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014).

Note: Map designed by the author and produced by cartographer Lowell Johns Ltd.

Over the last four decades, around 69,000 irregular maritime asylum seekers arrived although the vast majority (71 per cent, almost 49,000) arrived during the most recent peak period from 2008 to 2013 (Figure 5.2). Calendar year 2013 saw the largest number to Australia, with around 20,700 arrivals recorded. The significant decline at the end of

2013 reflects in large part the suite of measures taken by the Australian government, including in cooperation with countries in the region such as Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and Indonesia (discussed below). As a result only 157 irregular maritime asylum seekers arrived in 2014.



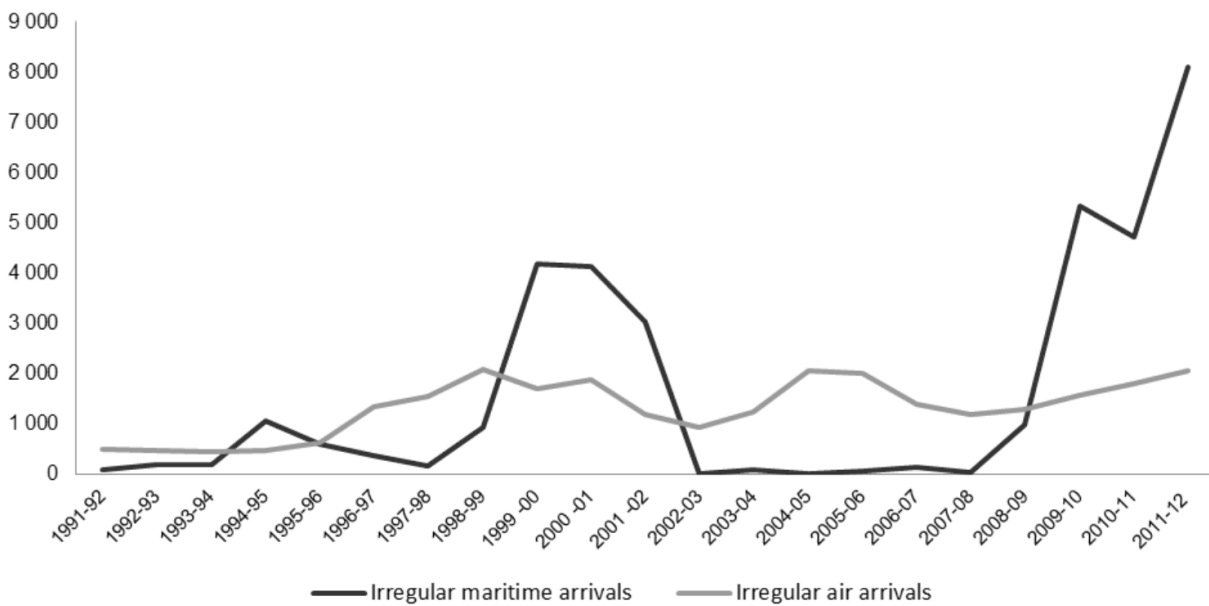
**FIGURE 5.2: Number of irregular maritime arrivals to Australia—1976 to 2014**

Sources: Parliament of Australia (2013a); McAuliffe & Mence (2014); Irregular maritime asylum seeker dataset (2014).

As outlined in Chapter 4, there is a paucity of irregular maritime arrival data globally although some countries and regions are more able to collect such data. It is also evident that data collection in some regions, such as the EU, has increased significantly in the last decade. It would still seem, however, that Australia holds a fairly atypical place among industrialised destination countries in being able to collect and record irregular migration flows extremely well. Australia's geography, sea borders and relative isolation from regions that have traditionally suffered from mass human displacement and acute refugee flows has meant that Australia has developed over recent decades perhaps the greatest ability among industrialised countries to know who is arriving irregularly. As a corollary, Australia has, out of necessity, developed border management practices that have extended its virtual border well beyond its physical border as a means of facilitating travel to what is—from much of the world's perspective—an isolated location. Almost all international travel to Australia is by air. Multi-layered processes have been developed focusing on the management of international cross-border movements with virtually no regulations or procedures in place to manage or monitor internal migration through, for

example, national identity cards, registration processes, internal ‘passports’, and other forms of regulation and restriction (as is done in many other countries) (Koser & McAuliffe 2013).

With a focus on the regulation of international air travel, and considerable investment in technology and international cooperation on this aspect, there has been a fairly constant low number of irregular air arrivals of between one and two thousand per year, which contrasts with the peak-lull pattern of irregular maritime arrivals (Figure 5.3).



**FIGURE 5.3 Irregular arrivals by sea and air (1991–92 to 2011–12)**

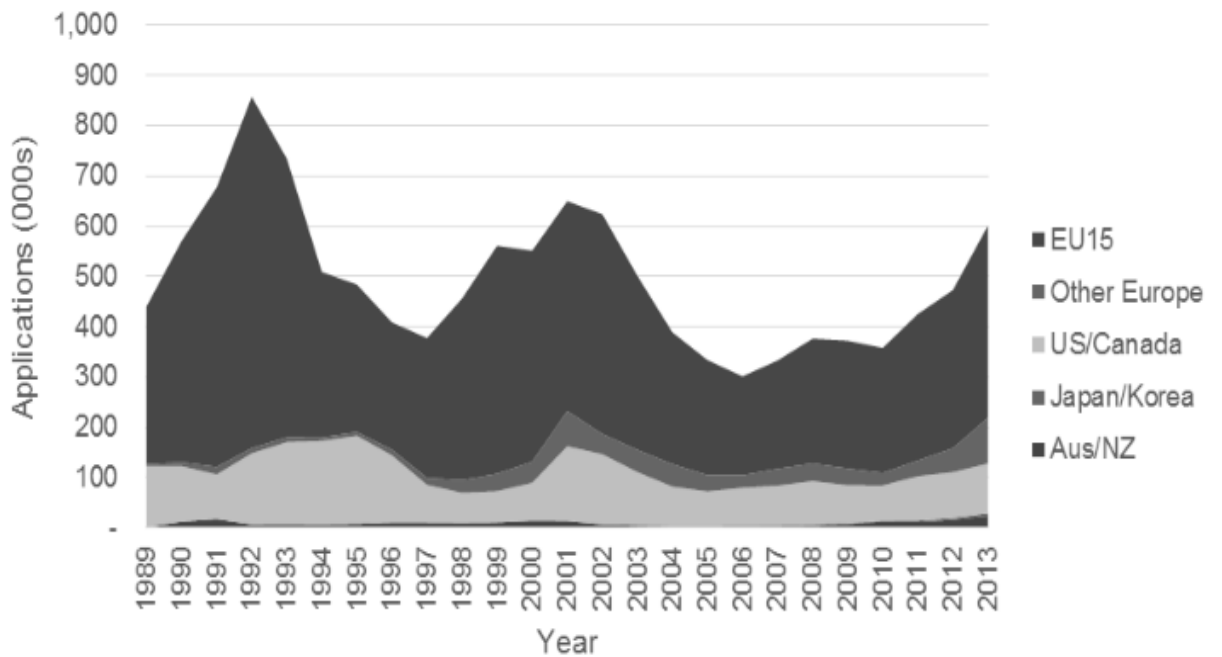
Source: Koser & McAuliffe 2013, 5.

In addition, the number of irregular migrants living in Australia is very low (around 60,000 or 0.25% of the population) compared to other countries, including the US (around 12 million or 3.85%), and South Africa (between 3–5 million or around 7.5%) (ANAO 2013, 39; Koser 2005; Passel et al 2013). This means that the definition of ‘irregular migrant’ has tended to take on a much narrower scope in the Australian context, and is generally understood to refer to those who seek to enter without authorisation of authorities (rather than those who enter on a visa and then become irregular). Further to this, irregular air arrivals represent a very small proportion of all air arrivals (around 0.013% in 2011-12, or 2048 of around 15.920 million air arrivals) whereas irregular maritime arrivals are a much greater proportion of all maritime arrivals (8,371 or 3.1% of 478,000 maritime arrivals in 2011-12) (DIAC 2012a).<sup>1</sup> Additionally, very few irregular air arrivals raise asylum claims; in 2011–12, of the 2048 irregular air arrivals (i.e. those

refused immigration clearance at airports), just 26 people made protection claims at the border (Koser & McAuliffe 2013). In contrast, all irregular maritime asylum seekers (other than Indonesian crew) have traditionally raised asylum claims, rendering the ‘mixed migration’ flow discussion in the Australian context moot.

**5.2 Asylum applications lodged in Australia in a global context**

To put the analysis of Hazara irregular maritime asylum seeker agency in context, a brief examination of asylum globally is provided, with a particular focus on applications lodged in developed countries (which UNHCR refers to as industrialised countries—see, for example, UNHCR’s annual report *Asylum Trends: Levels and trends in industrialised countries*). Ideally, comparison of Hazara asylum applications globally would have been provided, however, such data do not exist. Instead Afghan asylum applications are discussed below. But before doing so, it is worth noting that the data on asylum applications globally shows that the number of asylum applications Australia has received historically has been extremely small (Figure 5.4). Nevertheless, it is worth also noting that the overall patterns of peaks and troughs is similar for the EU15 and Australia/New Zealand since 1989 (and more strongly for 1997 onwards for all regions).

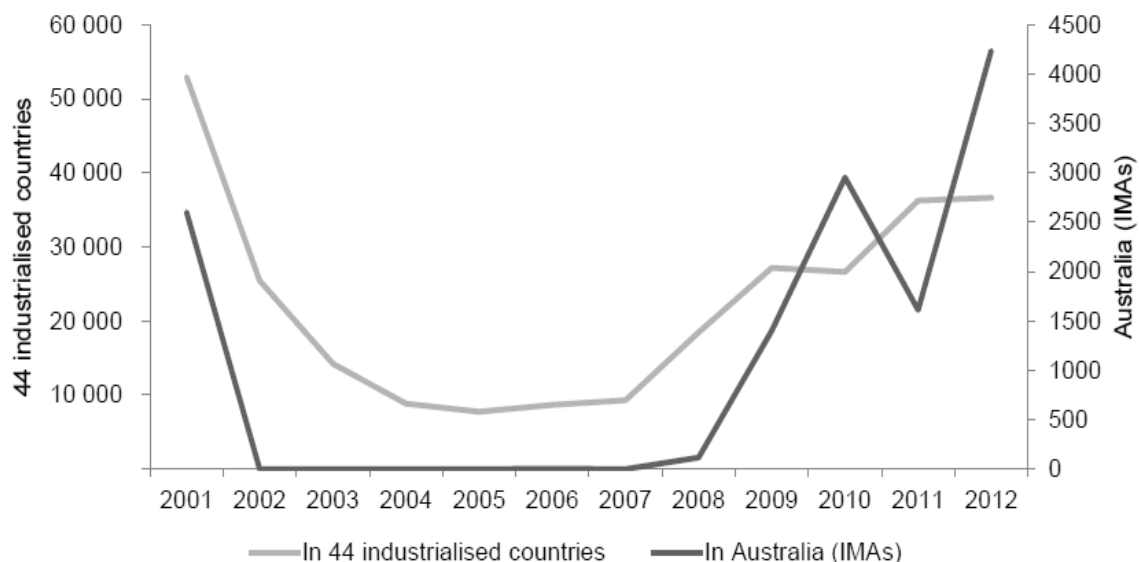


**FIGURE 5.4: Asylum Applications to 38 Countries by Region of Asylum, 1989 –2013**

Source: Hatton & Moloney (2015) Based on UNHCR data.

One important aspect to note about Figure in 5.4 is that it does not include all people who arrived as irregular maritime asylum seekers between 2008 and 2013. This is because under the *Migration Act 1958*, the Minister for Immigration is required to lift a statutory bar (under section 48 of the Act) before an irregular maritime asylum seeker is able to lodge a protection visa application. This means that asylum application data reported by UNHCR (as provided by the Australian Government) are not able to include those who may have arrived but not lodged a protection visa application.<sup>2</sup>

Based on data available, unfortunately it is not possible to reconcile asylum applications made in Australia during this period, as reported in UNHCR and DIBP reports (such as DIBP's *Asylum Trends*), with irregular maritime asylum seekers who arrived. However, in terms of Afghans at least, Koser and Marsden (2013) provide a useful comparison between Australia and all 44 industrialised countries (Figure 5.5), which shows a strikingly similar pattern (notwithstanding the very different scale). While the Australian data does not include those Afghans who arrived on a visa and then lodged a protection application, the number involved who did so is small. In 2008-09, for example, just 71 Afghans lodged an asylum claim while on a visa onshore (111 in 2009-10, 98 in 2010-11, 138 in 2011-12) (DIAC 2012b, 7). This means that the Australian pattern and trend line would not alter very much (if at all) if these Afghan applicants were also factored in to Figure 5.5.

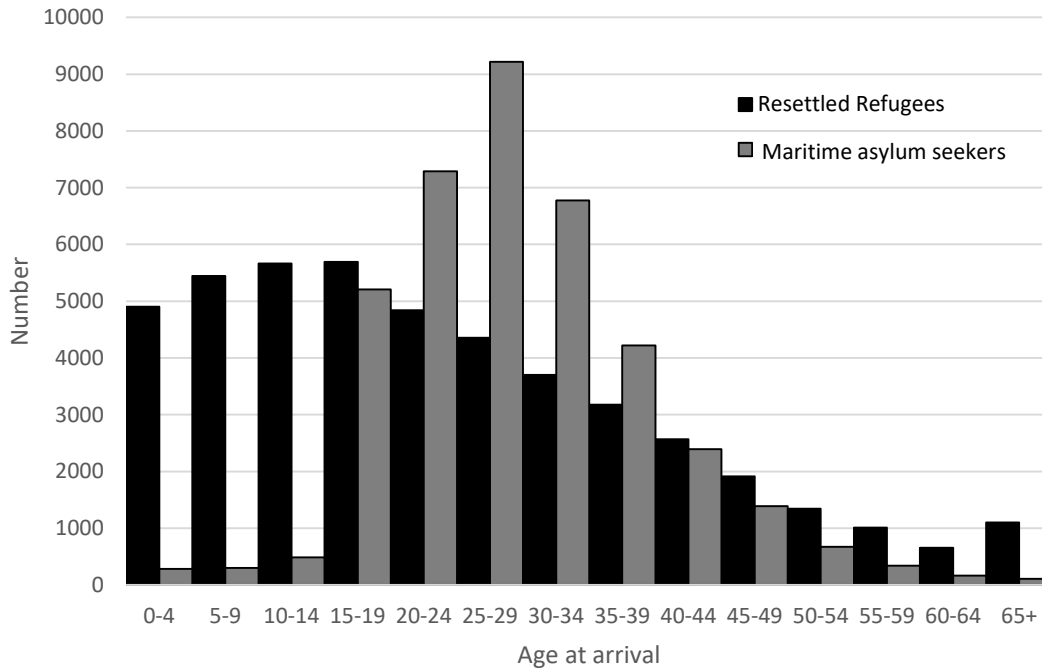


**FIGURE 5.5: Afghan asylum applications in 44 industrialised countries and irregular maritime asylum seekers to Australia**

Source: Koser & Marsden (2013, 19), based on UNHCR and DIBP data

### **5.3 Key features of the entire irregular maritime asylum seeker flow during the study period**

Examination of the demographic characteristics of an entire asylum seeker population provides a useful means through which the extent of agency can be gauged, particularly in assessing who migrates. Given the nature of the journeys undertaken, which involve risks, uncertainties and danger, plus the considerable distances travelled, it is likely that the population reflects characteristics considered more suited to the very challenging migration ‘experience’. As we saw in Chapter 2, asylum seeking to specific destinations (intended and unintended), involving the exercise of agency under arduous conditions and through the utilisation of local community and transnational networks, has been researched by demographers, anthropologists, geographers and sociologists with particular interests in populations at risk of forced migration or populations that have migrated internally and/or to neighbouring countries. Analysis of key demographic variables for the entire irregular maritime asylum seeker population over the five-year study period indicate that it was made up largely of young adult men, with 42.5% of all asylum seekers aged between 20 and 30 years at the time of arrival, and 88% of all asylum seekers being male. The age distribution in Figure 5.6 shows the heavy concentration of asylum seekers aged between 20 and 30 years, and the high number of people in their mid-twenties (5,759 or 15%) who made the journey. Analysis of the two datasets on asylum seekers and resettled refugees show stark differences in the populations who arrived in Australia during the study period. As can be seen from Figure 5.6, asylum seekers were much less likely to be under 15 or over 50 years of age compared with resettled refugee arrivals. The asylum seeker population aged between 20 and 30 years (42.5%) was more than double the proportion of those aged 20 to 30 years in the resettled refugee population, at 19.8% (see Figure 5.6).



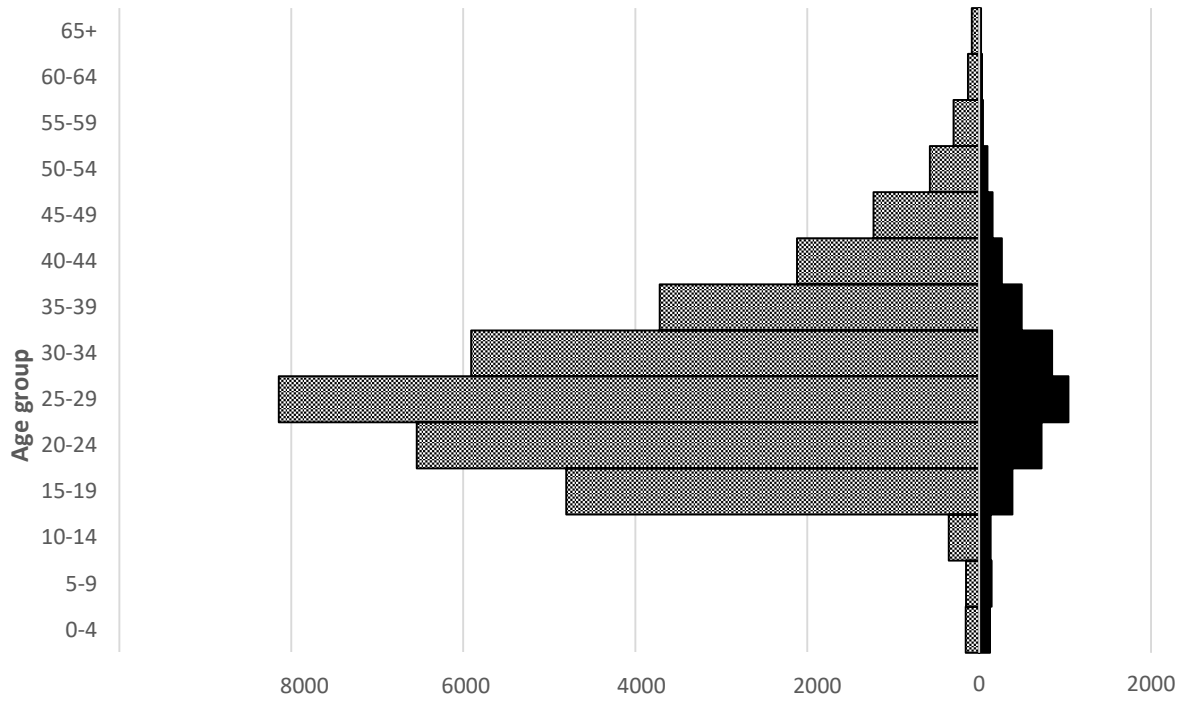
**FIGURE 5.6: Age at time of arrival, 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2013**

Sources: Overseas arrivals and departures (OAD) dataset (2015); irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014).

Note: OAD: n=46,370 arrivals (not individuals). Cells of less than 5 with a value not equal to 0 have been assumed to be 1, and so not all arrivals are able to be included. Irregular maritime asylum seekers: n=38,847.

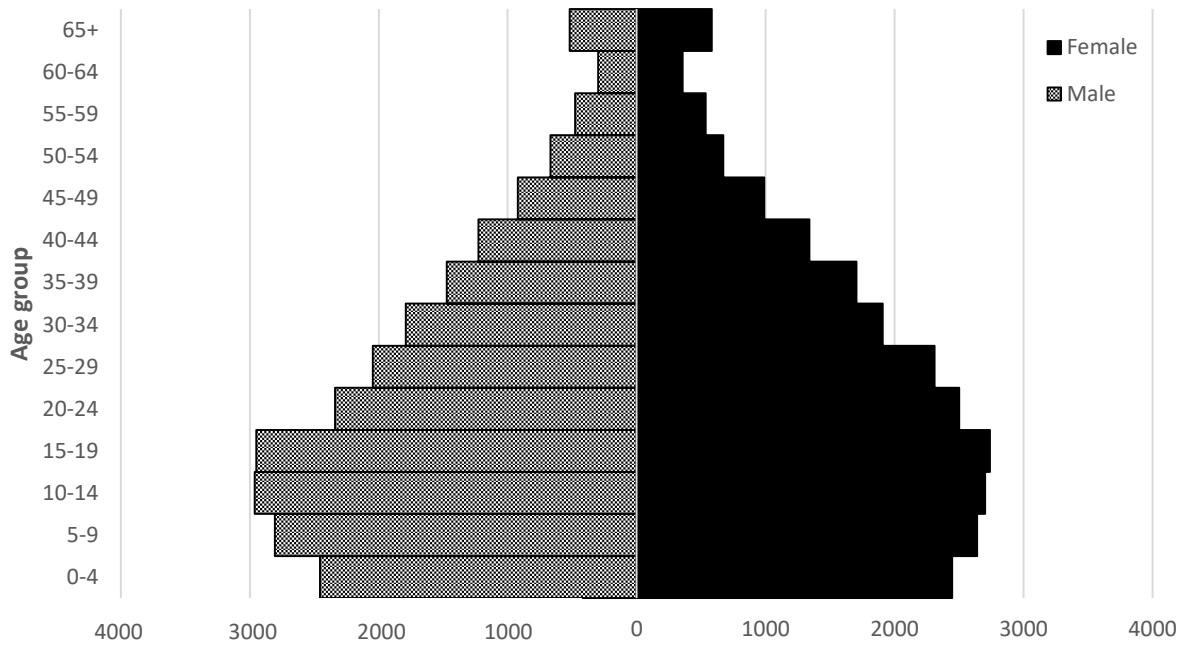
The most significant difference, however, is that of the sex distribution of the populations. As can be seen from Figures 5.7 and 5.8, resettled refugee arrivals comprised a much more even distribution of males (49.5%) and females (50.5%). Most of the age groups of the asylum seeker population are over-represented by males, as can be seen in the population pyramid in Figure 5.7, and this is most pronounced in the 20-24 and 25-29 age groups. In addition, the data show that three highly vulnerable groups<sup>3</sup>, being children, the elderly and women—acknowledging that asylum seekers and refugees are by definition all vulnerable—make up very low proportions of the asylum seeker population compared with resettled refugee arrivals. Children under the age of 15 accounted for 2.7% of the asylum seeker population compared with 34.5% of the resettled refugee arrivals; women<sup>4</sup> accounted for 10.6% of asylum seekers and 33.7% of resettled refugee arrivals; and the elderly<sup>4</sup> accounted for 0.3% of asylum seekers and 2.4% of resettled refugee arrivals.





**FIGURE 5.7: Irregular maritime asylum seeker population by age group and sex**

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014). Note: n=38,739.



**FIGURE 5.8: Resettled refugee arrivals by age group and sex**

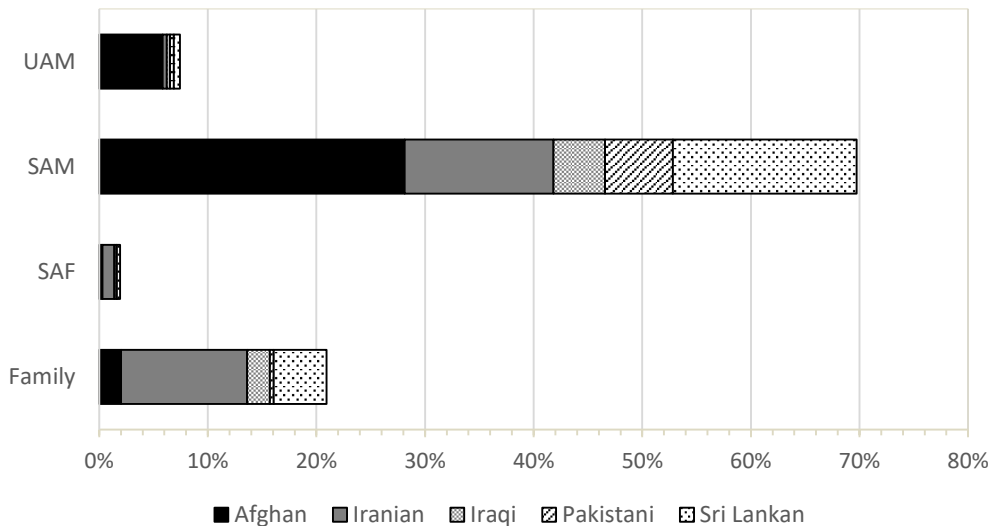
Sources: Overseas arrivals and departures dataset (2015).

Note: OAD: n=46,370 arrivals (not individuals). Cells of less than 5 with a value not equal to 0 have been assumed to be 1, and so not all arrivals are able to be included.

The analysis of the administrative data show unequivocally that maritime asylum seekers exhibited very strong demographic characteristics overall, with males (and particularly young males) being significantly more likely than others to arrive.

### *Migrating Family Status*

Analysis of the population by migrating family status is able to show who travelled with immediate family members. The data collected does not include other family members (such as cousins, aunts, etc), nor does it capture travel with friends or other associates. Importantly, adults who did not travel with immediate family members tended to be married (13,800 married compared with 6,750 not married) and so the term ‘solo adult male’ and ‘solo adult female’ (have been used rather than ‘single adult male or female’) so as to not cause confusion. Overall, most travelled as solo adult males (69.7%), followed by family members (20.9%), unaccompanied minors (7.4%) and solo adult females (1.9%). Examination of migrating family status by citizenship, however, reveals that citizenship groups tended to travel differently (see Figure 5.9). Iranians made up the majority of family travellers. Afghans dominated the unaccompanied minor category and made up a substantial proportion of solo adult males.



**FIGURE 5.9: Irregular maritime asylum seekers’ migrating family status by top five citizenships**

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014).  
Notes: n=32,323. Does not include missing data. Entire graph represents 100%.

A closer look at asylum seekers under the age of 18 at the time of arrival reveals stark differences in migration patterns, with a very high proportion of Afghans and Pakistanis under 18 travelling as unaccompanied minors (over 85%) compared with Iranians, for of 18 (Table 5.1). The numbers of unaccompanied example, who were much more likely to travel as part of a family group if under the age minors are relatively low for most citizenships, the significant exception being for Afghans, with 1,888 minors having travelled unaccompanied from Afghanistan (or Pakistan or Iran) over the five-year period. This equates to the arrival of almost one Afghan unaccompanied minor per day.

**TABLE 5.1 Top five irregular maritime asylum seeker citizenships by migrating family status—  
under 18 years**

	<b>Afghan</b>	<b>Iranian</b>	<b>Iraqi</b>	<b>Pakistani</b>	<b>Sri Lankan</b>	<b>Total</b>
Family (%)	221 (10.0)	386 (74.2)	150 (60.1)	10 (7.2)	227 (56.5)	994 (28.2)
Unaccompanied minor (%)	1,888 (85.4)	124 (23.8)	93 (37.6)	125 (89.9)	175 (43.5)	2,405 (68.3)
Total (%)	2,211 (100)	520 (100)	247 (100)	139 (100)	402 (100)	3,519 (100)

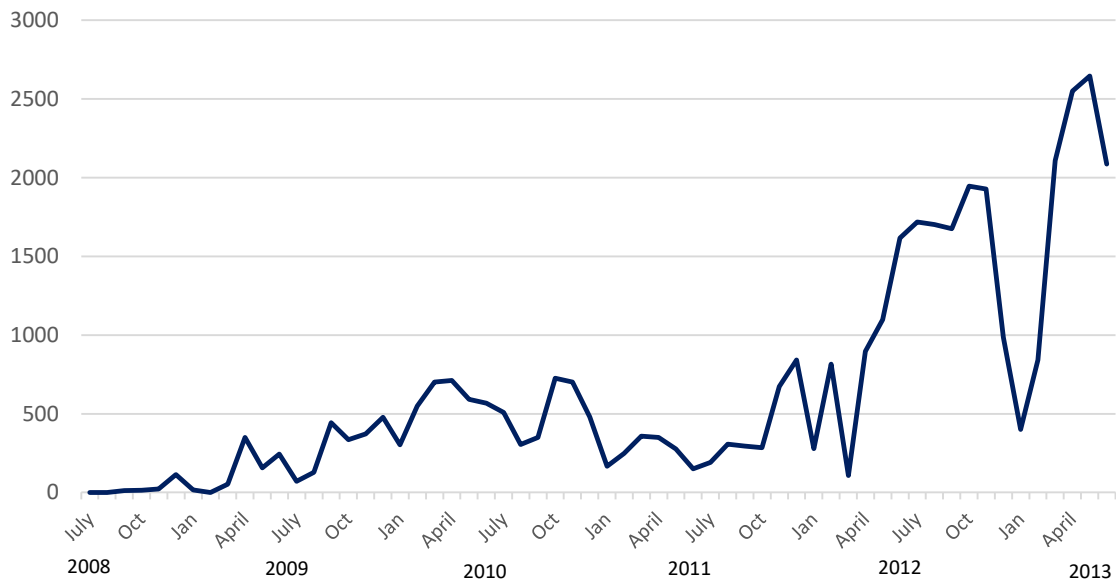
Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014).

Notes: Does not include missing data; ‘Unknown’ or those coded as ‘SAMs’ not included so totals may not add up to 100%. n=3,519.

### *Migration patterns of the asylum seeker population*

The preceding section examined the demographic characteristics of the entire asylum seeker population who arrived during the five-year study period. In this section we now turn to the temporal and spatial migration patterns of asylum seeker arrivals, and how patterns changed or evolved during the study period.

The numbers of asylum seekers who arrived during the study period changed dramatically over time, as can be seen in Figure 5.10. The first asylum seekers were intercepted in September 2008 on a vessel containing Afghans and Iranians. Almost all of the asylum seekers were males, and their ages ranged from 16 to 51 years old. Over the course of the next five years, these two citizenship groups would become the top two groups overall, with just over 11,700 Afghans and around 8,600 Iranians following in their footsteps.



**FIGURE 5.10** Irregular maritime asylum seekers by arrival month, July 2008 to June 2013

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014). Note: n=38,847

As can be seen in Figure 5.10, and notwithstanding the overall trend, there are noticeable peaks and troughs, which appear to be related to seasonal weather patterns (the term ‘sailing season’ is commonly used in the media and diplomatic reporting (Diamond 2012; US Embassy Jakarta 2009). While there is no analysis in the literature on monsoon effects, analysis of arrivals through two corridors (West Java to Christmas Island and Batticaloa to Cocos-Keeling Islands) indicates the monsoon season correlates with lower monthly arrivals over the five-year study period—see Appendix C.

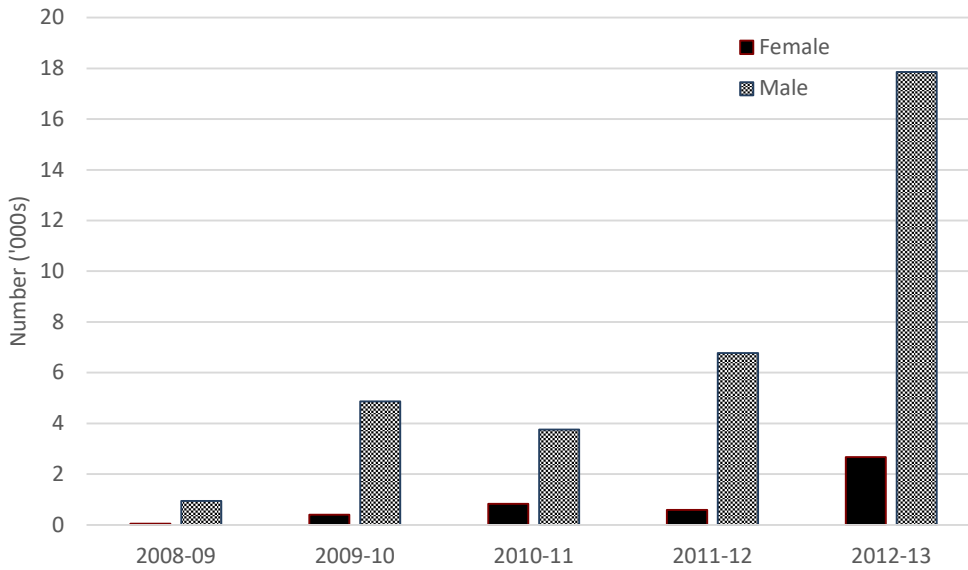
In the first year (1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009), less than one thousand asylum seekers arrived in Australia. As can be seen in Table 5.2, they were mainly Afghans (59%), Sri Lankans (30%), Iraqis (6%), stateless (3%) and Iranians (2%). Arrival numbers increased over time, with a slight dip in 2010–11, to reach a total of 20,591 in 2012–13. There was also a very substantial increase in diversity of the asylum seekers in the last year, with the number of citizenship groups increasing from a fairly stable 20 to 38 groups. Citizenship can indicate where an asylum seeker may have travelled from, although not always. The almost doubling of the number of citizenship groups in one year signals the possibility of a significant shift in the spatial dimensions of the asylum seeker flow. Discussion of this aspect is included in the next section.

**TABLE 5.2 Irregular maritime asylum seekers by arrival year and main citizenship group**

<b>Arrival year</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Top five citizenship groups (in priority order)</b>	<b>Number of citizenship groups</b>
2008–09	979	Afghans, Sri Lankans, Iraqis, Stateless, Iranians	7
2009–10	5,274	Afghans, Sri Lankans, Stateless, Iraqis, Iranians	17
2010–11	4,598	Iranians, Afghans, Stateless, Iraqis, Sri Lankans	18
2011–12	7,405	Afghans, Sri Lankans, Iranians, Pakistanis, Stateless	20
2012–13	20,591	Iranians, Sri Lankans, Afghans, Stateless, Pakistanis	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>38,847</b>	<b>Afghans, Iranians, Sri Lankans, Stateless, Iraqis</b>	<b>43</b>

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014). Note: n=38,847.

There were changes in the composition of the asylum seeker population over time by sex, although the number and proportion of males compared with females remained high during the entire study period. The lowest proportion of males and highest of females was recorded in 2010-11, and was related to the citizenship composition for that year. Iranians were the largest group in 2010-11, making up 30%, and were much more likely to be women (and travel with family members). The higher proportion of Iranians in both 2010-11 (30% of asylum seekers) and 2012-13 (27%) is therefore reflected in Figure 5.11. The highest proportions of females (although still low) were in those two years. In the years in which Afghans and/or Sri Lankans dominated, much lower proportions of females arrived overall.

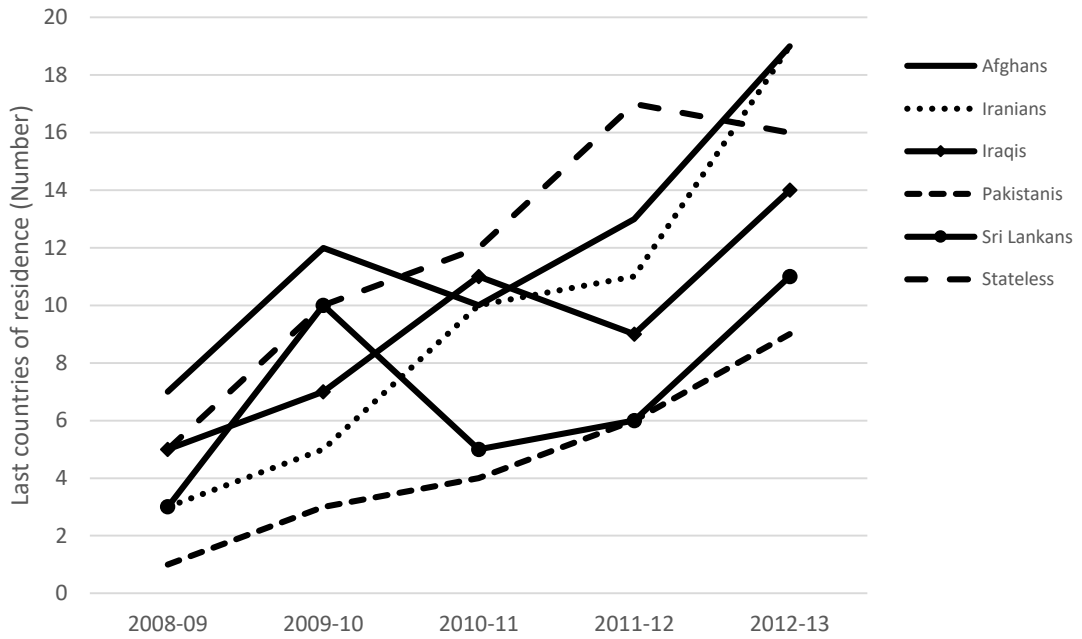


**FIGURE 5.11: Irregular maritime asylum seekers by arrival year and sex**

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014).

Notes: n=38,739. Does not include missing data.

In addition to changes in the asylum seeker flow over time in relation to who travelled, analysis of the data shows that the spatial dimensions altered too. The data indicates a radical shift in where people came from, and again the most significant changes occurred in the final year. There is also variation between citizenship groups in terms of where they travelled from. For example, Afghans' long history of displacement over many decades, most principally to Pakistan and Iran but also to Turkey, Europe and other regions, suggests that many Afghans would be likely to have travelled from countries other than Afghanistan as the flow evolved over time. This is indeed the case when last country of residence<sup>5</sup> is examined by the main citizenship groups. As Figure 5.12 shows, in 2008-09 Afghans travelled from seven different countries. As the numbers of asylum seekers increased over time so too did the number of countries they travelled from. In 2012-13 Afghan and Iranian citizens both travelled from 19 different countries, indicating the possibility of transnational connections supporting movements. This issue is examined in Part Three on Hazara migration patterns and processes.



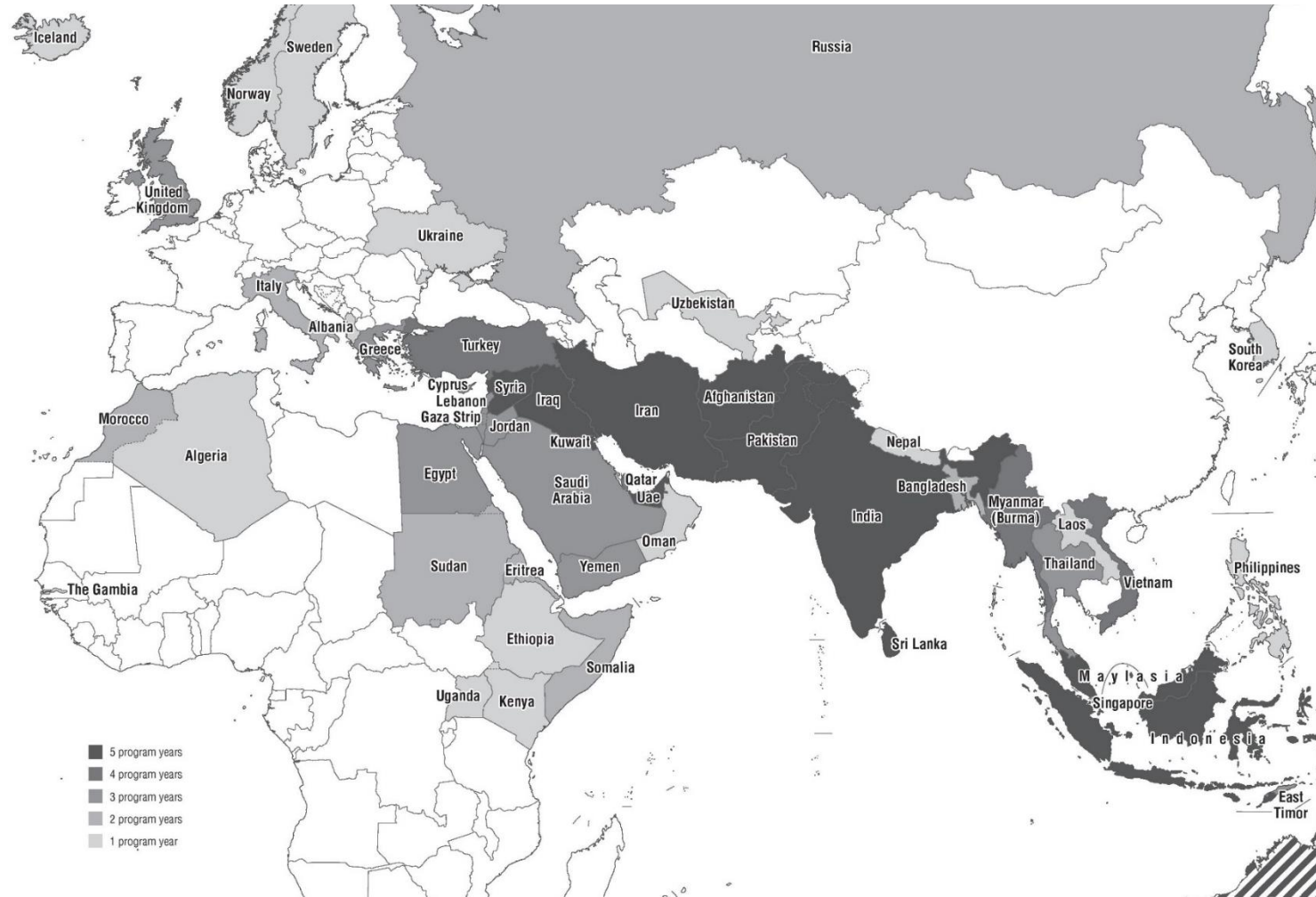
**FIGURE 5.12: Number of last countries of residence by program year and main citizenship groups**

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014).

Note: Does not include missing data. n=36,229

A clearer picture emerges when the entire asylum seeker population is analysed, showing that the spatial dimensions increased over time as the size and diversity of the flow also increased. Asylum seekers who arrived during 2008-09 travelled from a fairly narrow corridor of countries of residence including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and Iran as well as Sri Lanka and India. Afghanistan Asylum seekers who had been living in Malaysia and Indonesia also arrived in 2008-09, as well as the remainder of the study period, although the numbers of asylum seekers to do so were much smaller than those from traditional ‘origin’ countries.

The data indicates that as the flow of asylum seekers matured, the spatial dimension grew with people travelling initially from 11 last countries of residence in 2008-09, from 25 countries in the second and third years, from 30 countries in 2011-12 and from 50 countries in the final year. Figure 5.13 shows the ‘core’ countries (in the darker tone) from which maritime asylum seekers initially came (and continued to come), which then expanded as asylum seekers arrived from further afield, including countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Ukraine. As can be seen in Table 5.3, 60% of all last countries of residence saw fewer than 30 asylum seekers travel from that country during the entire flow. The vast bulk of asylum seekers travelled well-established pathways from Iran, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan.



**FIGURE 5.13: Asylum seekers’ last countries of residence (number of program years arrived from)**

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014).

Notes: Does not include missing data; n=37,635. Map designed by the author and produced by cartographer Lowell Johns Ltd. Does not include Lesotho, Samoa and the Bahamas (refer Table 5.3).



**TABLE 5.3 Irregular maritime asylum seekers by arrival year  
and last country of residence**

	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	Total
Iran	117	1,007	2,011	1,640	6,244	11,019
Pakistan	197	1,310	568	2,493	2,740	7,308
Sri Lanka	278	608	105	1,134	4,041	6,166
Afghanistan	272	1,294	519	1,102	1,814	5,001
Iraq	51	219	328	305	1,034	1,937
Malaysia	*	180	88	245	1,324	1,850
Vietnam		*	92	*	633	757
India	*	60	62	117	373	613
Indonesia	*	61	*	102	368	548
Bangladesh				*	506	515
Myanmar		*	*	*	401	435
Sudan				*	316	322
Cyprus			*	77	174	270
Syria	*	*	*	65	120	225
Kuwait	*	60	35	*	*	145
Lebanon			*	*	100	102
UAE	*	*	*	*	51	77
Somalia		*			56	60
Turkey		*	*	*	*	37
Thailand		*		*	*	30
Qatar		*	*	*	*	*
Yemen		*	*		*	*
UK		*	*		*	*
East Timor		*		*	*	*
Saudi Arabia		*		*	*	*
Gaza Strip			*	*	*	*
Egypt			*	*	*	*
Jordan			*	*	*	*
Greece			*	*	*	*
Singapore		*			*	*
Russia		*		*		*
Morocco			*		*	*
Eritrea				*	*	*
Italy				*	*	*
Uzbekistan		*				*
Philippines				*		*
Nepal					*	*
Albania					*	*
Ethiopia					*	*
Algeria					*	*
Kenya					*	*
Iceland					*	*
Laos					*	*
Uganda					*	*
Bahamas					*	*
Gambia					*	*
Lesotho					*	*
Norway					*	*
Oman					*	*
Samoa					*	*
South Korea					*	*
Sweden					*	*
Ukraine					*	*
Number of countries	11	24	24	30	50	53

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014).

Note: Does not included missing data; n=37,635; \* = cell of less than 30.

#### 5.4 Australia's response during the study period and beyond

It is important to note up front that the policies and actions of various Australian governments, particularly since the establishment of mandatory immigration detention in 1994, have received strong criticism at times from the international community (including UNHCR, OHCHR and other countries), Australian human rights bodies, political parties, academics, health specialists, NGOs and a range of other commentators. The purpose of this section is to briefly describe responses to irregular maritime migration by recent governments aimed at curbing irregular maritime flows without offering a view on the legality, legitimacy or morality of such responses. To understand what has been put in place (and to what effect) is one aspect of a critical analysis of the topic, particularly as it relates to irregular maritime asylum seeker agency. Commentary and analysis of the extent (or otherwise) of Australia's adherence to international obligations and human rights is vital, and will continue to remain a key focus of enquiry (see, for example, Brennan 2013; Chambers 2015; Crock & Ghezelbash 2010; Hodge 2014; McAdam 2013; McNevin 2011; Markus 2013; Pennington-Hill 2015; Pickering and Weber 2014).

The differential treatment of asylum seekers who arrive by air and sea largely stems from changes to the *Migration Act 1958* made in 1999, which resulted in separate tracks for those who arrived irregularly and regularly. Under the changes, irregular arrivals were able to access temporary protection visas (TPVs) while those who arrived regularly could be granted permanent protection visas (Pennington-Hill 2015). This differential treatment has also variously involved excision of offshore territories from the Australian migration zone, non-statutory protection processing regimes, offshore processing in other countries, and mandatory immigration detention of those who arrive irregularly. Differential treatment of asylum seekers based on arrival status has waxed and waned under successive governments, however, there have always been aspects of differential treatment in place over time.

The reasons for the substantial increase in irregular maritime asylum seekers to Australia during 2012 and 2013 has been the subject of much speculation and enquiry (Jupp 2012; Nethery & Gordyn 2013), as has the nature and consequences of the multiple policy and operational factors associated with the very substantial decrease (Chambers 2015; McAdam 2013; Pennington-Hill 2015). The most significant policy and operational changes have been those relating directly to the ability of asylum seekers to access transit countries (Indonesia and Malaysia) as well as physically arrive and stay in Australia.

Restricting access to territory has been an increasing focus. By applying Hatton's three-prong analytical typology of asylum-refugee policy, the focus would appear to predominantly be on 'border control policy' (prong one) as opposed to other aspects of related policy on refugee claims processing/acceptance (prong two) and the treatment of asylum seekers (prong three) (Hatton 2011, 49-53). While useful, there are some limitations with Hatton's typology. Firstly, it is focused on government policies that are specific to asylum-refugee issues without adequate consideration of broader immigration policy and practice, which can raise considerable complexity and some anomalies. In the Australian context this has been most noticeable in relation to Sri Lanka, which is one of Australia's top ten source countries for skilled migrants, an important source country of overseas students and temporary migrant workers and a significant source country for family migration (Jayasuriya & McAuliffe 2013).

Secondly, Hatton's typology does not account for the importance of multi-lateral, tri-lateral and bilateral cooperation on all three components of his typology. Australia's response could be characterized as a sub-regional response involving multiple states as well as international organisations. The policy and operational governance framework could not have been implemented by Australia alone, notwithstanding that some limited aspects (such as 'turnbacks') have been enacted unilaterally although within a bilateral context that necessarily requires judgement of the impact of 'fallout' on the overall relationship. One example of bilateral cooperation during the study period was that involving returns of irregular maritime asylum seekers to Sri Lanka following enhanced screening processes, which increased substantially in volume after mid-2012 (Jayasuriya & McAuliffe 2013). Between July 2012 and May 2013, for example, 162 voluntary and 965 involuntary returns to Sri Lanka occurred (Parliament of Australia 2013b, 52-3 and 115-6); in this context, 'voluntary' means that the asylum seeker agreed to return to Sri Lanka and 'involuntary' returns occurred despite the asylum seeker not agreeing to return. Involuntary returns require the express and prior agreement of the receiving country.

A major departure from previous policy positions of former governments occurred in July 2013, when the (then) government announced that irregular maritime asylum seekers would not only be transferred to PNG for claims processing but that they would also be resettled in those countries. This was subsequently supplemented by similar arrangements with Nauru (August 2013) as well as the Australia-Cambodia Agreement (September 2014), both of which provide for resettlement of refugees granted protection by Nauru

authorities. This makes the differential treatment of asylum seekers who arrive regularly and irregularly even more pronounced. The regional resettlement arrangements were accompanied by visa policy changes in key transit countries, namely the removal of visa-on-arrival arrangements for some nationals seeking to enter Indonesia and Malaysia (Surya 2014; McAuliffe & Mence 2014, 44). This reduced the ability of cohorts to enter the region prior to onward journeys to Australia, particularly for Iranians who had increased markedly in 2013. Changes to Indonesia's visa policy took effect in July 2013 and Malaysia's occurred in October 2013. In Indonesia, the effect was dramatic and immediate with the number of Iranians arriving in Indonesia dropping from 1,608 in September 2013 to 296 in December (Surya 2014).

A clear surge in irregular maritime asylum seekers to Australia in mid-2013 appears to have continued beyond the study period and into July 2013. While demographic and other data is not available beyond June 2013, the aggregate number of asylum seekers who arrived indicate sustained arrival numbers in July (over 4,000) and August (around 1,500). Interviews with asylum seekers in Indonesia in mid-2013 found that some migrant smugglers had been using the forthcoming federal election by "offering discounts or using fear tactics to up their sales" (Shepherd 2013, not paginated). Smugglers were actively encouraging people to travel by boat before the election on the basis that "the rules will be tighter or boats will be towed back" after the election and subsequent policy changes (Shepherd 2013, not paginated). These marketing tactics of smugglers appear to have had some effect given the large number of people who arrived in mid-2013.

The number of asylum seeker arrivals quickly subsided as the implementation of offshore resettlement, transit country visa-on-arrival changes and Operation Sovereign Borders took effect and key operational responses occurred, principally 'turnback' operations (Campbell 2014). Approximately 15 vessels carrying over 400 people were returned via turnbacks or other operations between November 2013 and January 2015 (Medhora & Doherty 2015). This coincided with a very significant drop in arrival numbers, with just over 800 asylum seekers arriving in September 2013, around 300 in October 2013 and one in January 2014 (ABC 2016).

More recently, and following lengthy policy and parliamentary deliberative processes, a new visa category was introduced in late 2014. The Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV) provides refugees (including those on 3-year TPVs) the option to transfer to a SHEV, which would allow them to work or study in a designated area for five years and renders

them eligible for permanent residence under one of several non-refugee visa categories (i.e. skilled workers, employer sponsored, family reunification) if they can satisfy the conditions. Both TPVs and SHEVs are available only for people who arrived before July 2013 (Newland et al 2016). Access to permanent protection visas for those who arrived irregularly is no longer available.

## 5.5 Conclusions

Over time, and since the mid-1970s, the scale and diversity of irregular maritime asylum seekers to Australia has increased. This has been most dramatic in the most recent period, and in particular during the final year of the study period (2012-13). Analysis of the demographic data of the irregular maritime asylum seeker population over the study period has revealed strong migration patterns, and the marked tendencies of some members of families and communities to have embarked on irregular migration, while other members remained in origin. Undoubtedly, this relates to the nature of the migration journeys, their length, the risks involved and the dangers faced (Fleay et al 2016; Pickering et al 2016). It may also relate to financial considerations. When cost, risk and danger are reduced or removed—as is the case for resettled refugees—the demographic characteristics of the populations are strikingly different.

It is difficult to countenance, therefore, that the irregular maritime asylum seeker population did not exhibit agency in travelling to Australia. The analysis of demographic data suggests that considerable agency is required, including that only some members of families are thought able to undertake the perilous and lengthy journeys involved. It is also evident that while some did travel, large numbers of people in need of protection (particularly women and children but also perhaps older or elderly parents) remained in origin countries. This suggests decision making processes were undertaken prior to migration, possibly at the family level. One of the more interesting findings is that of migrating family status as it relates to adults who may be travelling without family but are nevertheless married. The use of the term ‘single adult male’ by governments, UNHCR, researchers and others (Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee 2014; Schuster & Majidi 2013; Australian Human Rights Commission 2013; UNHCR 2013), masks the reality that most of these men are part of a (separated) family unit.

Overall, the analysis highlights the extent to which agency was able to be exercised (or was circumscribed) for people with protection needs based on migration processes available to them. Examination of the two groups—irregular maritime asylum seekers and resettled refugee arrivals—shows that notwithstanding their similar protection needs as reflected by refugee status determination outcomes, the way in which they were able to reach Australia was markedly different.

When the asylum seeker population is examined over time, distinct flows of groups of people of the same citizenship emerge, confirming the importance of examining demographic data of asylum seekers. The heterogeneity of the population is underscored by the temporal migration patterns that emerged over the study period, further highlighting the specific and distinct differences between, for example, the Afghan flow and the Iranian flows that occurred within a much larger asylum seeker flow. There are, however, distinct limitations in analysing these flows on a citizenship basis. As outlined in Chapter 4 (Data), the analysis in this Chapter has been undertaken using citizenship data (along with other demographic variables) to provide an overview of the entire asylum seeker population who arrived during the five years. Deeper analysis that goes beyond this overview requiring a different frame of reference is required, including because of the nature of the population and its international protection needs. Analysis by ethnicity in the study of asylum seeker and refugee populations is particularly relevant, given that persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution may be for reasons of ethnicity (as articulated in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees in terms of race and/or nationality). Part Three, therefore, examines self-agency of Hazaras by analysing the migration patterns and processes of their irregular maritime migration during the study period.

A very clear and interesting picture emerged on the spatial dimensions of the asylum seeker flow over time, showing an extraordinary geographic spread, particularly in the final year. This would indicate the possibility of transnational connections, including person-to-person but also more general telecommunications connectivity that can be accessed by potential migrants, diaspora communities as well as facilitators of irregular migration (McAuliffe 2016). A deeper examination of these issues is provided in the next Part on Hazara migration patterns and processes.

Finally, the short overview on key aspects of Australia's response has shown that many and most of the policy and operational changes occurred after the study period, and in

particular during a fairly short phase traversing two Australian governments (July to November 2013). It has also shown that most but not all of the changes required agreement and cooperation with other governments in the region. Finally, the significant drop in arrivals of irregular maritime asylum seekers in the latter part of 2013 and all of 2014 (and subsequently) indicate that the range of responses had the intended effect, principally by severely curbing asylum seekers' agency by physically restricting access to Australian territory at every stage (although to varying degrees). The scope of this study, however, is on a five-year period in which it was possible to gain entry to Australia via irregular maritime means, and so the analysis in Part Three needs to be situated in this context. The implications of severely restricting or preventing access to territory is discussed in the concluding chapter in Part Four.

## Notes

- 1 Maritime arrivals are derived from DIBP's annual report of 2011-12 (pp. 151 & 219).
- 2 The effect of the statutory bar can be significant. For example, as at 30 June 2014, there were approximately 28,000 irregular maritime asylum seekers in Australia with an unresolved status, many of whom had not yet been able to lodge a claim for protection (DIBP 2014: 149). This group of people have been characterized by the former Minister for Immigration as a "legacy caseload" who arrived during the previous government's term (Owens 2015).
- 3 UNHCR, for example, refer to children, unaccompanied adult women and the elderly as highly vulnerable groups in the context of immigration detention (UNHCR 1999).
- 4 'Women' for the purposes of this analysis is defined as females over the age of 14, given the age group data limitations of the Overseas and Arrivals Database (see Table 4.6). The elderly is defined as people over 65 years of age.
- 5 The variable 'last country of residence' is based on two questions asked at the time of arrival: "What was your last country of long-term residence?" (Not further defined) (asked between July 2008 to May 2011) and "What was your country of previous residence?" (asked between June 2011 to July 2013).

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## **PART THREE**

# **Hazara Irregular Maritime Asylum Seekers' Migration Patterns & Processes**



## 6 Hazara displacement and migration

This Part provides an analysis of the irregular migration patterns and processes of Hazara maritime asylum seekers over the course of the study period through the prism of agency. A deeper examination of Hazaras' experiences and contemplations is useful in that it allows for the specificities of their particular circumstances to be taken into account while also drawing on broader literature, theory and empirical research findings on the self-agency of asylum seekers. Hazaras are a very useful and highly relevant group to examine for a number of reasons. Firstly, they are the largest ethnic group to have arrived in Australia during the study period, representing over thirty percent of the entire flow, and a group that is enduring in nature, having arrived as maritime asylum seekers in the 1999 to 2001 flow to Australia. Hazaras are also thought to make up substantial proportions of the Afghan irregular migrant populations in Europe as well as transit countries Turkey and Indonesia and host countries Iran (and to a lesser extent Pakistan). Hazara irregular migration may only involve a small proportion of the total Hazara population, however, it is significant for Hazaras themselves as a security/livelihood strategy as well as for host, transit and destination countries.

Second, Hazaras strongly identify as an ethnic group; and it is their ethnicity that provides them strength but also makes them vulnerable. The distinctive facial features of Hazaras in some locations renders them visible, and they are widely acknowledged as having been subject to discrimination, exclusion and persecution in their home and host countries for many decades. This is reflected also in high finally determined refugee grant rates of applications made by Hazaras in Australia (DIBP 2013).<sup>1</sup> There is also a more practical aspect to this in that while some ethnic groups are notoriously difficult to assess and/or verify as part of refugee status determination and other visa-related processes, including because of close ethno-linguistic links to other groups (e.g. Rohingya and Bengalis), Hazaras' distinctiveness (while not wishing to overstate this) does ensure ethnicity is a potentially more straightforward issue compared with some other groups.<sup>2</sup>

Third, the small but comprehensive and deep body of research on Hazara migration indicates that their migration patterns and processes have particular features as it relates to migration within the sub-region. Examination of Hazara irregular maritime migration to Australia allows for these features to be examined and tested in a different, lengthier (and possibly more arduous) migration corridor. Such an examination allows for us to determine the extent to which similar migration strategies are evident.

Fourth, the nature of the irregular maritime migration flows of asylum seekers to Australia during the study period, of which seventy percent were from the region<sup>3</sup>, together with the granularity and comprehensiveness of the dataset, provides a unique opportunity to examine Hazara migration patterns in comparison to other ethnic groups from the region. It also allows for examination of differences (if any) between Hazaras who had lived in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran prior to departure.

This Part, with its focus on Hazara migration patterns and processes, comprises four chapters. This, the first chapter in Part Three, provides a descriptive overview of Hazara populations, displacement and migration in the region and to Australia, noting that this contextual material is only able to offer a summary of complex, enduring and dynamic issues. This overview draws on research and data on Hazara as well as Afghan migration, given that some material while relevant to this study may not be limited or focused specifically on Hazaras but refer to Afghans more generally. Naturally, more emphasis has been placed on the small body of scholarship on Hazara migration. Chapter 7 provides analysis of Hazara maritime asylum seeker migration patterns specifically as they relate to the demographic and social dimensions of asylum seeker agency. Chapter 8 then outlines analysis of the temporal dimensions, and Chapter 9 the spatial dimensions. The analysis has been conducted using the analytical framework articulated in Chapter 2, and which builds upon the extensive literatures on forced and irregular migration. The analysis of Hazara migration patterns and processes draws on results of the 2013 survey of maritime asylum seekers to Australia who were found to be refugees, the administrative dataset of all maritime asylum seekers to Australia as well as the existing body of Hazara/Afghan migration literature.

## **6.1 Who are the Hazara people?**

Historically, Hazaras were a highly influential ethnic group in West Asia, particularly in Afghanistan where they were estimated to comprise around two-thirds of the population

in the late 1880s (Lamer & Foster 2011). It is thought that around half of the Hazara population of Afghanistan was massacred or displaced in 1893 under the rule of Amir Abdur Rahman Khan (Mousavi 1998), rendering the once majority Hazara ethnic group a targeted minority. Hazara are predominantly Shia Muslims, and have been discriminated against, excluded and persecuted by the Sunni majority in Afghanistan for many decades (Harpviken 1996; Maley 2001; Marie 2013; Mousavi 1998). Hazaras are commonly referred to as the traditional underclass of Afghan society who are renowned for seeking justice and equality largely through non-violent means such as political activism, education, art and academic research (Ali 2015; Marie 2013).

Hazara ethnicity is argued as being based on five key aspects: physical appearance based on phenotype, religion, physical territory, social status and language dialect (Harpviken 1996, 21). Aspects of Hazara ethnicity are intrinsic, such as their physiology and distinctive facial features, which Ibrahimi describes as typical “Central Asian physiognomy of ...relatively flat nose, broader face and narrower eyes” (Ibrahimi 2012, 2). Harpviken also refers to scant facial hair and shorter stature of Hazaras (Harpviken 1996). Other aspects of the Hazara ethnicity have emerged over time, including as a result of strong differentiation perpetrated by others as a means of subjugation. Hazaras’ low social status and separate settlement locations (principally Hazarajat in central Afghanistan), have been brought about through century-plus discrimination and marginalisation, which has waxed and waned while remaining ever-present. Arguably one of the cornerstones has been sectarian dominance sought by Sunni Muslims determined to convert or push out Shia Hazara as part of broader ‘de-Shiitization’ policies and practices (Ibrahimi 2012, 6). Indeed, one of the recent statements by radical group Sipah Sahaba Taleban (a.k.a. Lashkar-e-Jhangvi or Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat) suggest that Hazaras are targets of extreme violence in Quetta more because of religion than ethnicity (as reported in Nishapuri 2013):

We don’t kill Shias because of their ethnic background (e.g., Hazara, Pashtun etc). We are not against any ethnicity. We kill Shias because of their faith, they are Kafir (infidel)...We will continue to kill Shias wherever we find them.

Data on the number of Shia killed in Pakistan (both Hazara and non-Hazara) suggest that sectarianism may well be at the core of some extremist groups, however, the overt identity of Hazaras also render them a target (Nishapuri 2013). The US Commission on International Religious Freedom, for example, found that Hazaras have long been

discriminated against and marginalised for a “combination of political, ethnic and religious reasons” (US Commission on IRF 2012, 6). This discrimination has taken many forms including illegal (over)taxing, forced recruitment, forced labour, physical abuse, detention and restricted freedom of movement (US Department of State 2011, 43).

Hazaras are widely recognised as having a strong ethnic identity, although Ibrahimi discusses this in terms of ‘scales of identity’, which operate at the local level and right the way through to the transnational level (Ibrahimi 2012). Hazara community and political groups operate transnationally, for example, in social media (e.g. facebook and twitter) and on websites, including *hazarawa.blogspot.com*, *Hazarapress.com*, *hazara.net*, *hazara.co.uk*, *worldhazaracouncil.org*, *hazaranewspakistan.wordpress.com*, *hazaraasylumseekers.wordpress.com*, *afghans-asylum.mihanblog.com*, and *hazarapeople.com*. Hazara tend to be well organized internationally and several coordinated ‘demonstration days’ in support of Hazaras have occurred at various times, including in Australia, Austria, Canada, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden Turkey and the USA (Kabul Press 2011). These highly coordinated demonstrations have been in response to particular incidents or violent campaigns against Hazaras, including the murders of Hazara in Quetta in August and September 2011 (Ibrahimi 2012; Kabul Press 2011; Melbourne Protests 2011). This transnational organisational capability and action reflects a strong ethnic identity, and yet Ali refers to the differences in Hazara identity in diaspora groups in Australia, which operate at the local level on the basis of existing traits that have in effect been imported, despite the potential for divisiveness (Ali 2013, 2):

Almost in every major cit[y], Hazaras are divided into a number groups formed on the basis of sect, *taifa* (sub-caste) and nationality. These groups are so antagonistic to one another that sometimes their differences even reach to the point of clash[ing]. They prefer to hold their own separate ceremonies and functions at different sites to celebrate and observe various events than to organize them jointly at a single place.

Despite these local differences, Hazaras appear largely united in their opposition to discrimination, marginalisation and persecution of Hazaras as well as in support of greater political power and religious freedom (World Hazara Council 2014). Monsutti describes their marginalisation as being a unifying aspect allowing for shared identity that may nevertheless allow being ‘Hazara’ to mean different things to different people



depending on context (Monsutti 2005). These two positive associations of the Hazara identity—political activism and religious freedom—are particularly important in Afghanistan and Pakistan, including because of the extent to which politics and religion are so closely intertwined in these countries (Barfield 2010; Harpviken 1996; Maley 1997; Marsden 1998). Canfield notes that despite Hazaras historically being notorious for their fractiousness, there has been a noticeable, positive and ‘self-conscious’ evolution in their political identity which was brought about by circumstance as well as leadership, most notably of Abdul Ali Mazari (Canfield 2004; Harpviken 1996). Mazari’s influence extended to uniting Hazaras by operating on the basis of inclusiveness rather than seeking to exclude particular groups, such as the Isma‘ili Hazaras “a minority normally scorned and persecuted by other Shi‘aas” (Canfield 2004, 256).

The emphasis was on an ethno-national Hazara identity instead of an Islamist one, which enabled the influences of Shiites in Iran to be moderated and a more local, unified identity to be fostered (Canfield 2004). Mousavi comments that “Mazari succeeded to bring together the many sections, forces and classes within Hazara and Shi‘a society and to represent a united people...” (Mousavi 1998, 195). This solidifying effect has allowed for the development of a transnational identity that has at its core at local social relationships as a basis for united action and advancement. In recent years, for example, Hazaras have improved their standing in political representation in Afghanistan, and currently hold 50 seats (or 20%) in the parliamentary Wolesi Jirga (House of the People) as well as 16 seats (or 16%) in the Meshrano Jirga (House of Elders) (Livingston & O’Hanlon 2015, 16). In 2005, Hazara held 35 seats in the Wolesi Jirga. The extent of Hazara representation is, however, contested with some scholars suggesting that the true representation levels are much lower and are currently around 4%, noting that 22% of all votes cast in the 2014 Afghan presidential election were by Hazaras (Abbasi reported in VIDC 2016). In addition, Ahmadi’s analysis of the performance of the Wolesi Jirga in 2015 also suggests systemic discrimination remains a serious concern, “in 2015, parliament questioned and then approved or rejected two groups of candidates for cabinet minister posts...the overall pattern – the rejection of all the women, Hazaras and Uzbeks – gave the appearance of party, ethnic or tanzim politics at play” (Ahmadi 2016, 4).

*Hazaras and gender*

The experiences of women and girls in Hazara communities reflect the broader gender situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan, in which gender inequality is pervasive and extreme (Lindisfarne & Tapper 1991; UN Women 2015). Overall, OECD's 2014 Social Institutions and Gender Index rate both Afghanistan and Pakistan poorly, coming in the 'high' category along with countries such as Guinea, Nepal and the Central African Republic.<sup>4</sup> However, the 2014 report also notes the well-documented period of severe repression of women and girls' rights under Taliban rule in Afghanistan and the measures subsequently taken to significantly improve their rights after the defeat of the regime. Significant advances in gender equality, however, have largely stalled reflecting Afghanistan's history as a highly conservative society. A 2016 United Kingdom Home Office report, for example, describes Afghanistan as a "strictly patriarchal society, which restricts women's freedom of movement, and limits access to healthcare services, justice and the workplace" (UK FO 2016, 5). A range of population statistics highlight aspects of differential treatment of women and girls compared with men and boys. For example, World Bank data on Afghanistan indicate that: the female to male labour force participation rate is 20.1 (meaning that 20.1 females to every 100 males are in the labour force); secondary school enrolment rates are much lower for females (35.2%) than males (61.5%); and the proportion of women in ministerial level positions is around 10% (World Bank 2016). Similar, although not as pronounced, statistics on Pakistan reflect systemic inequality there too. The Afghan Constitution sets female representation at 28% of both houses, the Wolesi Jirga and the Meshrano Jirga (articles 83 and 84 of the 2004 Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan).

Beyond the gender indicators, scholars suggest that the concept of gender in Afghanistan is heavily intertwined with social and economic relations but also with ethnicity, religion, domination, subordination and masculinity (Rostami-Povey 2012, 147). However, gender inequality also has legal dimensions and aspects are enshrined in sections of national legislation. Section 70 of Afghanistan's Civil Code, for example, sets the minimum legal age of marriage at 16 for girls and 18 for boys, allowing for the marriage of a girl aged between 15 and 16 with the father's consent (UK Home Office 2016). Marriage under the age of 15 is prohibited, however, in practice it occurs widely. It is estimated that 39% of females aged 20-24 in Afghanistan were married before the age of 18, which is amongst the highest rates in the world (UNFPA 2012). Further to

this, an estimated 60 to 80% of all marriages in Afghanistan are forced, most of these occurring in early years (Rastin-Tehrani & Yassari 2012).

Within this context of gender inequality in Afghanistan (and Pakistan), Hazara women have been described as independent and industrious, with many Hazara women highly educated and serving in political and professional fields (particularly during the pre-Taliban era) (Stone 2012). There are recent notable examples of Hazara women in political positions, including Habiba Sarabi (Afghanistan's first provincial governor), Sima Samar (current Chairperson of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission and former Afghan Minister for Women's Affairs) and Azra Jafari (first female mayor in Afghanistan) (Houk 2010).

Canfield notes that one of the distinguishing features of the Hazaras in recent decades has been their focus on educating boys and girls, which has been an integral part of forging a progressive ethnic identity (Canfield 2004). Interesting aspects related to migration and displacement have emerged to suggest better educational outcomes of females whose families have migrated. Research conducted in Pakistan of displaced Afghan Hazaras, for example, has found that the move away from the limiting social structures and biases prevalent in Afghanistan has allowed Hazara communities to more freely pursue girls' education, which is seen as a means to improve Hazaras socio-economic situation overall (Changezi & Biseth 2011; Opper & Waheed Wafa 2010).

Concepts of masculinity are an integral part of the gender dimension in the region, and are important aspect of Hazara society, including in how they are manifested in migration. Monsutti has found that the intra-regional migration of young Hazara males is an important aspect of rite of passage into adulthood that exposes them to hardship while physically and emotionally separating them from families and homes (Monsutti 2007). The rite of passage of Hazara males is likely to be influenced by inter-generational experience of war and displacement, which has contributed to separation, loss and the need to 'reclaim' masculinity (Gilani 2008). This has implications for a gendered form of migration, as Monsutti argues (2007, 182):

Men are the more mobile elements of domestic units. They go fighting or migrate abroad for work, sometimes for several years. Rural women tend to move less but play a much more crucial role in the family economy and strategies—possibly increased throughout the years of war—than men would publicly admit. Staying behind in the village of origin while so many men are absent, they gain a considerable importance and assume increasingly traditionally male tasks.

Monsutti also argues that considerable care needs to be taken when contemplating decision making within households in light of a “subtle matrifocality of the Hazara kinship system”, which allows for the development of women’s soft or subversive power (Monsutti 2007, 183). Outwardly, it would seem that male family members dominate, but this is not necessarily the case and may mask more complex dynamics, although Monsutti also acknowledges that this is “difficult to understand for a male external observer” (ibid). It is clear, however, that the structural and societal norms in Afghanistan and Pakistan do involve a strong degree of gender inequality, which may not preclude greater equality within households but neither act to reinforce equality nor provide the conditions to encourage it.

There is also an age-related aspect to this gendered form of migration, which extends beyond the ‘rite of passage’ concept and takes on additional importance, particularly when transnational family structures are considered. Within the region, it may be possible, and desirable for males to be mobile, moving between countries and cities in lines with seasonal patterns. However, this takes on a different tone when migration further afield is considered and undertaken, as Koser and Marsden argue (2013, 11):

A family may feel that a combination of adverse security conditions and economic hardship is such as to make it lose hope in a future for its children...it may take the view that it is better for one or more children to look for long-term opportunities elsewhere. The better off families may increase their options by having family members spread across the globe, particularly given the high value being placed on education.

This finding was also expressed in recent research conducted in Afghanistan with families of migrants who had travelled to Europe in 2015. The researchers found that in many cases there was considerable pressure on migrants to be a “good investment” for the family, as highlighted by one of the interviewees (van Bijlert 2016, 7).

All the family decided together that we would send our brother to Europe so he could help out the whole family financially once he makes it. We specifically chose Germany. We expected that our brother would be accepted as an asylum seeker in Germany... (Brother of a 25-year old migrant from Takhar)

## **6.2 Hazara populations, displacement and migration in the immediate region and beyond**

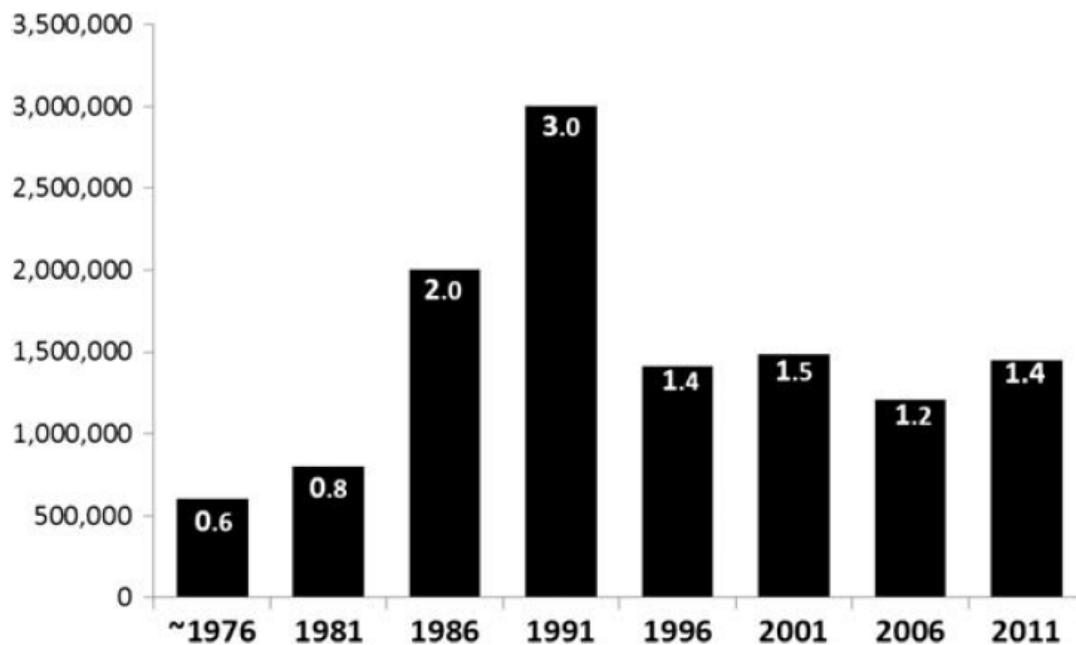
Population data are not available on the size of Hazara populations, although current estimates indicate that Hazaras comprise sizeable populations in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran. Smaller populations are also thought to live in several countries in Central Asia as well as Turkey (Sengupta 2016). The last population census in Afghanistan was conducted in 1979 (Haub 2009; UNFPA n.f.d). Only broad estimates of the Hazara population in Afghanistan are therefore available, although these should be treated with caution. Nevertheless, Hazaras are estimated to comprise around 2.9 million of Afghanistan's total estimated population of 32.5 million (CIA 2015), although the Hazara community estimates it to be much higher at between 10 and 19 percent of the population (or 3.2 to 6.2 million) (US CIRF 2012).

Estimating the number of Hazaras living in Pakistan is equally challenging. The number of Afghan Hazaras living in Pakistan at the time of the 1998 population census in Pakistan was considered relatively low at around 40,000 people (or 1.3%); by far the majority of Afghans were Pashtun at around 2.48 million (or 81.5%) (Population Census Organisation & UNHCR 2005, 6). Other more recent estimates place the population of Hazaras in Pakistan much higher, although in the absence of official statistics, these estimates are not able to be tested or verified—estimates range from 500,000 (Nishapuri 2013) to 650,000 (Sumbal 2013). Despite the lack of robust data on the Hazara population in Pakistan, which is to some extent caught up in politics, there are two points that seem to be universally accepted: i) the majority of Hazaras in Pakistan live in Quetta, the capital of the province of Balochistan; ii) the size of the population is much smaller than that in Afghanistan. Some researchers also note the difficulties in placing estimates on the size of Hazara populations in the region because perpetual movement between Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran is a feature of (regional) society (Monsutti 2005).

Unlike for Afghanistan and Pakistan, population estimates in Iran are based on population census data (see Figure 6.1). Data on the Afghan population in Iran has been collected over time, including in two recent national censuses conducted in 2006 and 2011. The data collected in 2006 indicates that Afghans totalled 1.2 million, with Hazara accounting for 47% (or 564,000) (Abbasi-Shavazi et al 2016). The size of the

Hazara population may have increased slightly in light of the 2011 population census results, which indicate that the Afghan population in Iran rose to 1.4 million (See Figure 6.1). More recently, estimates of the total Afghan population in Iran (documented and undocumented) indicate that there are around 1.5 documented Afghans in Iran (including 950,000 refugees who hold Amayesh cards<sup>5</sup>) plus around 1 million undocumented Afghans (Abbasi-Shavazi et al 2017; UNHCR 2015).

Although ethnic breakdown over time is not available of the Afghan population in Iran we do know that Shiite Afghans are likely to be in much higher proportions than for Pakistan given sectarianism in the region, as reflected in the 2006 data. There has been long-term movement of Shia Hazaras to Iran, and Hazaras had been making pilgrimages to Iran for decades well before war broke out in 1979 (Abbasi-Shavazi et al 2017; Hugo et al 2012). Overall, it is estimated that around half of all Afghans residing in Iran are Shia Hazara (Abbasi-Shavazi et al 2012; Abbasi-Shavazi et al 2017).



**FIGURE 6.1: Stock of Afghan immigrants in Iran, 1976–2011**

Source: Hugo et al (2012), based on Iranian census data

Based on the existing data and estimates, we can see that the largest Hazara population in the region is in Afghanistan (around 2.9 million), with populations in Pakistan and Iran being smaller in size at around 5-600,000 (Pakistan) and up to 1.2 million (Iran).

### Recent periods of displacement

Fluctuations in displacement and migration in and from Afghanistan (both international and internal) in recent decades, including of Hazaras, have tended to correlate to phases of armed conflict and political instability. These phases include: the Soviet invasion (1978–89); the Soviet withdrawal and the subsequent civil war (1989–95); the Taliban rule (1995–2001); the post-9/11 US-led invasion (2001–2002); the defeat of the Taliban and the establishment of an interim government and neo-Taliban insurgency (2002–2006); ongoing (rising) civil conflict and the presence/withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) (2007–14). While these ‘phases’ may be marked by particular events, which have variously affected displacement levels, Figure 6.2 shows that displacement has been a constant feature of the landscape in Afghanistan. This accords with data compiled by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in 2009, which found that 76 per cent of Afghans are displaced at least once in their lives, many of them repeatedly (ICRC 2009).

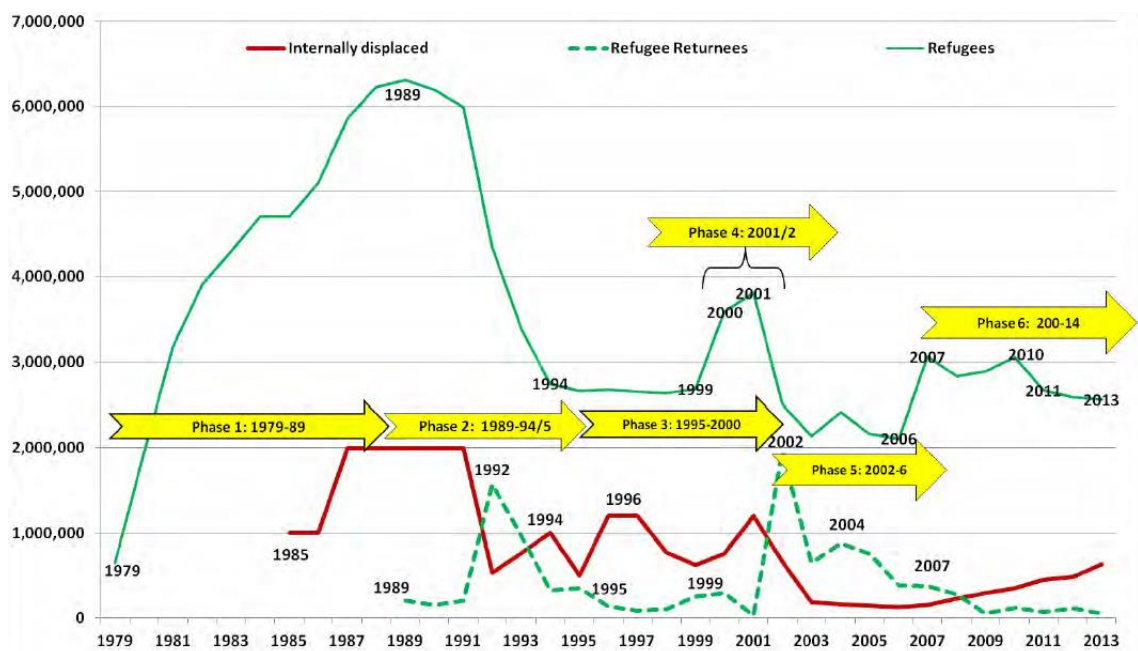
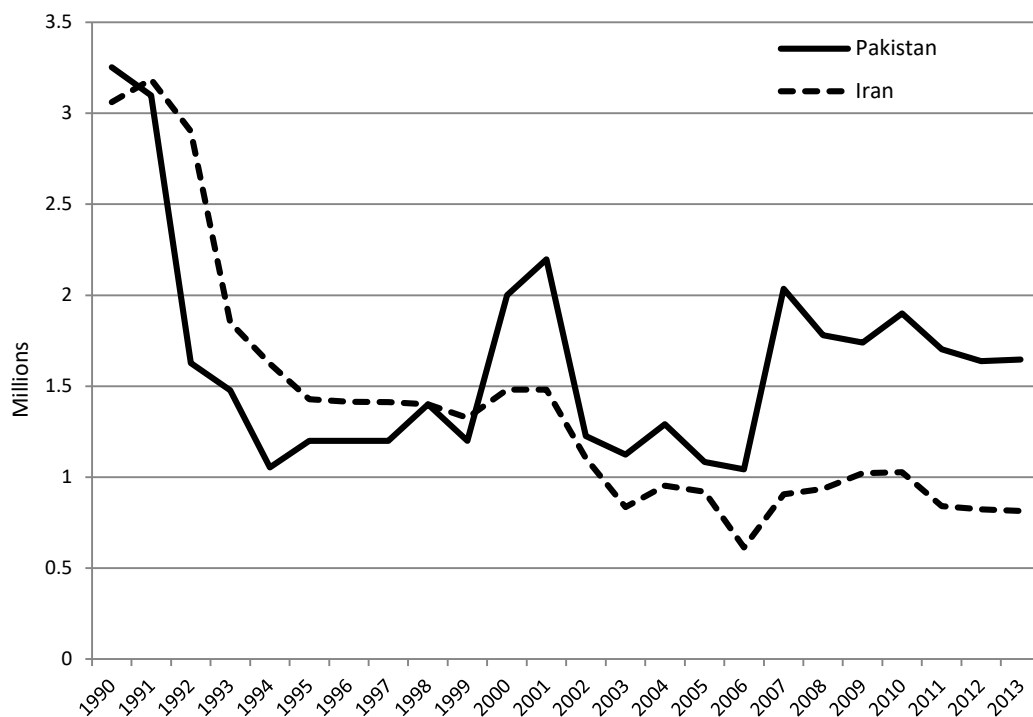


FIGURE 6.2: Phases of displacement in and from Afghanistan, 1979 to 2014

Source: Schmeidl 2016

Displacement from Afghanistan has largely been to Pakistan and Iran. UNHCR figures indicate that Pakistan has been the largest host country of Afghan refugees in the world

since 2000 when it surpassed Iran (UNHCR 2016). Figure 6.3 shows that a significant difference between the two Afghan refugee populations emerged in 2007, after which time Pakistan has hosted between 750,000 to 1 million more Afghan refugees, noting that these UNHCR figures do not include other Afghans who may be living in Iran or Pakistan. There are also thought to be significant irregular or undocumented Afghan populations in both countries additional to the UNHCR figures; recent estimates indicate that around 1 million undocumented Afghans were residing in Iran (Abbasi-Shavazi et al 2017; UNHCR 2015).



**FIGURE 6.3** Afghan refugee populations in Iran and Pakistan, 1990 to 2013

Source: UNHCR 2016

Within the broader parameters of Afghan displacement, Hazaras have tended to gravitate to specific locations within Pakistan (principally Quetta) and Iran (Tehran, Mashhad, Isfahan, Zabol). Movements to and between these locations are related to historical links/communities, social networks, expectation of higher degrees of religious/ethnic tolerance, and the preferences of authorities (including restrictions on freedom of movement, particularly in Iran). Hazaras face different issues and problems in Iran and Pakistan. While there is much greater religious tolerance in Iran of Hazaras' beliefs, there is pressure on Hazaras (and other Afghans) in Iran to return to Afghanistan



(Houk 2010). This is demonstrated by the ‘waves’ of deportations by the Iranian authorities from 1990, after Iran’s initial period of ‘open door’ policy during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (Glazebrook & Abbasi-Shavazi 2007, 191; Koser & Marsden 2013). It is also reflected in repatriation rates, as noted by Abbasi-Shavazi and Glazebrook (2006, 6):

[in 2005] while Hazaras comprise 43 percent of documented Afghans in Iran (377,036), their returns are only 25.6 percent of the total UNHCR-assisted return figures up to August 2005...this imbalance is due both to greater economic opportunities in Iran for Hazaras, and perceptions of continued prejudice against Shias in Afghanistan.

Similar reluctance to return to Afghanistan was also found in research conducted in Mashhad of Hazaras, although in this study the overwhelming issue of concern to Hazaras was physical insecurity and war (Jamshidiha & Ali Babaie 2002). Despite feeling more physically secure in Iran, other issues plague Hazaras such as education access, freedom of movement and housing insecurity. Abbasi-Shavazi and Glazebrook recount the difficulties experienced by an Afghan Hazara widow and her family in Mashhad (2007, 197):

She elaborated these troubles in terms of the legal restrictions that prevented her sons from undertaking higher education and confined them to laboring jobs; precluded her from officially owning her own house; and required her to apply for a permit to travel beyond the city of Mashhad, for example, to visit her daughter and grandchildren in Tehran.

More recently, however, Iran has improved access to education for Afghans regardless of their legal status, and including Afghan refugees (Abbasi-Shavazi and Sadeghi 2016; Abbasi-Shavazi et al 2017). This is likely to have further effect on the education and employment outcomes of third and subsequent generations Afghans in Iran, which have shown improved outcomes compared with first and second generation Afghans residing in Iran (Abbasi-Shavazi and Sadeghi 2016).

The situation has been different for Hazaras living in Pakistan, most of whom live in the city of Quetta. Physical insecurity, most pointedly by being targeted by Sunni extremists, is a major and perpetual issue. Examples of episodes of violence against Hazaras in Quetta during the study period included: 73 people were killed by a bomb blast at a Shia procession, which the extremist group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi claimed responsibility for (September 2010); 13 people were killed in a suicide bombing near Hazara Eid Gah (August 2011); 26 Hazaras were murdered after their bus was stopped

on the highway between Mastung and Quetta (September 2011); 14 people were killed when their bus was fired upon (September 2011); 15 people were killed in a suicide bombing targeting Hazaras on a bus returning to Quetta from Iran (June 2012), four simultaneous bombings in Quetta results in the deaths of 115 people and injury of a further 270, again claimed by Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (January 2013). Numerous other murders of smaller numbers of Hazara and non-Hazara Shia occurred during this period (Nashipuri 2013). While these incidents, many of which were subsequently claimed responsibility for, target Shia members of Quetta's community, general insecurity also poses extraordinary challenges. Quetta is recognised as a haven for extremist and criminal networks who have been able to exploit poor governance and infrastructure (Hinds 2014; Thames 2014).<sup>6</sup>

Up until 2016, issues of deportation and limited freedom of movement, such as experienced in Iran, were largely irrelevant for Hazaras in Pakistan—at least formally, as they were likely to be more vulnerable outside of Hazara-majority parts of Quetta, which may have acted to limit movement. Since the beginning of 2016, however, there have been increasingly larger movements of Afghans from Pakistan back to Afghanistan, which is part of Pakistani efforts to coerce and deport Afghans residing in the country (IOM 2016; Rasmussen 2016).

Recent attacks by Taliban on the highways linking Ghazni province and Quetta have also significantly increased the risks to Hazara travelling between Afghanistan and Pakistan, as they are often targeted by violent extremists (Constable 2015). Koser and Marsden argue that Hazaras' "capacity to secure an adequate livelihood by moving between the Hazarajat and Quetta has been adversely affected by the security threats that they face..." (2013, 20). This is particularly problematic at times because migration and movement between Quetta and Hazarajat (and Kabul and elsewhere) is commonplace and long-standing (Koser & Marsden 2013; Monsutti 2005). Quetta continues to be a key transit point for Hazara, and plays a pivotal role in a "transnational network of hundreds of thousands of migrant workers and refugees that stretched from Hazarajat, Iran and beyond" (Ibrahimi 2012, 12).

*Migration-displacement nexus*

Central to considerations of Hazara migration in modern times has been the concept of forced migration, including of asylum seekers, refugees, internally displaced persons, and trafficked migrants. However, this needs to be viewed in a broader migration context, particularly in light of the body of literature that articulates the migration-displacement nexus relevant to Hazara (and Afghan) migration. Migration as a social, security and economic strategy acknowledges that there are often many reasons underpinning migration that are not static but dynamic in nature (Koser & Marsden 2013; Majidi et al 2016; Stigter & Monsutti 2005), acknowledging that much of this work is specific to the sub-region as well as migration to Europe (Linke 2016). Alessandro Monsutti, for example, has argued that in relation to Hazaras, no hard and fast distinction can be made between refugees and economic migrants and that a ‘migration continuum’ exists that has developed as part of a broader strategy of survival (2005, 168-9). This is also reflected in the analysis of Koser and Marsden (2013, 19):

...any new migration or displacement will take place against the backdrop of – and may be hard to distinguish from – a long tradition of labour migration to Pakistan and Iran. In a situation in which much of the Afghan population is living at a highly marginal level, it is common for households to spread their risks by having, for example, some family members working on the land, others working in one or other urban centre within Afghanistan and still others migrating to work in Pakistan or Iran.

Similarly, recent qualitative research undertaken in Afghanistan with families of people who migrated to Europe in 2015 has found that a combination of factors related to instability (security and economic) and poor prospects for the future were the main reasons cited for family members migrating (Linke 2016, 9):

...although the majority of the respondents mentioned economic and/or educational opportunities as a main contributing factor, it was clear that in almost all cases declining security had also been a significant (primary or contributing) factor. In some cases where insecurity and threats had been a primary concern, the subsequent negative impact on the families’ income opportunities appeared to have become the final push in the decision to leave.

Migration survival strategies employed by discriminated/marginalised (if not persecuted) people in fragile states who are unable to rely on state authorities necessarily place emphasis on a range of social networks, and be necessarily strategic in realising migration intentions in challenging circumstances (Horst 2006; Stigter and Monsutti 2005). When viewed as a social strategy, the existence of migration pathways and networks, including to and within destination countries, is almost certainly likely to

have an impact on the tendency and ability of groups of people to migrate successfully. Migration as part of historical and cultural norms is an aspect that is particularly relevant to Hazara migration, with Monsutti arguing that trust and collaboration via social networks is often linked to ethnicity, religion and to those whose origin is known: family or neighbours (Monsutti 2005, 172).

The contexts in which migration occurs also has implications for patterns and processes adopted. As an ethnic minority that is routinely targeted by officials, authorities, extremists and other citizens more generally, Hazaras have developed specific migration processes that pivot on Hazara identity and solidarity in an environment in which “Shiites and Sunnis do not readily mix with each other...When Hazaras travel, they prefer to be with other Hazaras” (Monsutti 2005, 172). However, Monsutti also cautions on the risk of placing too much weight on these aspects when examining migration patterns and processes (2007, 172):

Although economic and personal insecurity due to the ravages of war partly explain these population movements, they were never unidirectional. We are a long way from the figure of the refugee compelled to leave his or her homeland in the face of a towering threat, with the vague hope of one day being able to return. Seen through those migratory strategies, the concepts of “economic migrant,” “political refugee,” “country of origin,” “host country,” “voluntary” or “forced” migration, or even “return,” appear singularly reductionist.

There is very little research into Hazara migration patterns and process beyond the immediate inter-linked ‘Hazara’ countries of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran. The research and analysis on these aspects tends to be conducted and presented in a broader context of ‘Afghan migration’, including because of the different geo-spatial lens adopted—‘Afghan’ becomes the more relevant and perhaps digestible variable when examining migration to more distant countries in Europe, North America or elsewhere. There is also the important issue of data, particularly as it relates to migration flows, including data on detections/interceptions of irregular migrants, applications lodged by asylum seekers, and arrival/entry statistics, none of which are available by ethnicity, all of which are available by citizenship/origin country. This dictates the nature of reporting and analysis of topics, and also limits scholarly enquiry into the international migration of Hazaras.

### 6.3 Hazara migration to Australia

While Afghan migration to Australia can be traced back to the mid-1800s when around 3,000 Afghan cameleers worked in Central Australia on exploration and transportation endeavours, Hazara migration to Australia really commenced in the 1980s after the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979 (Fazal 2001). The Afghan cameleers had been almost exclusively Pashtuns whereas a sizeable proportion of Afghans who came to Australia (or remained in Australia) as refugees in the 1980s were Hazara (Fazal 2001; Koser & Marsden 2013). By 1996 there were 5,824 Afghanistan-born settlers in Australia, 4,555 of whom spoke Dari (Fazal 2001, 165).

The second period of Hazara migration to Australia was between 1999 and 2001, when around 12,000 maritime asylum seekers mainly from Afghanistan and Iraq arrived (Maley 2001, 365; Glazebrook 2004). This period coincided with the Taliban government in Afghanistan (1996 to 2001) and was a key factor in displacement generally, not just to Australia (Koser & Marsden 2013). The majority of Afghan maritime asylum seekers at this time were Hazaras, and in a similar vein to those included in this study, high refugee recognition rates of Hazaras were a feature of that flow (Maley 2001, 361). Consequently, there is a small diaspora population of Hazaras in Australia. During the 2011 Population Census, for example, just over 20,000 people reported their ancestry as 'Afghan', and 4,903 as 'Hazara' (noting that two responses per person were allowed) (DSS 2015). Of the 28,000 Afghanistan-born population recorded in the census, the languages reported were Dari (50.3%), Hazaraghi (20.7%), Persian excluding Dari (12.1%), Pashto (7.2%) and other (9.7%), which would indicate that many (and possibly a majority) of Afghanistan-born are likely to be Hazara.

#### *Visa access issues*

In terms of mobility through regulated pathways, the Henley Visa Index indicates that Afghans have the lowest visa access rates in the world; Afghanistan is ranked lowest out of 104 citizenships, with Pakistan ranked at 103 (Henley and Partners 2016). The visa options available to Hazaras—most of whom are Afghan or Pakistani citizens—being extremely limited (or non-existent), the ability to travel to most countries on visas

would also necessarily be highly restricted. This is reflected in official statistics on regular arrivals data to Australia. In program year 2011–12, for example, Afghans accounted for just 4,856 (or 0.0003%) of all arrivals to Australia, which totalled 14,597,168 (DIBP 2015). In contrast, Pakistanis accounted for 23,698 arrivals, and Iranians totalled 20,074 arrivals. To put this in context, these relatively small numbers of arrivals of citizens of the region are dissimilar, for example, to those of Indonesians (184,301), Malaysians (332,305) and those from the United Kingdom (900,280).

The composition of the Afghan arrivals for the 2011–12 program year highlight distinct characteristics and reflect Afghanistan's very low ranking on the Henley visa index. Of the 4,856 Afghan arrivals in 2011–12, very few arrived on visitor visas (just 199, or 4.1%) compared with Afghan settler arrivals (1609, or 33.1%). Most settlers were on humanitarian visas (825, or 51.3%) compared to family visas (766, or 47.6%) or skilled migration visas (18, or 1.1%). It is possible to say, therefore, that it is very difficult to enter Australia as an Afghan as a visitor, which in addition to global visa access rankings is also related to Afghanistan's very high non-return rate from Australia.<sup>7</sup>

#### *Hazara maritime asylum seekers*

Data on the 1999 to 2001 flow of maritime asylum seekers is limited. However, it is apparent that Hazaras made up a sizeable proportion of the total number of arrivals (Maley 2001). It is also apparent from the limited data available that there was not the same diversity of asylum seekers as was seen during the study period, as most asylum seekers in the earlier flow were from Afghanistan and Iraq (Maley 2001).

The next Chapter provides a detailed discussion of the demography of Hazara maritime asylum seekers who arrived in Australia during the study period, so I do not propose to repeat it here. It is useful, however, to provide a brief overview of the Hazara maritime asylum seeker population as it relates to the 2013 survey sample. The administrative data allows for a detailed examination of what Hazaras did, whereas the survey results allow for a better understanding how Hazara asylum seekers contemplated and thought about their migrations. Importantly, to better account for Hazara particularities (if any), the survey analysis has been conducted using a subset of survey respondents (n=899), based on the three key Hazara origin countries (Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran) as well as people from other neighbouring countries (e.g. Iraq). Sri Lankan Tamils (n=100) and other minor ethnic groups from outside the region (n=9) have been excluded, including

because of the shorter distances and direct routes travelled, which is likely to have affected decision making processes and migration journeys.

**TABLE 6.1 Survey respondents' ethnicity—major groups from the region**

	<b>Hazaras</b>	<b>Pashtun</b>	<b>Persian</b>	<b>Kurdish</b>	<b>Arab</b>	<b>Total</b>
Survey respondents (i)	413 (48.9%)	38 (4.5%)	195 (23.1%)	96 (11.4%)	103 (12.2%)	845 (100%)
Maritime asylum seekers (ii)	12,114 (54.0%)	1,186 (5.3%)	5,129 (22.8%)	2,586 (11.5%)	1,437 (6.4%)	22,452 (100%)

Sources: (i) Irregular maritime asylum seeker survey dataset (2013); (ii) Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014).

Notes: Does not include missing data or all ethnic groups; the survey sub-sample (n=899) also includes, in addition to those in the table, 19 Tajiks, 13 Turks and 22 Azeris.

As can be seen in Table 6.1, the survey subsample generally reflects the underlying population of unauthorised maritime asylum seekers, which is due to the survey design as well as the application of weights (by citizenship, age and sex). In terms of the sex and age profiles of Hazara respondents, therefore, these are consistent with the underlying population. For example, 98% of Hazara respondents were male and two per cent female; just 2.9% (or 388) of all Hazara unauthorised maritime asylum seekers were female.

Table 6.2 also shows that the Hazara respondents included in the sample are consistent with the underlying population in relation to variables that were not subject to re-weighting. As shown in Table 6.2 the vast majority of Hazara survey respondents were born in Afghanistan and the majority migrated from Pakistan. This is consistent with the underlying population of Hazara unauthorised maritime asylum seekers as outlined in Table 7.2 and section 7.3 in Chapter 7.

**TABLE 6.2 Hazara respondents' countries of birth and long-term residence**

	<b>Afghanistan</b>	<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>Iran</b>	<b>Other</b>
Country of birth	91.3%	7.2%	1.5%	0.0%
Last country of residence	36.9%	50.8%	10.3%	1.9%

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker survey dataset (2013).

Notes: n=413. Weighted. Questions 4 & 12. Last country of long-term residence is defined as the last country in which the respondent lived for at least 12 months prior to migrating to Australia. 'Other' includes Indonesia, Syria and the United Kingdom.

## 6.4 Conclusions

The displacement of Hazaras over time particularly to Pakistan and Iran, and the heavy reliance on close social links based on ethnic identity at the local level, has resulted in Hazaras developing particular survival strategies in a hostile environment. These strategies have involved splitting families and developing transnational networks linked by specific migration processes and practices as a means of surviving but also of prospering within heavily circumscribed limits. Within the context of the broader literatures on forced and irregular migration, which provide little room for migrant self-agency but seem overly preoccupied with the geopolitics and policy aspects of such migration, examining the extent and nature of agency of a group of people widely recognised as being subject to inter-generational discrimination, marginalisation and persecution, provides the opportunity to re-think how and why people engage in difficult and dangerous migration. The granularity of the administrative data, together with the 2013 survey results in which Hazaras made up over forty percent of the respondents (n=413), allows a greater focus to be placed on what Hazaras did and how they did it, rather than purely on the external factors causing migration. It offers the chance of a different but nevertheless important perspective to emerge that more squarely focuses on the migration patterns and processes of maritime asylum seekers.

## Notes

- 1 While finally determined grant rates are not available by ethnicity, the administrative dataset indicates that almost all Afghan irregular maritime asylum seekers were Hazara (93%). Official data show that annual final grant rates of all irregular maritime asylum seekers between 2009 and 2013 ranged between 88 and 98.8%, with rates for Afghans ranging between 95.9 and 100% (DIBP 2013: 30). This is in contrast, for example, to annual final grant rates of asylum seekers who sought asylum after arriving regularly in Australia on a visitor, student or other visa, which were between 43.4% and 51.1% over the same period (2009 to 2013) (DIBP 2013: 19).



- 2 I recognise that the data analysed are those that have been provided by asylum seekers to authorities. To some extent, some information such as age, citizenship and ethnicity may be based on fraudulent documents or misinformation for the purposes of attaining a protection visa, however, the extent of misinformation is likely to be insignificant. Ethnicity, at least for some groups such as Hazara, would prove hard to falsify compared with others, including because of distinctive physiology and/or ethno-linguistic traits. It is difficult to assess whether a person from Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh is Rohingya or Bengali, for example, given their similar appearances and linguistic similarities (Jahan 2014; Parnini 2013). The distinctive appearance and dialect of Hazaras, while not singular in totality nor incapable of copying, would prove much more difficult to falsify, including because of a sizeable Hazara community in Australia available to act as interpreters.
- 3 For the purposes of this analysis, the region includes origin countries in West and South Asia, including Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Pakistan, the Palestinian Authority, Syria and Turkey.
- 4 The OECD's Social Institutions and Gender Index involves an assessment of countries' legal and other normative institutions. Discriminatory social institutions are defined as the formal and informal laws, attitudes and practices that restrict women's and girls' access to rights, justice and empowerment opportunities.
- 5 The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and UNHCR conduct annual re-registration of refugees under the Amayesh scheme, whereby refugees are issued with Amayesh cards. Under the Amayesh scheme refugees are able to access basic services. Amayesh cards make it possible to receive a work permit in some circumstances.
- 6 There have also been sensitive suggestions made by analysts that regional powers, such as India, fuel sectarian violence in Baluchistan as a means of continued destabilisation of Pakistan (Fair 2009; Sumbal 2013). While these assertions remain unfounded (and difficult to substantiate), the influence of other, more powerful States in the more fragile and unstable Afghanistan and Pakistan are more difficult to refute.
- 7 In the Australian context, the lack of visa access for Afghan citizens is consistent with and compounded by official non-return rates, which are based on the extent to which citizenship groups comply with visitor visa departure requirements (DIAC 2013). The non-return rates for Afghanistan for program years 2010-11 and 2011-12 were among the highest of all citizenships in the world, along with Eritrea and Liberia. Afghanistan's non-return rate was 19.02 in 2011-12 compared to the global average of 0.79 per hundred visitors. Pakistan's was relatively high at 4.44 (DIAC 2013). Non-return rates are used by visa officers in assessing applications. In this context, the ability of Afghan (Hazara) passport holders to secure visas is extremely low, especially if a family group were proposing to travel as the chances of them not returning would be perceived to be even higher. Similar restrictions would also apply to Pakistani Hazara, noting that Pakistan's non-return rate was not as high as Afghanistan's but much higher than the global average.

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## 7 Demographic & social dimensions\*

Examination of the demographic characteristics of the Hazara asylum seeker population provides a useful means through which the extent of agency can be gauged. Given the nature of the journeys undertaken, which involve risks, uncertainties and danger, plus the considerable distances travelled, it is hypothesised that the Hazara population reflects characteristics considered by Hazaras themselves as more suited to the very challenging migration ‘experience’. Migration as a survival strategy, involving the exercise of agency under arduous conditions and through the utilisation of local community and transnational networks, has been researched by anthropologists with particular interests in Afghan populations at risk of forced migration or populations that have been displaced internally and/or to neighbouring countries by war. Alessandro Monsutti’s extensive ethnographic research on Hazaras from Afghanistan points to the ways in which communities share information, resources and engage in mutual support as a means of survival and advancement. Monsutti’s important studies have involved detailed examinations of individuals within specific cultural, social and geographic bounds. Qualitative research methodologies were employed to delve deeply into small groups to uncover migration processes developed through social interactions over time and space, but have limited ability to answer questions on the extent to which agency is able to be realised, and asylum seeking to distant geographies achieved. Building on the work of other disciplines, such as anthropology and human geography, the analysis of an entire Hazara asylum seeker population—its demographic characteristics as well as social migration dimensions—attempts to assess the extent to which Hazara have engaged in irregular maritime migration to Australia. In this Chapter the specific demographic and social dimensions are analysed.

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\* This chapter draws on a paper presented at the *Afghan Migration: Aspirations, Movements, Demography, Integration & Return Conference*, School of Demography, The Australian National University, 23 & 24 March 2016, titled ‘Future seekers in an era of survival migration: The demography and decisions of Afghan maritime asylum seekers to Australia’.

Before embarking on the examination of Hazara asylum seekers, it is worth briefly touching on why an examination of demography is important and what it can usefully tell us about agency and movements. Many people with ‘high value’ passports that provide the ability to travel easily, and occasionally at short notice, take this for granted, and may not comprehend fully the significant variation in people’s access to international mobility (and to a lesser extent migration) based on the passport they carry.<sup>1</sup> Those with ‘high value’ passports can in most situations choose when to travel, where to travel and with whom to travel. A family holiday internationally is not out of reach for most people in developed countries, including because of the ease in which they are able to enter and stay in a multitude of countries as well as the ongoing reductions in the cost of international air travel (IATA 2014). This level of access and choice, however, is markedly different for people from developing, poor and unstable countries, such as Afghanistan, as was discussed in the preceding chapter.

Against this backdrop of limited international mobility, analysis of the demographic characteristics allows us to develop a much deeper understanding of movements and migration that goes beyond citizenship. Examining who arrived as asylum seekers in terms of ethnicity, sex, age, education levels, marital status, migrating family status, origin country as well as who people travelled with (including friends) provides the ability to assess the extent of family separation, the gender aspects of irregular migration as well as the extent to which populations in origin and host countries have migrated. In doing so we can answer the following key research questions:

- Were some demographic groups (e.g. males, younger adults) more likely to exercise agency and be irregular maritime asylum seekers than other groups (e.g. females, minors and the aged)?
- Who did Hazaras travel with, and how did this compare with other groups from the region? To what extent did Hazara asylum seekers undertake migration in family groups? Were Hazaras more likely to travel without family, including as unaccompanied minors?

The analysis presented in this chapter draws on the irregular maritime asylum seeker dataset as well as the results of specific questions in the 2013 survey of former irregular maritime asylum seekers. The analysis is placed within the existing body of literature and research findings relevant to the study population. In the following section a brief overview of the key demographic characteristics of the Hazara asylum seekers study



population is provided before analysis of the demographic dimensions of the population is presented. The chapter then includes an analysis and discussion of who Hazara asylum seekers travelled with, before outlining some conclusions on the demographic and social dimensions of asylum seeker agency.

### 7.1 Demography of the Hazara sub-population—Who migrated?

Hazaras were the largest ethnic group of maritime asylum seekers to arrive in Australia during the study period, totalling 12,136 people and making up 31% of the total population of maritime asylum seeker arrivals. The next major ethnic group was Tamil (6,651 people), as can be seen on Table 7.1, followed by several groups from the West and South Asia regions, including Persians, Arabs, Kurds and Pashtuns.

**TABLE 7.1 Major ethnic groups—irregular maritime asylum seeker population, 2008–2013**

<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Hazara	12,136	31.24
Tamil	6,651	17.12
Persian	5,174	13.32
Arab	4,126	10.62
Kurdish	2,844	7.32
Rohingya	1,720	4.43
Pashtun	1,186	3.05
Kinh	782	2.01
Bengali	655	1.69
Sinhalese	577	1.49
Turkish	540	1.39
Azari	390	1.00
Tajik	377	0.97
Turkmen	134	0.34
Punjabi	133	0.34
Other	254	0.66
Unknown	1,168	3.01
<b>Total</b>	<b>38,847</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014).

The Hazaras who arrived as irregular maritime asylum seekers to Australia between 2008 and 2013 were predominantly Afghan citizens, although as can be seen from Table 7.2 just over nine percent presented as Pakistani citizens.<sup>2</sup>

TABLE 7.2 Hazara and other main ethnic groups of the region by citizenship

Citizenship	Hazara	Pashtun	Persian	Kurdish	Arab
Afghan	10,905 (90.4%)	320 (27.0%)	4 (0.1%)	6 (0.2%)	1 (0.07%)
Pakistani	1,125 (9.3%)	863 (72.8%)	2 (0.04%)	1 (0.04%)	2 (0.1%)
Iranian	39 (0.3%)	3 (0.2%)	5,086 (99.2%)	1,074 (41.5%)	1,021 (71.1%)
Stateless	45 (0.4%)	0 (0.0%)	37 (0.7%)	1,505 (58.2%)	413 (28.7%)
Total	12,114 (100%)	1,186 (100%)	5,129 (100%)	2,586 (100%)	1,437 (100%)

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014).

Notes: N=22,452. Does not include missing data or all ethnic groups.

When Afghan citizenship is examined by ethnicity, 93% of Afghan irregular maritime asylum seekers were Hazara, three percent were Tajik and 2.7% were Pashtun.

It is not possible to compare the Hazara irregular maritime asylum seeker sub-population to resettled refugees because data on ethnicity is not collected for the Overseas Arrivals and Departures dataset, from which the dataset on resettled refugee arrivals is drawn (see discussion in Chapter 4). It is also very difficult to compare the Hazara sub-population to the general populations living in Afghanistan and Pakistan (and to a lesser extent Iran). One of the main reasons for this is a lack of up-to-date, accessible census or other population data (CIA 2015; UN Statistics Division 2014). The last population census in Afghanistan, for example, was conducted in 1979 (Haub 2009; UN Statistics Division 2014). Only broad estimates are therefore available, although these should be treated with caution. That said, such estimates do usefully highlight that the Afghan irregular maritime asylum seeker sub-population does not reflect the underlying population of Afghanistan but is instead significantly over-represented by Hazaras compared with other ethnic groups. The US Library of Congress, for example, estimated that at the start of the study period for this research (2008), Hazaras were around 9% of the population in Afghanistan, with other main ethnic groups as follows: Pashtun (42%); Tajik (27%); Uzbek (9%); Aimak (4%); Turkmen (3%); and Baloch (2%) (Lamer & Foster 2011). Hazaras are estimated to comprise around 2.9 million of Afghanistan's total estimated population of 32.5 million

(CIA 2015). The number of Afghan Hazaras living in Pakistan at the time of the 1998 population census in Pakistan was considered relatively low at around 40,000 people (or 1.3%); by far the majority of Afghans were Pashtun at around 2.48 million (or 81.5%) (Population Census Organisation & UNHCR 2005, 6), although movement between Afghanistan and Pakistan is a feature of society, particularly for Afghan Hazaras (Monsutti 2005), rendering these 1998 figures obsolete. Unfortunately, there is very little information on the Pakistani Hazara population. Fairly recent estimates range from 500,000 to 600,000 although these are unverified and (again) are likely to not reflect the size of the true population (Nishapuri 2013; Sumbal 2013).

### **An Afghan flow or a Hazara flow?**

The data outlined in Table 7.3 indicate that the irregular maritime migration flow from the region could be characterised more a ‘Hazara’ flow than an ‘Afghan’ flow, notwithstanding that Afghans were the largest citizenship group to have arrived during the study period. The remainder of this section provides an overview of the demography of the Hazara sub-population who travelled to Australia, with reference to sex, age, marital status, migrating family status, education and occupational grouping. The key variable used for analysis of the Hazara sub-population is that of last country of long-term residence.<sup>3</sup> Given that no reliable data is available on the Hazara populations of Afghanistan or Pakistan, or of other Hazara migrants to Australia, or of Hazara migrants to other parts of the world (either regular or irregular), last country of long-term residence allows for comparison of Hazaras populations who were living in different countries in the region. This data provide a useful basis for the analysis outlined in next section in particular, which examines the migration patterns between the three countries as well as through transit countries to Australia. Where relevant, Hazaras are also compared with the other four main ethnic groups from the region who travelled as irregular maritime asylum seekers: Persians, Arabs, Kurds and Pashtuns (see Table 4.5 in Chapter 4). The lack of robust population data for Afghanistan and Pakistan make it problematic to place too much weight on comparing the Hazara asylum seeker population with general estimates of Hazara populations in origin countries. However, from the little we do know, it would appear that Hazaras who lived in Pakistan may

have been more likely to have migrated to Australia (5,892 of 5-600,000) compared with those living in Afghanistan (4,273 of 2.9 million) or Iran (1,521 of 1.2 million).

**TABLE 7.3 Hazaras by citizenship and last country of long-term residence**

Citizenship	Last country of long-term residence			Total
	Afghanistan	Pakistan	Iran	
Afghan	4,258	4,789	1,470	10,517 (90%)
Pakistani	9	1,086	9	1,104 (9.5%)
Iranian	3	1	27	31 (0.3%)
Stateless	3	16	15	34 (0.3%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,273</b> (36.6%)	<b>5,892</b> (50.4%)	<b>1,521</b> (13.0%)	<b>11,686</b> (100%)

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014).

Notes: n=11,686. Does not include missing data.

Table 7.3 shows that Afghan Hazaras (i.e. those Hazaras with Afghan citizenship) resided in Pakistan, Afghanistan and to a lesser extent Iran immediately prior to travelling to Australia. In fact, slightly more Afghan Hazaras had been residing in Pakistan than Afghanistan prior to travel. Pakistani Hazaras in the sub-population, on the other hand, appear to have remained in Pakistan and not been displaced to Iran or Afghanistan. It should be noted that on this point the study period is important (mid-2008 to mid-2013), particularly in light of the more recent deportations and returns of many thousands of Afghans who had been residing in Pakistan for many years back to Afghanistan (IOM 2016; Rasmussen 2016).

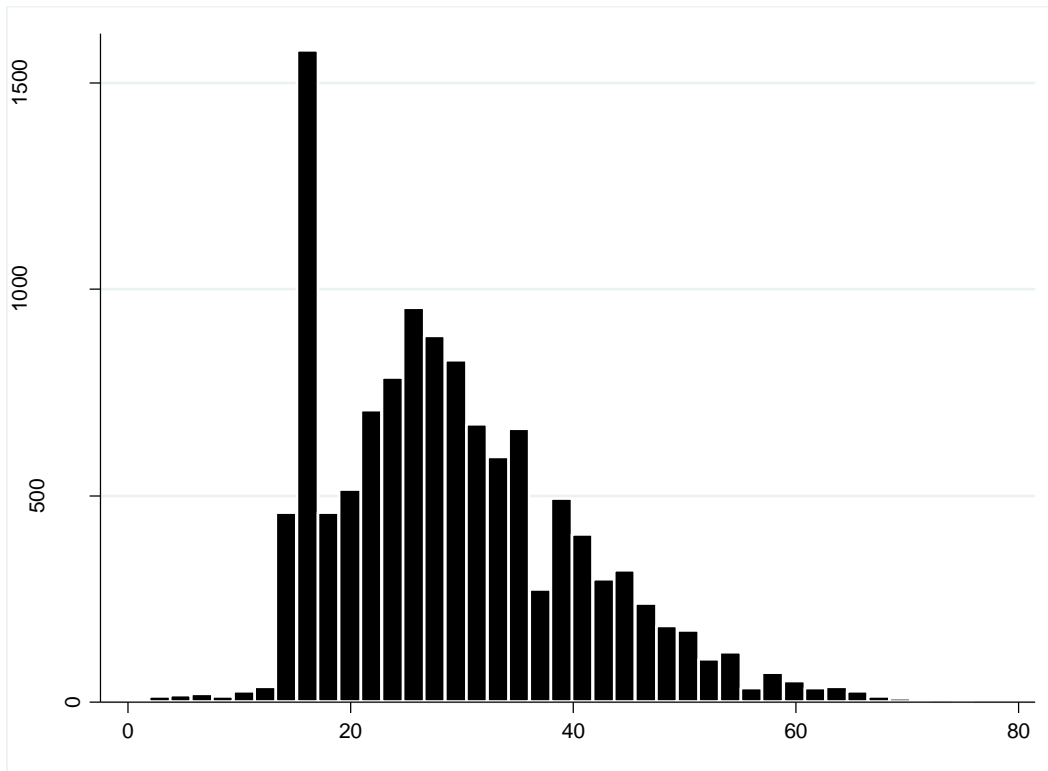
The data in Table 7.3 is particularly interesting given the lack of major upheavals in Afghanistan during the study period—and prior to the (negative) post-2014 economic, political and security transitions following the ISAF withdrawal (Koser 2014; Koser & Marsden 2013; Schmeidl 2014)—as well as the large number of returns and repatriations to Afghanistan from neighbouring Pakistan and Iran following the fall of the Taliban in 2001 (Monsutti 2005). It supports the notion of the flow to Australia being more a ‘Hazara’ flow than an ‘Afghan’ flow, which in turn reflects the nature of the persecution, discrimination and marginalisation of Hazaras on the basis of their ethnicity and religion, acknowledging that general insecurity of Afghanistan was

undoubtedly also a contributing factor. The administrative data, for example, would indicate that displacement from Afghanistan to Pakistan remained a persistent feature over time, and that significant numbers of Afghan Hazaras remained displaced in Pakistan during the study period. Alessandro Monsutti's work, as well as more recent studies in the region, would indicate that Hazaras living in Pakistan also moved between Afghanistan and Iran for a range of reasons, including work, pilgrimage, to access health care and education services (Changezi & Biseth 2011; Linke 2016; Monsutti 2005).

It would also be useful to determine the extent to which the flow from the region (and beyond Hazaras) constitutes a Shia flow. Unfortunately, data on religion is not available, however, given the general profile of some of the major ethnic groups from the region (e.g. Hazaras and Persians), there may be sectarian aspects to movements. However, considerable care needs to be taken in relation to this issue given geopolitical sectarianism within the region. Persians, for example, would be unlikely to face sectarian-based violence while living in Iran.

### **Age profile of Hazara maritime asylum seekers**

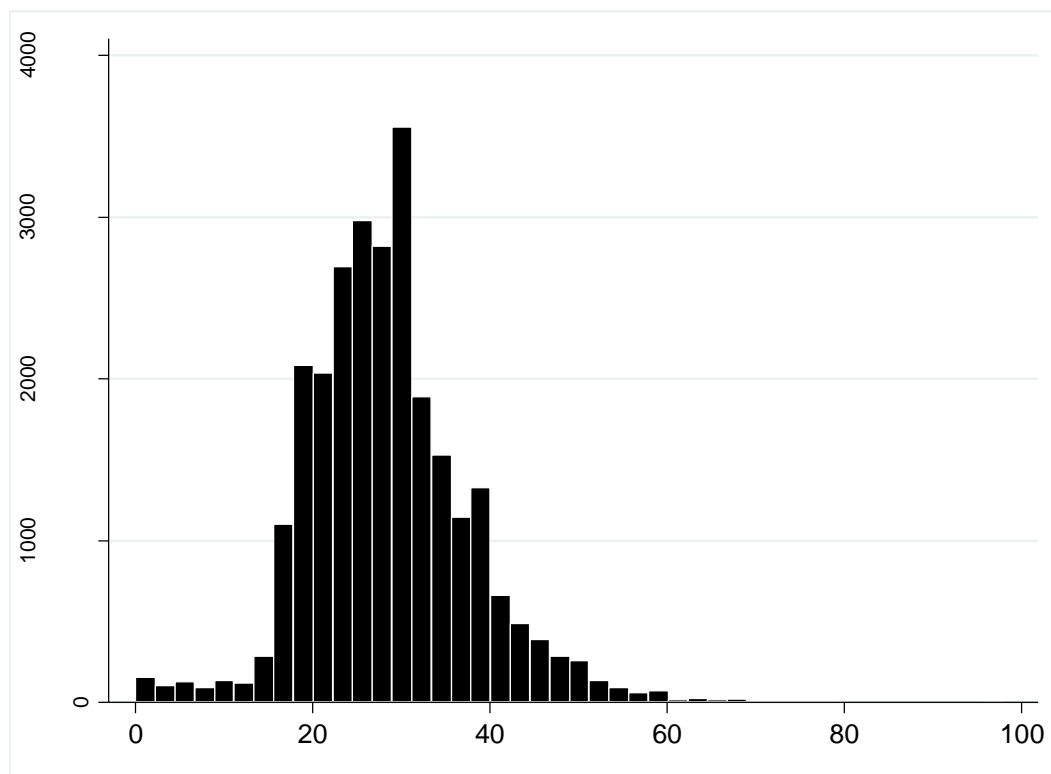
The most striking feature of the age profile of Hazara asylum seekers is the very high number of those aged 16 or 17 years, as can be seen in Figure 7.1. A total of 1,578 Hazara asylum seekers who arrived in Australia during the study period were these ages. Other features, such as the high numbers of people aged in their mid-twenties, are consistent with the aggregate asylum seeker population's age profile (as seen in Figure 7.1).



**FIGURE 7.1: Hazara asylum seekers' age at time of arrival, 2008 to 2013**

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014). Note: n=12,136.

The large spike of 16 and 17 year olds is at odds with typical age profiles of migrants. Even within the total maritime asylum seeker population, this over-representation appears to be specific to Hazaras. For example, 16 and 17 year olds account for 13% of all Hazaras, whereas this is much lower for other ethnic groups from the region: 3% of Persians, 4% of Arabs, and 5% each of Kurdish and Pashtun asylum seekers. Figure 7.2 shows the age of all non-Hazara asylum seekers at the time of arrival, with a very high proportion between 20 to 40 years of age (78%) and just 4.1% aged 16 or 17 years.



**FIGURE 7.2:** Non-Hazara asylum seekers' age at time of arrival, 2008 to 2013

Source Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014). Note: n=26,711.

The high prevalence of mid-teen Hazara minors is related to at least three aspects: i) existing migration patterns of Afghans and Hazaras; ii) the differential concepts of minor; and iii) possible benefits associated with arriving as an unaccompanied minor. In terms of recent migration patterns, the large spike is in keeping with the limited data available on irregular migration interdictions and asylum applications of Afghans in Europe. Increasing numbers of Afghan unaccompanied minors to Europe have been reported by authorities (Eurostat 2016; Majidi & Danziger 2016), and examined in the literature (Boland 2010; Monsutti 2007; Mougne 2010; Verliet et al 2015). Alessandro Monsutti argues that Afghan migration, and that of Hazaras in particular, is related to a “rite of passage” of young males as part of their transition to adulthood (Monsutti 2007). Monsutti’s ethnographic research of Hazaras and migration has enabled him to document a social and cultural tradition of such migration, which typically involves migration from mid-teens although he has documented cases involving boys as young as ten (Monsutti 2007, 178; Monsutti 2005, 131-2).

In terms of the concept of ‘minor’, there would appear to be socio-cultural and economic differences in the concept of a minor between Afghanistan and industrialised

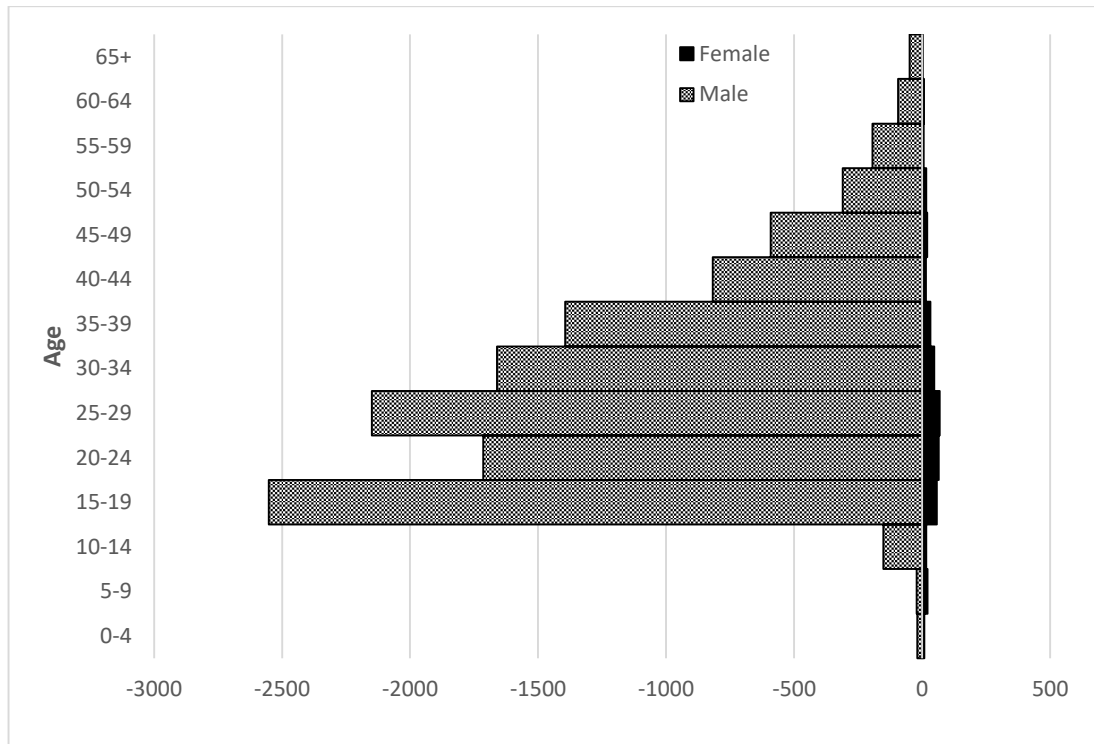
destination countries such as Australia. Notwithstanding the legal definition and that the majority age in Afghanistan under the Civil Law of the Republic of Afghanistan (Civil Code 1355/10/15) is 18 years, substantial and significant differences in employment and marriage do exist. Childhood appears to be a shorter period for many children in Afghanistan. For example, UNICEF estimates that 30 percent of Afghan children aged 5 to 14 are engaged in some form of work (UNICEF 2009). In addition, and acknowledging that the legal marital age for females without parental consent is 16 in Afghanistan, it is estimated that 39% of females aged 20-24 in Afghanistan were married before the age of 18—this is amongst the highest rates in the world (UNFPA 2012, 23). It is also not uncommon for a 16 or 17 year-old Hazara males to be married and a significant provider for the household (Echavez, Mosawi & Pilongo 2016). It is not surprising then that around 5% of Hazara asylum seekers aged 16 or 17 indicated they were married.

Lastly, the perceived and actual benefits afforded to unaccompanied minors who arrive as asylum seekers are also likely to be a factor. These include guardianship assigned under the *Immigration (Guardianship of Children) Act 1946*, and implemented under the Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors Programme. Support services provided under the programme include medical services, torture and trauma services, education and community services, mentoring through to adulthood and case management (DIBP 2016). While falsifying sex is extraordinarily difficult, age is more difficult to assess and there has been considerable controversy concerning age determination practices of asylum seeker unaccompanied minors in destination countries, including Australia, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Denmark (Abbing 2011; Hjern, Brendler-Lindqvist & Norredam 2012; Hurley & Beaumont 2016; Solheim & Vonen 2006). A closer examination of Hazara unaccompanied minors, including by last country of long-term residence, is discussed below in the ‘migrating family status’ section.

### **Age and sex profile of Hazara maritime asylum seekers**

Very few Hazara women and girls travelled to Australia as irregular maritime asylum seekers, as dramatically shown in Figure 7.3, which captures this highly gendered form of migration. The pronounced 15 to 19 year-old male group (again) is the largest of all groups.

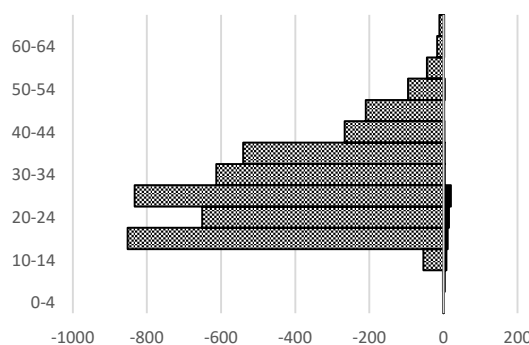




**FIGURE 7.3: Hazara asylum seeker population by age group and sex**

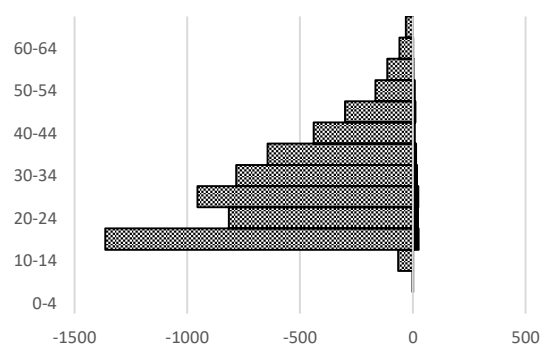
Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014). Note: n=12,102.

There is distinct variation in the age/sex profile of the Hazara maritime asylum seekers when examined by last country of long-term residence, as shown in Figures 7.4, 7.5 and 7.6. While the age profiles all show significant over-representation in the 15 to 19 year-old male group, it is most pronounced for the profile of Hazara who migrated from Pakistan. Hazaras who had been living in Afghanistan or Iran also had sizeable numbers in the 25 to 29 year-old age category for males.



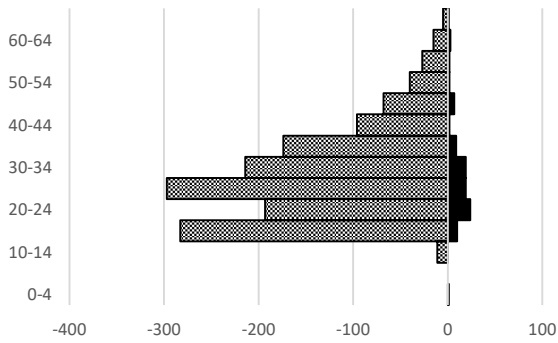
**FIGURE 7.4: Hazara population by age group and sex—Last country of LT residence Afghanistan**

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014). Note: n=4,273



**FIGURE 7.5: Hazara population by age group and sex—Last country of LT residence Pakistan**

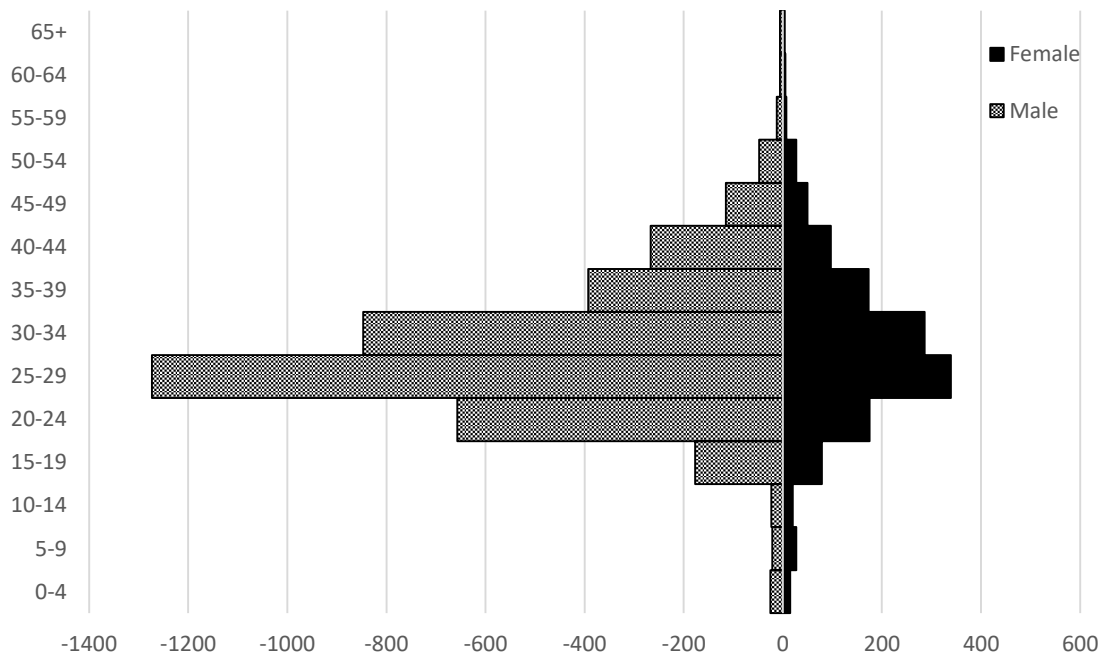
Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014). Note: n=5,877



**FIGURE 7.6: Hazara population by age group and sex—Last country of LT residence **Iran****

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014). Note: n=1,522

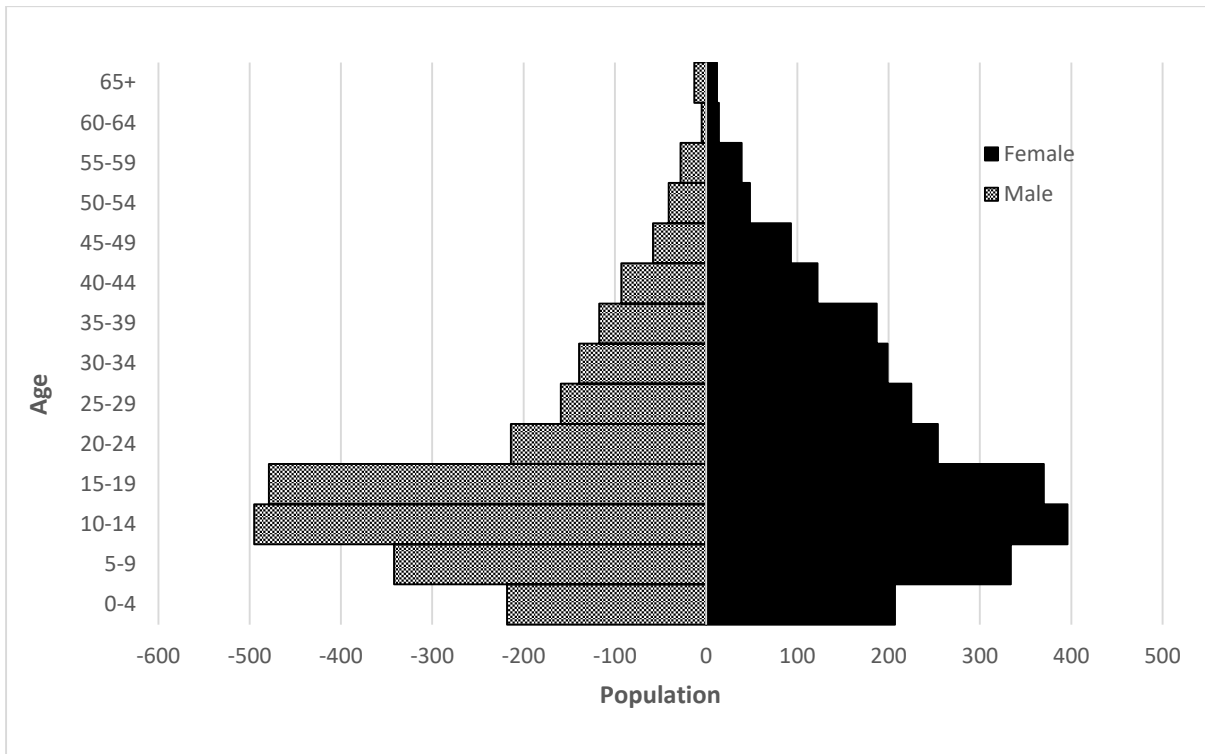
The population pyramids also show that a higher proportion of females was evident in the Hazara asylum seeker group who migrated from Iran (6.5%) compared to Afghanistan (1.9%) and Pakistan (2.4%). Nevertheless, the population pyramids of the three groups based on the last country of long-term residence clearly show the very strong and distinctive age and sex demographic characteristics of Hazara asylum seekers from the region. This is particularly evident when the profiles of other ethnic groups of asylum seekers are examined. As shown in Figure 7.7, for example, the profile of the second most significant ethnic group from the region (Persians) indicates a much high presence of females (both girls and women) as well as the absence of the distinctive 15 to 19 year-old age category ‘spike’. In fact, the very pronounced involvement of these teenage males in this period of maritime asylum seeking is specific to Hazaras—no other ethnic group in the study population features such a pattern. This issue is discussed further in the section on ‘migrating family status’ below.



**FIGURE 7.7: Persian asylum seeker population by age group and sex**

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014). Note: n=5,174.

While we can see from the figures above that there were distinct differences between the populations, most especially when compared with Persians, there is also merit in acknowledging the very significant contrast with Afghan resettled refugee arrivals (noting that this is not a neat comparison given it is based on citizenship, not ethnicity). These arrivals are of Afghan citizens who arrived in Australia during the study period on a refugee visa, having been granted the visa overseas under the Humanitarian Program. It is clear that this distribution is very different in terms of both sex and age. It suggests that perhaps some Afghans who arrived on refugee visas may have engaged in family reunion as dependants of adult male asylum seekers who had arrived before them and had been granted a protection visa; the adult male component of the population in Figure 7.8 is noticeably undersized. The Afghan resettled refugee arrivals is much smaller in number (n=4,901), which is likely to reflect the lag between irregular maritime asylum seekers arriving and being able to sponsor family members (which can be years).



**FIGURE 7.8: Afghan resettled refugee arrivals by age group and sex**

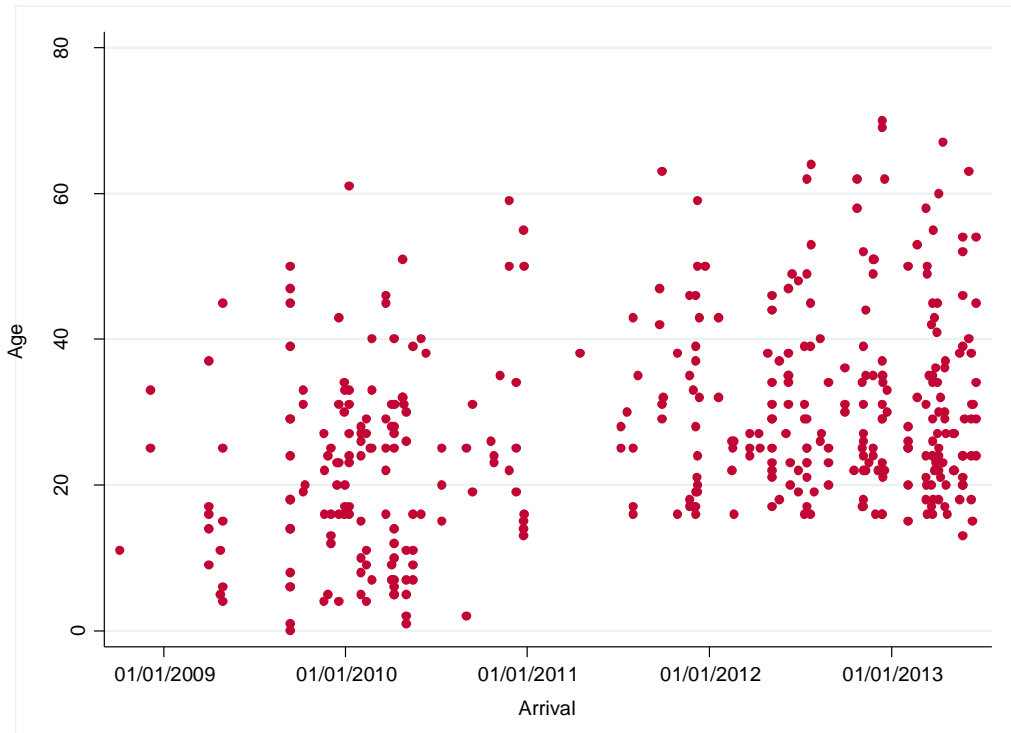
Source: Overseas arrivals and departures dataset (2015).

Note: n=4,901 (arrivals, not individuals). Individual cells of less than 5 with a value not equal to 0 have been assumed to be 1, and so not all arrivals are able to be included.

### *A strongly gendered form of migration*

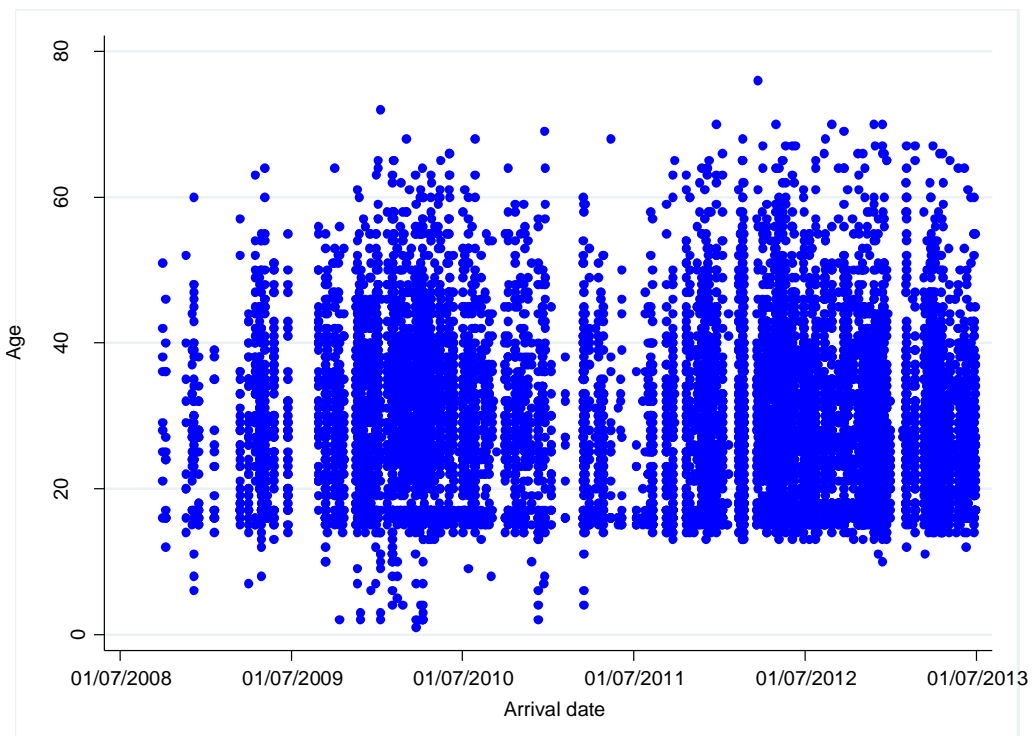
An examination of Hazara asylum seeker arrivals over time by sex (and age) show that the number of female Hazaras who arrived over the study period remained very low, with females accounting for just 2.9% (or 388) of all Hazara arrivals. Figures 7.9 (females) and 7.10 (males) highlight the very strong volumetric differences by sex; the scatterplots also show that while females who arrived over the study period appear to become slightly older over time, this does not appear to be the case for males. This highly gendered form of migration resonates strongly with Monsutti's ethnographic research on Hazara migration between Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran (Monsutti 2007, 182):

Men are the more mobile elements of domestic units. They go fighting or migrate abroad for work, sometimes for several years. ...Staying behind in the village of origin while so many men are absent, they gain a considerable importance and assume increasingly traditionally male tasks.... Most young Hazara migrants I met in Iran have kept their links to their place of origin, where the women, the children, and the elderly of the family have remained... Men may migrate to Pakistan or to Iran, leaving their families behind.



**FIGURE 7.9 Female Hazara asylum seekers by arrival date and age, July 2008 to June 2013**

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014). Notes: n=388.



**FIGURE 7.10 Male Hazara asylum seekers by arrival date and age, July 2008 to June 2013**

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014). Notes: n=11,714.

The patterns in the scatterplots are confirmed upon a closer examination of the data, as shown in Table 7.4, which shows that the mean age for females increased over time but stayed fairly constant for males (except for a slight increase in the second year).

TABLE 7.4 Hazara asylum seeker mean age (years) by sex and program year

	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	Total period
Females	18.2	21.7	27.3	30.7	31.7	27.9
Males	28.8	31.1	29.0	29.0	28.1	29.2

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014). Notes: n=12,102.

The two scatterplots also clearly show a sudden change in the age profile of Hazaras over the study period, which appears to apply to both females and males. Up until the end of 2010, it was not uncommon for very young (under 12 years) Hazaras to arrive as asylum seekers.

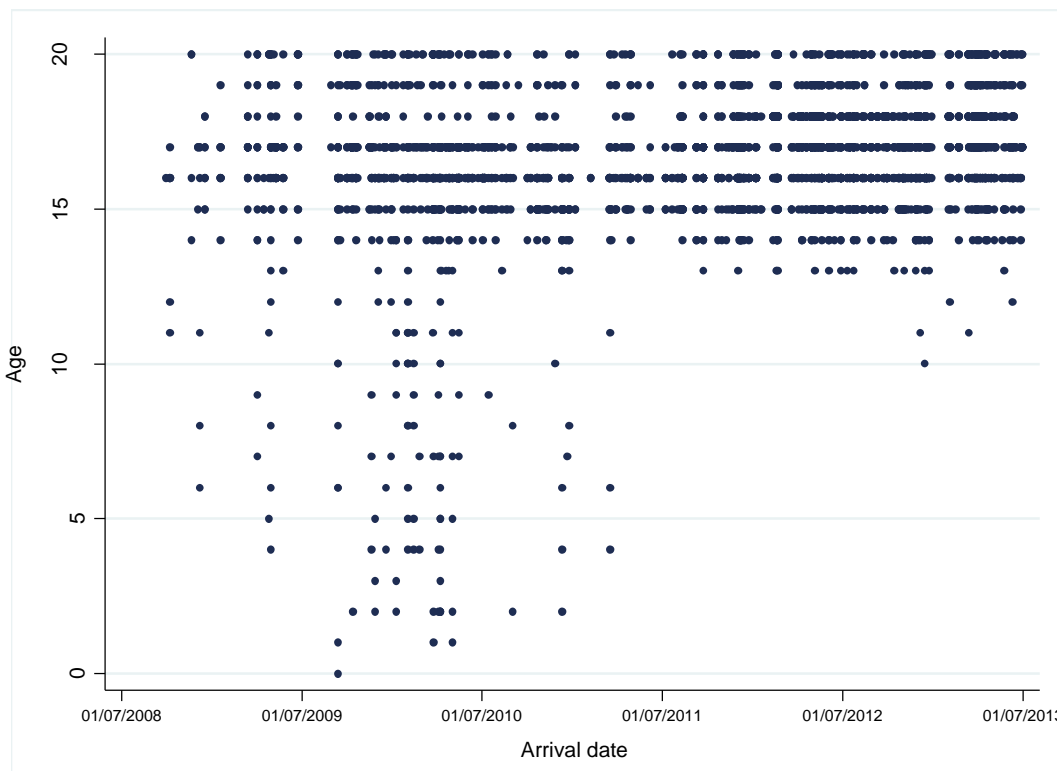


FIGURE 7.11 Hazara asylum seekers under 21 years by arrival date and age

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014). Notes: n=3,147.

Acknowledging that the number of Hazara asylum seekers aged 12 years or under is very small (n=105) compared with number of Hazara asylum seekers over 12 years (n=12,021), it is notable that almost all young children arrived before 2011 (97 or 92%). Only eight young Hazara children arrived after 31 December 2010. While the onset of this decline coincides with the general ‘lull’ in Hazara arrivals during the first half of 2011 (discussed in detail in the next chapter on temporal dimensions), it is possible that the highly visual impact of the video footage of the sinking of SIEV 221—which graphically highlighted the dangers of the journey—had a greater impact on families, and affected their willingness to travel with young children (see Chapter 3 for still images of the sinking of SIEV 221). The intention to engage in family reunion following the migration and refugee acceptance of male Hazaras is reflected, for example, in the 2013 survey results. Twenty-nine per cent of Hazaras indicated that a key reason for travelling to Australia was so that “my family would be able to follow me”. The result for Hazaras was significantly higher than for Persians (12.6%), who tended to travel more as family groups. It is also possible that those Hazaras more able to access the funds required to travel in family groups left the region during the early part of the study period, soon after the commencement of the flow. It is widely acknowledged in the literature that the higher socio-economic segments of societies are the first to leave when instability increases or is anticipated to increase (Kunz 1973). The administrative data, however, is not sufficiently detailed to enable full analysis of this aspect. The data that is available is examined in the next section.

### **Education and occupational profile of Hazara maritime asylum seekers**

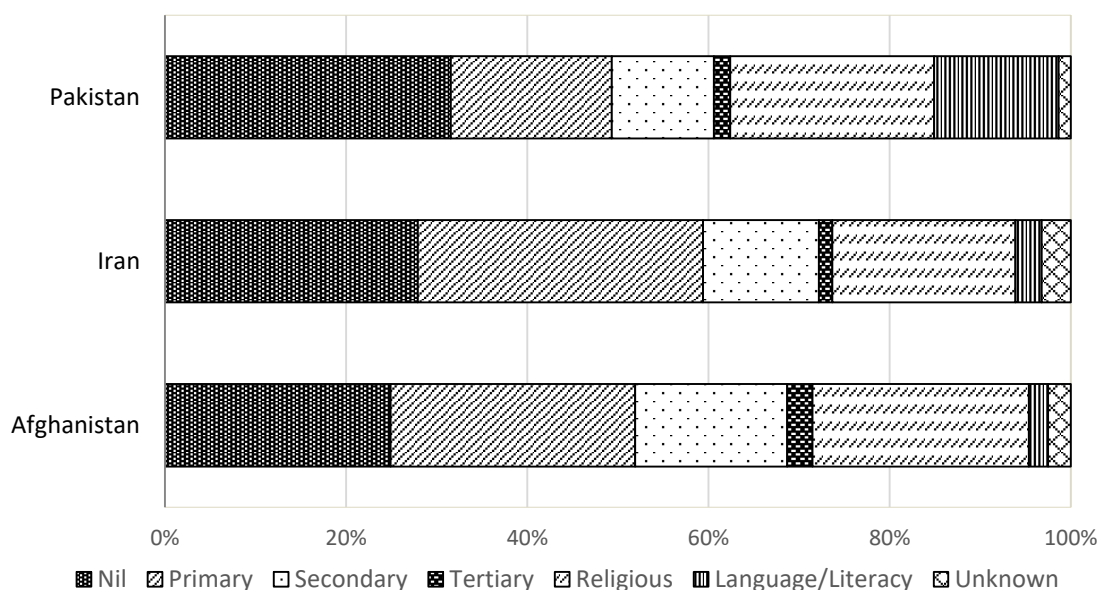
Overall, Hazaras who travelled to Australia had low education and skill levels. For example, for Hazaras aged 15 years or more, 27.9% reported having completed no formal education, 23.4% completed primary school, 14.0% secondary, 22.9% religious education (madrassa) and 2.3% tertiary level.<sup>4</sup> This is much lower than available World Bank data, for example, on current secondary enrolment rates for males in Afghanistan (61.5%) and primary completion rates for males in Pakistan (80.0%), noting that enrolment rates tend to be slightly higher than completion rates (World Bank 2016). There is no data available specifically on Hazara enrolments or educational attainment.

Relatedly, Hazaras were not employed in high skilled occupations prior to migrating. Again, this is broadly consistent with occupational groupings and industry in Afghanistan and Pakistan, which are dominated by the low/unskilled agricultural sectors, most especially Afghanistan (CIA 2015). It is also likely to reflect ongoing, inter-generational discrimination and persecution of Hazaras, as described in the literature (Harpkiven 1996; US Department of State 2011), and their difficulty in attaining higher employment and political positions in both countries.

When education levels of Hazara are examined by the last country of long-term residence, it would seem that Hazaras in Pakistan were more likely to have indicated they had not completed any formal education (31.4%). Hazaras who had been residing in Pakistan were also less likely to have completed primary or secondary school (17.8% and 11.2% respectively) compared with those who had resided in Afghanistan or Iran prior to migrating. The differences may relate to access to education, and in particular more restricted access due to ethnic discrimination in Pakistan. Hazaras reported very high levels of discrimination due to ethnicity in the 2013 survey (84%), although only Hazara who had been living in Iran indicated that poor education was a major problem prior to their migration (61% compared with 23% of those who had lived in Pakistan, and 27% who had lived in Afghanistan). Hazaras in Iran cited poor education as the most prevalent non-protection problem they faced prior to migration, with 'widespread violence' the next highest response (40%). Hazaras who had lived in Pakistan or Afghanistan were much more likely to report general insecurity as the major non-protection problem (67% and 66% respectively). Education issues in Iran for Hazara have featured in research on Hazara integration and return intentions (Abbasi-Shavazi and Sadeghi 2011; Glazebrook and Abbasi-Shavazi 2007). However, research also indicates the integration of Afghans in Iran (including education outcomes) has improved over time, with second and third generations have much improved education attainment compared with Afghans initially displaced by war in the late 1970s (Hugo et al 2012; Abbasi-Shavazi and Sadeghi 2016).

Notwithstanding the differences by last country of long-term residence as shown in Figure 7.12, it is clear that the Hazara populations who had been living in all three countries prior to migration all had low education levels overall. Without data on the underlying populations in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran, it is impossible to compare the Hazara maritime asylum seekers to those Hazara who did not migrate.





**FIGURE 7.12: Hazara irregular maritime asylum seekers (aged 15 years or more) highest education level by last country of long-term residence, 2008-09 to 2010-11**

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014).

Notes: n=4,483. Does not include program years 2011-12 and 2012-13 because of large amounts of missing data.

The data on education does to some extent conflict with a small study on education of Hazaras in Pakistan, which found that the move away from the limiting social structures and biases prevalent in Afghanistan allowed Hazara communities to more freely pursue girls' education, which is seen as a means to improve Hazaras socio-economic situation overall (Changezi & Biseth 2011). It should be noted, however, that the focus of this qualitative study was on gender and education, and so the administrative data is not necessarily inconsistent with these findings—we know, for example, that almost all Hazara maritime asylum seekers to Australia were male and very few females travelled, severely limiting a gender comparison. The results are, however, consistent with reporting on the increased take up of education by Hazara communities in Afghanistan in recent years, and particularly in the post-Taliban era (Oppel & Waheed Wafa 2010).

Data on occupational groupings indicate that Hazaras residing in Afghanistan were marginally more likely to be working in a higher skilled occupation (at 7.6% of those in Afghanistan) compared with Hazaras living in Pakistan (at 7.3%) and Iran (at 3.9%). It would be useful to compare these results against the Hazara populations in all three countries but unfortunately such data do not exist. The literature, however, does point to

a lack of access to higher education for Hazaras in Iran, thereby limiting employment opportunities and occupational advancement (Abbasi-Shavazi and Glazebrook 2006).

### **Who migrated: A short summary**

In this section I have analysed the demographic characteristics of the Hazara asylum seeker sub-population as a means of answering a key question concerning the manifestation of agency: Who migrated? Based on the existing literature, research questions were developed related to the demographic characteristics of the maritime asylum seeker flow to Australia. In this section, we answered the research questions as they related to Hazaras.

The analysis shows that Hazaras who arrived in Australia between mid-2008 and mid-2013 as maritime asylum seekers exhibited very distinctive traits. This population was almost exclusively male, with the majority being young males, many of whom were married. We can determine with a reasonable degree of certainty, therefore, that people with particular demographic characteristics (e.g. males, younger adults) were more likely to exercise agency and be irregular maritime asylum seekers than other groups (e.g. females, minors and the aged). There was also a high proportion of unaccompanied male migrants amongst the population. The extreme distribution of the Hazara maritime asylum seeker population, which does not resemble the national population of Afghanistan nor the Afghan resettled refugee population, strongly indicates that migration decision making occurred, and that a calculated rationality was involved—migration patterns were not by chance, nor did they resemble other ethnic groups from the region. The demographic characteristics of Hazara maritime asylum seekers—particularly sex and age—are consistent with the limited research and data on Hazara migration within the region, particularly the way in which young Hazara males have migrated from Afghanistan to Iran and Pakistan as part of a “rite of passage” (Monsutti 2007). Data from Europe indicates that increasing numbers of Afghan male unaccompanied minors have been arriving in Europe over the last decade (Eurostat 2011; Majidi & Danziger 2016), which is consistent with the analysis of this flow population, notwithstanding the limitations posed by the lack of information on ethnicity for European data.

The extreme distribution of the asylum seeker population does not, however, reveal much about the migration decision making processes involved prior to travel, although

it could be said that it raises a number of questions. These questions are examined in the following chapters on the temporal dimensions—*whether to* and *when to migrate*—and the spatial dimensions—*where to migrate*.

## 7.2 Social dimensions—who Hazaras travelled with

As highlighted in the discussion on the conceptualisation of the various aspects of agency of asylum seekers (Chapter 2), there has been very little attention afforded in the literature to exactly who irregular asylum seekers travel with. This is an important aspect of agency as it further highlights the degrees of freedom available (or not) to a person or persons seeking asylum, particularly as it relates to those closest to the asylum seeker(s) such as family members. While acknowledging that outside of mass displacements, refugee status determination processes are typically conducted on an individual basis (UNHCR 2015), such processes in Australia and other developed countries involve assessing only the primary applicant's claims for international protection under the Refugees Convention or complementary protection provisions—members of the primary applicant's family do not have to make separate claims for protection as they are considered part of the primary applicant's protection application, however, they are required to meet secondary criteria (such as health and character requirements) should the primary applicant be found to be in need of protection. Importantly, many asylum and refugee processing regimes allow for 'split family' applications, which means that an asylum seeker may include family members who are not physically present in the country in which asylum is sought. There are also other options available to re-unite families, such as family migration programs, once a family member has been granted refugee status (or another form of protection). From the little we know from the academic literature, this appears to be a pressing issue for many asylum seekers who have to consider separating and reuniting later (Robinson & Segrott 2002, 40):

...families were forced to flee their home country but were not able to travel to the UK together. Whilst the reasons for the initial migration of family members to this country may have been multifaceted, the decision of spouses and children to come to the UK at a later date was primarily one of family reunion.

While there is very little research on the movements of asylum seekers in relation to who they travel with, there is a body of work in academic literature that has examined the impact of family separation on asylum seekers and refugees (Sourander 2003; Steel et al 2006; Steel et al 1999). This area of specific enquiry has tended to be on the mental health effects of family separation on asylum seekers and refugees, rather than the decision making, migration processes or other issues that were involved, however, many studies have implied separation from family during or prior to migration processes (accidental or otherwise), and have found that family separation is associated with negative mental health effects (Sourander 2003; Steel et al 2006; Steel et al 1999).

The distinction between mass displacement and protracted asylum seeking in terms of who asylum seekers travel with would appear to have some salience if recent data on irregular maritime migration in the Mediterranean Sea is examined. Data collected by the Italian authorities on demographic characteristics of irregular migrants who arrived in 2014 and 2015 indicate that Syrians were more likely than others to travel in family groups, which is likely to reflect the nature of their displacement involving the loss of homes as well as security, livelihoods and protection. The Italian authorities' data also reveals that Afghan unaccompanied minors were also a key group in the Central Mediterranean flow, as can be seen in Table 7.5. While the categorisation differs, the data clearly show that Afghans were much more likely to travel as unaccompanied minors compared with other asylum seekers from the region. Twenty-three per cent of all Afghans were unaccompanied minors compared with 11% of Iraqis, 10% of Palestinians, 3% of Syrians and 1% of Pakistanis. The data for minors are not available by sex, and the data for adults are not available by migrating family status. The data are also not available by ethnicity.

**TABLE 7.5 Irregular maritime migrants intercepted by Italian authorities in 2014 and 2015—  
selected citizenships by sex (adults) and whether accompanied (minors)**

	Afghan <sup>(1)</sup>	Syrian	Palestinian	Pakistani	Iraqi	Total
Men (%)	397 (51)	29,294 (59)	4,328 (56)	5,326 (97)	1,081 (65)	40,426 (62)
Women (%)	95 (12)	7,440 (15)	1,344 (17)	80 (1)	238 (14)	9,197 (14)
Minor accompanied (%)	111 (14)	11,398 (23)	1,327 (17)	41 (1)	176 (11)	13,053 (20)
Minor unaccompanied (%)	181 (23)	1,639 (3)	756 (10)	71 (1)	179 (11)	2,826 (4)
Total	784 (100)	49,771 (100)	7,755 (100)	139 (100)	402 (100)	3,519 (100)

Source: UNHCR (2016); collected by Italian authorities.

Notes: n=65,502. (1) Afghan demographic data not available for 2015; the total number of Afghans who arrived was 117 but has not been included.

### **Hazara maritime asylum seekers' migrating family status**

The unique administrative dataset allows for a much deeper exploration of who irregular maritime asylum seekers travelled with than is currently available in the academic or grey literature. The analysis shows distinct patterns that, while not entirely exclusive to Hazaras, were much more pronounced than for other ethnic groups from the region.

The migrating family status of Hazaras was predominantly solo adult males (9,479 or 78%), with unaccompanied minors accounting for 1,867 or 15.4%. Hazaras travelling with family totalled 684 or 5.6% and solo adult females were a very small 106 or 0.9%.

The very high numbers (and proportion) of Hazara unaccompanied minors is particular to this ethnic group, as can be seen in Table 7.6. Some 1,867 Hazaras under 18 travelled to Australia without immediate family members, with almost all being male. Just 25 Hazara girls under the age of 18 travelled as unaccompanied minors. These results resonate with Alessandro Monsutti's anthropological examination of Hazara migration

and survival strategies as well as a cultural ‘rite of passage’ tradition (Monsutti 2005; Monsutti 2007).

**TABLE 7.6 Irregular maritime asylum seekers by migrating family status and key ethnic groups—under 18 years**

	Hazara	Kurdish	Arab	Persian	Pashtun	Total*
Family	205	284	195	204	9	897 (28.1%)
Unaccompanied minor	1,867	96	125	63	76	2,227 (90.4)
Total*	2,172 (68.7%)	391 (12.4%)	327 (10.3%)	272 (8.6%)	87 (2.7%)	3,249 (100%)

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014).

Notes: \*Does not include missing data, ‘Unknown’ or those coded as ‘SAMs’ so may not add up to 100%. n=3,249.

A closer examination of the data reveals that unaccompanied Hazara males under 18 years of age were most likely to have travelled from Pakistan, with 966 (or 52.8%) having travelled from Pakistan as their last country of long-term residence. This compared with 652 (or 35.7%) from Afghanistan and 210 (or 11.7%) from Iran.

As can be seen from the data in Table 7.7, and notwithstanding the number of ‘unknowns’, by far the majority of solo adult males were married, meaning that very many of them (but perhaps not all of those married) left at least one family member behind. Given the differences in migrating family status between Afghans and Iranians (outlined in Chapter 5), a comparison between Hazaras (as the main ethnic group with Afghan citizenship) and Persians (as the main ethnic group with Iranian citizenship) is provided. The differences between the two groups are pronounced. Notwithstanding that both groups must travel similar distances to reach Australia, the way they migrate at least in terms of who they migrate with, is glaringly different. Table 7.7 highlights that Persians were much more likely than Hazaras to have travelled with family if married, or as solo adult males if not married, although a note of caution given the number of ‘unknowns’ is warranted.

**TABLE 7.7 Hazara and Persian irregular maritime asylum seekers  
by marital status and family migrating status**

	<b>Married</b>	<b>Not married</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>HAZARAS</b>				
Family	345 (51.0)	228 (33.7)	103 (15.2)	676 (100)
Solo adult females	41 (38.7)	50 (47.2)	15 (14.1)	106 (100)
Solo adult males	6,701 (71.1)	1,390 (14.8)	1,328 (14.1)	9,419 (100)
Unaccompanied minors	43 (2.3)	966 (52.4)	836 (45.3)	1,845 (100)
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,130</b>	<b>2,634</b>	<b>2,282</b>	<b>12,046</b>
<b>PERSIANS</b>				
Family	1,554 (69.8)	463 (20.8)	208 (9.4)	2,225 (100)
Solo adult females	169 (62.4)	61 (22.5)	41 (15.1)	271 (100)
Solo adult males	669 (26.2)	1,126 (44.1)	761 (29.8)	2,556 (100)
Unaccompanied minors	2 (3.2)	31 (50.0)	29 (46.8)	62 (100)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,394</b>	<b>1,681</b>	<b>1,039</b>	<b>5,114</b>

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014).

Notes: Does not include missing data. Hazara n=12,046; Persian n=5,114.

Part of the dynamic relates to the regulatory regimes applying to Hazaras (Afghan citizens) and Persians (as Iranian citizens). During the study period, transit countries Indonesia and Malaysia allowed for visa-on-arrival for Iranian citizens but not for Afghan citizens, who were required to apply for a visa prior to arrival. In practical terms, this means that Persians would have been much more able to travel with family members, including because of easier entry but also because their stay in Indonesia would have been significantly different. Iranians on visas in Indonesia would have only become irregular after entering Australian waters. Transit country migration patterns and processes are analysed in Chapter 9.

A further reason for the substantial difference relates cost and access to sufficient funding. Fewer transit countries translate to lower travel costs (see discussion in Chapter 9) and higher socio-economic status suggests greater access to funds to travel. Further, research on Hazara migration in the region of origin indicates a particular culture of migration has developed over decades that involves young males migrating away from home and family (Monsutti 2007). Thus, a combination of regulatory, economic and social aspects are involved in the distinctive migration patterns of Hazaras.

Migrating family status of Hazara asylum seekers remained fairly stable over the five-year study period, indicating strong and enduring migration patterns. The very high proportions of solo adult males, extremely low proportions of solo adult females and atypically high proportions of unaccompanied minors (compared with all other groups) appear to be key features of the Hazara asylum seeker sub-population, as can be seen in Table 7.8.

**TABLE 7.8 Hazara asylum seekers by family migrating status and program year**

	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	Total
Family	12 (2.1)	138 (4.6)	66 (5.5)	171 (4.9)	297 (7.6)	684 (5.6)
Solo adult females	5 (0.9)	45 (1.5)	1 (0.1)	20 (0.6)	35 (0.9)	106 (0.9)
Solo adult males	444 (77.9)	2,385 (80.1)	901 (74.3)	2,693 (77.8)	3,056 (78.0)	9,479 (78.1)
Unaccompanied minors	109 (19.1)	408 (13.7)	244 (20.1)	576 (16.6)	530 (13.5)	1,867 (15.4)
Total	570 (100)	2,976 (100)	1,212 (100)	3,460 (100)	3,918 (100)	12,136 (100)

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014).

Note: Does not include missing data. n=12,136.

There were very substantial differences in migrating family status by sex. Female Hazaras were much more likely to have travelled with other family members than males—a pattern which is extraordinarily pronounced, as can be seen in Table 7.9. Females in the 16 to 24 years age group were slightly more likely than those in other age groups to travel without family (41.1% did so), however, this was still much lower than for males. Males in the 16 to 14 years age group almost all travelled without family



(97.5%); only males under the age of 16 travelled with family to a significant degree (17.8%).

**TABLE 7.9 Hazara asylum seekers by family migrating status and sex**

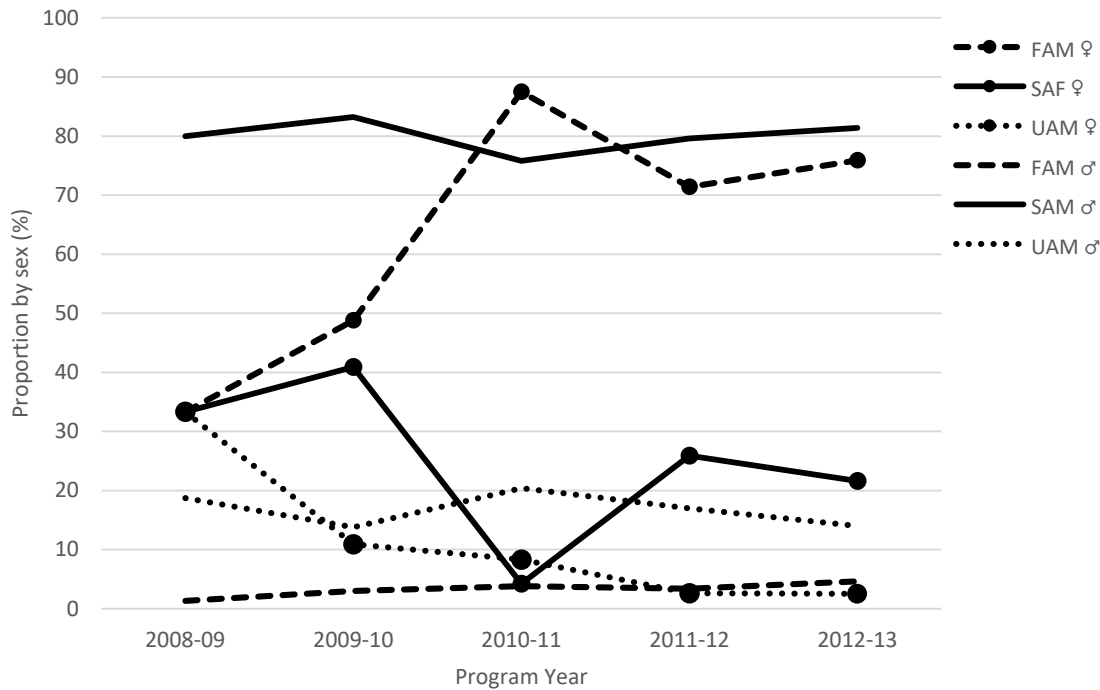
Age (years)	Females				Males			
	Family	SAF	UAM	Total	Family	SAM	UAM	Total
Under 16	44 (83.0)	0 (0.0)	9 (17.0)	53 (100.0)	96 (17.8)	0 (0.0)	444 (82.2)	540 (100.0)
16-24	69 (59.0)	32 (27.4)	16 (13.7)	117 (100.0)	98 (2.5)	2,426 (61.9)	1,393 (35.6)	3,917 (100.0)
25-34	73 (62.4)	44 (37.6)	0 (0.0)	117 (100.0)	118 (3.1)	3,692 (96.9)	0 (0.0)	901 (100.0)
35-44	34 (70.8)	14 (29.2)	0 (0.0)	48 (100.0)	60 (2.7)	2,151 (97.3)	0 (0.0)	2,211 (100.0)
45-54	24 (66.7)	12 (33.3)	0 (0.0)	36 (100.0)	29 (3.2)	872 (96.8)	0 (0.0)	901 (100.0)
55 or more	13 (76.5)	4 (23.5)	0 (0.0)	17 (100.0)	23 (6.9)	312 (93.1)	0 (0.0)	335 (100.0)

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014). Note: Does not include missing data. n=12,102.

While the cost of family-related migration is undoubtedly more expensive, and so would act as a practical restriction on who asylum seekers migrated with, the very strong gender differences indicate that socio-cultural issues are also likely to be significant, particularly as they related to the difficulties and risks of the migration journey itself. We can see from Table 7.9, that those considered more vulnerable on the basis of age and sex (i.e. minors, elderly and females) were much more likely to travel with family.

The perceptions and estimations of vulnerability appear to have been sharpened over time. A closer examination of migrating family status by sex over time reveals that for the small number of Hazara females (n=388) who arrived as asylum seekers, migration patterns changed significantly over the study period as different migration processes were implemented. As can be seen in Figure 7.13, the proportion of female unaccompanied minors dropped significantly over time from 33% of all female arrivals in 2008-09 to a low of 2.5% of all female arrivals in 2012-13. Concomitantly, the

proportions of females travelling with family increased over time from 33% in 2008-09 to 76% in 2012-13 (peaking at 87% in 2010-11).



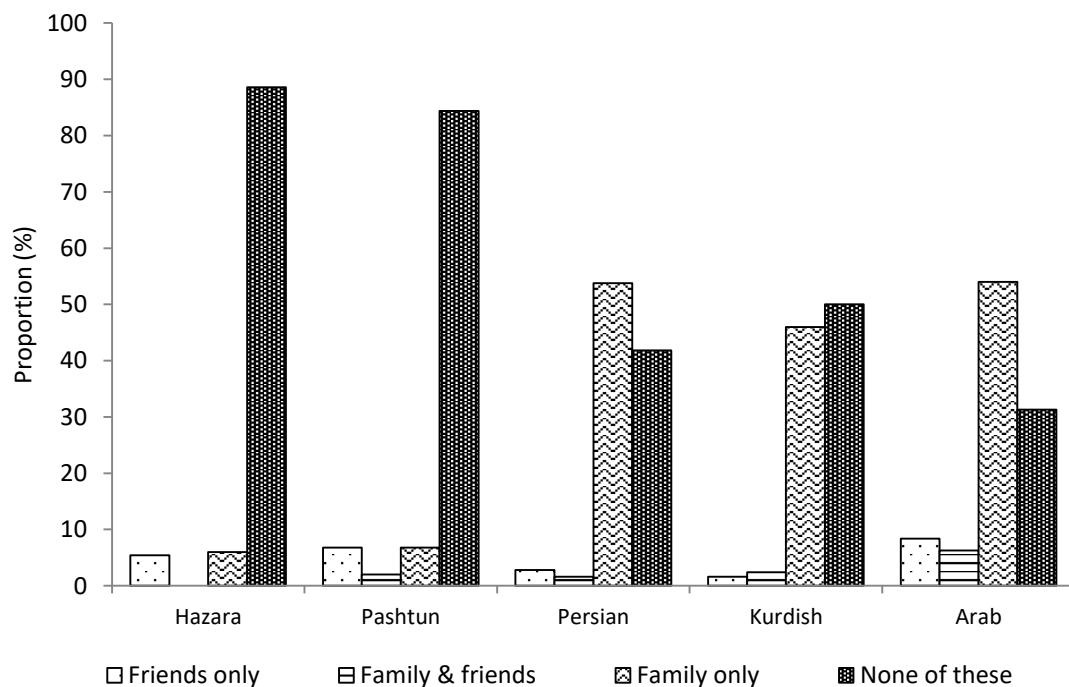
**FIGURE 7.13: Hazara asylum seekers' migrating family status by arrival program year and sex**

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014). Notes: n=12,136 (♀ n=338; ♂ n=11,714). Proportions add up to 100% for females and 100% for males.

Program year 2010-11—with its noticeable ‘lull’ in Hazara arrivals—also saw a dramatic drop in female arrivals (from 110 in 2009-10 to 24 in 2010-11). As the numbers of females steadily increased to 77 in 2011-12 and 162 in 2012-13 (or 42% of all females in the 5-year study period), who they travelled with also changed and much higher proportions of females travelled with family compared with the first two program years. The changes in migration patterns and processes of female Hazara asylum seekers point to specific adjustments having been made, including as a means to better manage potential vulnerabilities during journeys. The ‘lull’ in arrivals that commenced in early 2011, together with the noticeable change in who females travelled with, add further weight to the potential impact of the sinking of SIEV 221 and European pathways ‘opening up’ on Hazara (and others’) decision making processes and eventual migration patterns. The results of the survey provide useful information on asylum seekers’ experiences of their migration journeys to Australia, and this data is now in turn examined.

*Beyond ‘migrating family status’*

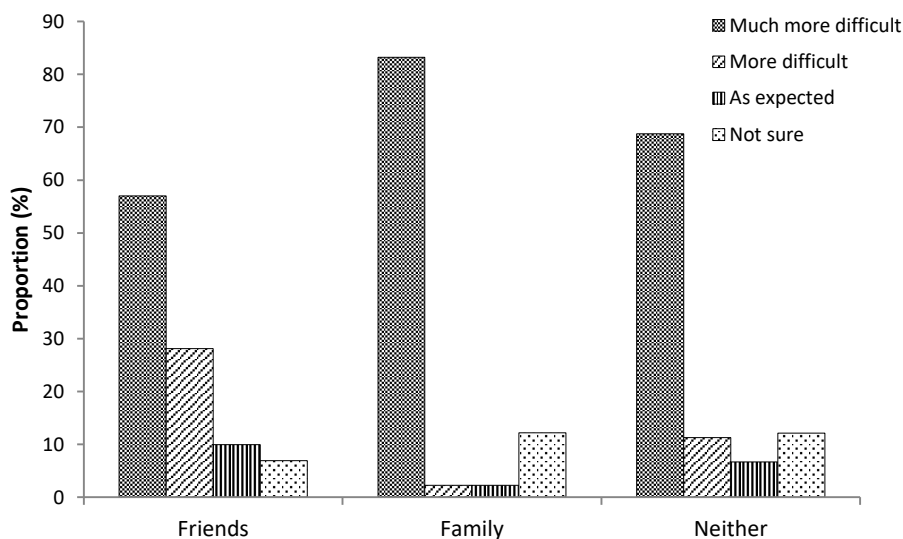
The distinctive and differential ‘migrating family status’ of Hazara asylum seekers evident from the analysis of the administrative data was also reflected in the survey results. As can be seen from Figure 7.14, Hazaras and Pashtuns were much less likely to indicate that they travelled with family compared with the other ethnic groups from the region. Interestingly, the survey results indicate that most Hazaras did not travel with family or friends, which implies that they travelled alone. However, survey results on migration practices in transit found that Hazaras tended to stay with fellow Hazaras en route (66%), and that this result was much higher than for other groups, including Pashtuns (21%)—for complete results see Table 9.13 in Chapter 9. It also accords with Monsutti’s research, in which he concluded that “when Hazaras travel, they prefer to be with other Hazaras” (Monsutti 2005, 172). There may well be a preference, although some indications are that it is a practice borne out of need, and is discussed further in Chapter 9.



**FIGURE 7.14: Who people travelled with by major ethnic group**

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker survey dataset (2013). Weighted. Question 6. (n=837).

The survey results also provided insights into the experiences of Hazara who travelled with different groups of people, namely friends, family or neither friends or family. The analysis indicates that experiences of the journey were quite different, depending on who the respondent travelled with. Hazaras who travelled with family members were more likely to indicate that the total cost of the journey was more than USD 20,000 (18%) compared with those who travelled without family or friends (5%) and those who travelled with friends (0%). As to be expected, the mean cost of travel for those who travelled with family (USD 15,062) was significantly higher than for others (USD 10,809 for those who travelled with friends; USD 11,462 for those who travelled without family or friends). This is consistent with the limited literature available—Robinson & Segrott, for example, found that cost was one of the main reasons for family separation of asylum seekers who had travelled to the United Kingdom (2002, 40). The survey results, however, also indicate that there was a relationship between difficulties of the journey and who people travelled with. While very high proportions of Hazara asylum seekers indicated that the journey to Australia was much more difficult (69.6%) or more difficult (11.4%) than expected, this was even more pronounced for people who travelled with family (Figure 7.15). In addition to the extra costs involved, the results also appear to indicate a higher level of difficulty and possibly stress involved in travelling with family, which may act to further complicate already the challenging logistics of travelling through transit countries often irregularly. Transit migration patterns and practices of Hazaras are examined in Chapter 9.



**FIGURE 7.15** Who people travelled with by difficulty of the journey—Hazaras only

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker survey dataset (2013). Weighted. Questions 6 and 43. (n=396).

The relative difficulties of the journey were also reflected in how much advice/assistance on migration they would be inclined to provide people back in their country of origin. None who travelled with family indicated they would provide information and advice to family or friends on how to travel to Australia by sea, compared with 12.7% of those who travelled with friends, and 5.8% of those who travelled with neither family or friends. In contrast, but as to be expected given the challenges of the journey, those who travelled with family indicated they were more likely to assist family apply for visas in the future (77.0%) compared with those who travelled with friends (57.9%) and those who travelled with neither (70.7%). This may also reflect the demographic characteristics of the respondents, including the extent to which they have family in origin.

### **Who people migrated with: A short summary**

The analysis of the administrative data provides rich and illuminating insights into who Hazaras travelled to Australia with, including in comparison with other ethnic groups from the region of origin. The existing literature and data on Hazara migration within the region of origin as well as Afghan irregular migration to Europe indicate that young males without family are much more likely to engage in migration. Accordingly, analysis was undertaken to see if these research findings from elsewhere were also relevant to the irregular migration corridor to Australia. The analysis of the administrative data and survey results show that Hazaras did not tend to travel in family groups but were much more likely to travel without family, including as unaccompanied minors. The analysis also indicates that important economic, social and regulatory aspects are associated with who Hazaras travelled with, and that family members and friends were most often left behind. Support, safety and companionship for those who migrated was instead found in other Hazaras, who may not have been known before travel but who were relied upon during the journey. By analysing the detailed migration and survey data we can see that Hazaras—as an ethnic minority subject to exclusion, marginalisation and persecution in their countries of origin group, and as predominantly Afghan citizens with extremely limited visa mobility—have a highly circumscribed ability to choose who to travel with but that some are able to exercise agency and undertake migration with fellow Hazaras despite the serious limitations they face.

### 7.3 Conclusions

Scholarly enquiry into the demographic and social dimensions of asylum seeker movements and self-agency has been limited in the academic literature for several reasons. As outlined in Chapter 2, and in addition to the underlying assumption that forced migration involves the migration of whole groups, there has been a lack of data on the demography of asylum seekers, and even less data on who asylum seekers travelled with. There are, however, indications that this is changing as more data sources become available, including those of Eurostat, IOM, UNHCR and some countries.

Notwithstanding the current dearth of such data, where it is available, its analysis can yield relevant and important insights in relation to asylum seekers' movements and the ability (or otherwise) to exercise agency. In this Chapter, analysis of administrative and survey data on Hazaras have been conducted in order to better understand who migrated, and who Hazaras migrated with. In doing so, two hypotheses have been tested in order to assess whether the existing research on Hazara migration has applicability to the narrow irregular migration corridor of asylum seekers over the five-year study period. The findings of the analysis indicate that similar features of other flows are present in this study group, which is a highly gendered form of migration, with young males being significantly over-represented, both in terms of the general qualitative literature on Hazara migration as well as in comparison with other ethnic groups from the region.

Overall, the findings indicate that self-agency of Hazara maritime asylum seekers appears to be highly circumscribed by economic, socio-cultural and regulatory aspects. Importantly, however, this chapter only examined the demographic and social dimensions of asylum seeker agency, and so is not able to provide a full account of agency as per the analytical framework outlined in Chapter 2 of this thesis. The temporal dimensions—whether to migrate and when to migrate—and the spatial dimensions—where to migrate and how to migrate—are also critical dimensions in the examination of asylum seeker agency, and it is to the temporal dimensions that we now turn.

## Notes

- 1 At an IOM workshop on global migration scenarios in Geneva in May 2016, the workshop convenors (Global Futures) noted that almost all participants—who were mainly from developed countries—did not refer to identity documents or passports when asked to reflect on what they would take from their house in the event of a fire during the warm-up exercise. The convenors commented that in developing countries, it is common for all or almost all participants to cite identity documents as the one thing they would remove in the event of a fire, acknowledging the importance of documentation, identity and movement. A discussion ensued on the tendency for citizens of developed countries to take their freedom of mobility for granted.
- 2 I recognise that the data analysed are those that have been provided by asylum seekers to authorities. To some extent, some information such as age, citizenship and ethnicity may be based on fraudulent documents or misinformation for the purposes of attaining a protection visa, however, the extent of misinformation is likely to be insignificant, including in light of DIBP's improvements to its data matching and other capabilities (ANAO 2014). The analysis of the entire population, rather than a sample, mitigates to some degree against the significance of any misinformation. It should also be noted that the high final protection visa grant rates of maritime asylum seekers would indicate that the level of misinformation provided by the population overall is likely to be small given the visa processes undertaken, which involving assessing protection claims as well as the health and character of the applicant (including the provision of false and/or misleading information or documents). It may also be that obtaining a genuine Pakistani passport through corrupt practices and despite not having Pakistani citizenship is easier than obtaining an Iranian passport. This may account for some Hazaras presenting as Pakistani citizens.
- 3 The variable 'last country of long-term residence' is based on two questions asked at the time of arrival: "What was your last country of long-term residence?" (Not further defined) (asked between July 2008 to May 2011) and "What was your country of previous residence?" (asked between June 2011 to July 2013). Responses were not recorded for 195 Hazaras across the study period and have been coded as 'unknown' (responses for the remaining 11,941 Hazaras were recorded). It is important to note that duration of residence in the 'last long-term country of residence' was not collected. Duration of 'country of previous residence' was collected, with 86% of relevant Hazaras indicating their country of previous residence was for 12 or more months. Overall, this means that 92.4% of Hazaras' recorded information was for a long-term residence country. For the remaining 7.6% with residence of less than 12 months, and in the absence of any other information on prior residence country, this data has been coded as a 'long-term' country of residence. It may also appear in 'transit country' for the purposes of spatial migration pattern analysis.
- 4 These proportions are based on education level data for those who arrived in program years 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 only. Large amounts of missing data for program years 2011-12 and 2012-13 prevents data from these years being included.

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## 8 Temporal dimensions\*

In this Chapter analysis of the temporal dimensions of asylum seeker agency are critically examined, in terms of the movement patterns, migration processes and views of Hazaras on *whether to migrate* and *when to migrate*. As we saw in Chapter 2, considerations of the temporal dimensions of agency, and most especially *whether to migrate*, tended to dominate the earlier literature, and understandably so. Whether to migrate is a key aspect of international migration research, and central to all theorising of migration, including forced and irregular migration. In fact, Bean and Brown propose that one of the principal research questions posed by social demographers when examining migration patterns and processes of specific populations is “what factors affect who and how many people migrate?” (Bean & Brown 2015: 69). It is also a considerable preoccupation of policymakers, most especially its irregular form but occasionally in relation to regular flows that result in unintended consequences.<sup>1</sup>

Just as with other groups of people around the world, Hazaras living in Afghanistan, have long migrated internally, to neighbouring countries as well as more distant ones. Ethnographic research has provided rich insights into Hazara migration experiences within broader cultural realms, highlighting a multiplicity of reasons for migrating and providing important explanations of how social and economic processes shape Hazara movement patterns (Monsutti 2005). The analysis in this Chapter is, therefore, situated within and draws on the existing literature on Hazara migration as well as the broader literature on asylum seeker decision making. This allows for further insights on aspects involved in the contemplation of factors underpinning migration, and acts to provide a deeper understanding of how Hazaras contemplate whether to migrate and when to migrate. This analysis is, however, necessarily limited in that it is *post facto* and is not able to consider fully decision making on whether to migrate of populations in countries of origin. It is also extremely difficult to ascertain with any certainty the number of

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\* This chapter draws on a paper presented at the *Afghan Migration: Aspirations, Movements, Demography, Integration & Return Conference*, School of Demography, The Australian National University, 23 & 24 March 2016, titled ‘Future seekers in an era of survival migration: The demography and decisions of Afghan maritime asylum seekers to Australia’.

Hazaras (other than the 12,136 in this study) who migrated globally during the study period. No data on Hazara movements outside the administrative dataset is available. The existing literature points to some knowledge of Hazara populations as well as their migration patterns and processes (as discussed in Chapter 6), most especially within the region, but no data on the size or composition of Hazara populations or flows are available. The utility, therefore, of this study on asylum seeker agency is on being able to examine in detail the behaviour and views of Hazaras who travelled to Australia as maritime asylum seekers during the study period in considerable granularity while also affording an unusual level completeness. The detailed administrative data covering a five-year period allows for robust comparisons of different Hazara populations—those who had lived in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran before departure. It also enables an assessment of Hazara patterns and processes in comparison with other ethnic groups from the region who also arrived as maritime asylum seekers, namely Persians, Pashtuns, Kurds and Arabs.

In this chapter, the following research questions on Hazara irregular asylum seeker temporal dimensions of agency are answered:

- Were maritime asylum seekers themselves active decision makers when deciding whether to migrate?
- Was collective decision making a feature of Hazara migration decision making processes?
- For those found to be refugees, were both protection and non-protection factors significant in the decision to migrate as an irregular maritime asylum seeker?
- What factors were significant in determining *when* they travelled to Australia as asylum seekers?

The analysis presented in this chapter draws primarily on results of the 2013 survey of former irregular maritime asylum seekers. It also draws on the irregular maritime asylum seeker dataset, which is particularly relevant to the development of a better understanding of factors underpinning when asylum seekers arrived in Australia. The analysis is placed within the existing body of literature and research findings relevant to the study population, including pertinent qualitative research findings. The first section of this chapter provides an analysis of Hazara migration patterns on *whether to migrate*—drawing on survey data related to problems in origin, reasons for migrating,

as well as proximity to a 'culture of migration'. Migration decision making processes are also examined to determine the extent to which maritime asylum seekers themselves were involved in the decision to leave, and the extent of collectivity in decision making processes. The next section then explores aspects related to *when* Hazaras migrated as maritime asylum seekers, particularly in relation to the extent of 'triggered' migration, the relationship to previous migration within the region and relative stability of residence prior to migration.

### 8.1 Whether to migrate

Hazara maritime asylum seekers have been travelling to Australia on and off since the late 1990s, and they were one of the main groups to have arrived in Australia by boat during the 1999 to 2001 flow (Fazal 2001; Koser & Marsden 2013; Maley 2001). As an ethnic minority widely recognised as being persecuted in Afghanistan and Pakistan, it is in some respects understandable that there tends to be strong assumptions that Hazaras are simply fleeing for their lives:

For hundreds of years, Afghan Hazaras have fled for the relative safety of Quetta, on Pakistan's restive western border. The latest wave of refugees has been driven out of Afghanistan by Taliban violence. (Doherty 2013)

...this paper has provided a historical overview of the largely overlooked experiences of century-old persecution and marginalisation that continue to force many Shiite Hazaras to flee their homeland...(Philips 2011)

Some live legally, some have been able to obtain UNHCR refugee cards, but most have to make regular payments to local authorities and the police to avoid incarceration and deportation. This [Hazara] community has become the target of killings and massacres and its members have been forced to flee for their lives. (Zaher 2011)

There are sound reasons, however, for seeking to critically examine Hazara asylum seeking based on: i) what we understand of the Hazara populations of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran and the environments in which they live; ii) what we know about the migration circumstances of Afghans and Hazaras (including visa access and refugee grant rates); iii) the extent to which we understand the views of Hazaras in the region about their migration aspirations; iv) what we already know about Hazara migration experiences and processes from the literature. The existing body of knowledge, for example, has provided very important insights into the Hazara people and their relationship to migration, particular in the region of origin. Broadly, and as outlined in

Chapter 6, the need to examine the extent to which Hazaras are able to exercise agency on whether to migrate is based on the tensions that exist between acknowledgement of Hazara as being a people in need of international protection, the reality of the likelihood of international protection being attained (in various locations and under various circumstances), and the pragmatic need for large Hazara communities to co-exist with others in unstable and insecure societies. In addition, and as we have seen in Chapter 7, the demography of Hazara maritime asylum seekers points to strong and distinctive characteristics indicating a highly gendered form of ‘youth’ migration with implications for decision making on whether, how, when and with whom to migrate to Australia.

In examining the issue of whether to migrate, much of the literature on Hazara migration acknowledges and describes complex and multi-faceted reasons for migrating, which extend beyond the need to secure safety and include aspects such as maximising livelihoods, accessing health and education services and undertaking pilgrimage (Glazebrook & Abbasi-Shavazi 2007; McAuliffe & Jayasuriya 2016; Monsutti 2005; Monsutti 2007; Stigter & Monsutti 2005; Stigter 2004). The research, however, is largely situated in the immediate region and so it is important to examine this particular aspect of agency and the experiences of Hazara maritime asylum seekers who travelled much further afield to Australia.

The analysis in this section draws mainly on the 2013 survey results of maritime asylum seekers, and in particular respondents’ views on living conditions in origin countries prior to departing. Specifically, respondents’ views on the problems they faced in their origin country prior to migrating were sought. Further questions were also asked (and are analysed below) on the factors involved in the decision to migrate, however, the question posed on ‘problems’ was earlier in the survey and related to origin country circumstances rather than reasons for migrating, acknowledging that the two are conceptually distinct while being inevitably linked. The main focus of the analysis, however, is on decision making processes about whether to migrate, and specifically the extent to which asylum seekers themselves were involved in the decision and the extent of collective versus individual decision making processes. By examining decision making processes of a group who has already migrated we are able to more readily assess the nature and extent of asylum seekers’ agency of the key and critical consideration of whether to migrate.

### **Recalling problems at home**

The focus of the survey was on the various reasons for migrating as maritime asylum seekers, and so it was framed within this context. As discussed in detail in Chapter 4 (Study design and data), the methodology sought as far as possible to elucidate accurate responses on sensitive topics, including by utilising new research methodologies to reduce social desirability effects. That said, issues of recall in *post facto* research requiring people to answer questions about their past experiences places unavoidable limitations on analysis. Nevertheless, analysing the survey results in conjunction with detailed administrative data on the demographic characteristics and movement patterns of the entire population enables a deeper analysis of how migration decisions were taken, not just what resulted from those decisions.

The survey sought respondents' views on the main problems they faced in their country of origin prior to travelling to Australia. As can be seen from Table 8.1, Hazaras indicated they experienced very high levels of discrimination (ethnic and religious), including compared with other ethnic groups from the region. That Hazaras reported high levels of discrimination based on their ethnicity is consistent with the existing literature (Maley 2001; Ibrahim 2012; US Department of State 2011, 43), along with high rates of religious discrimination. Political oppression, however, was relatively low reflecting the nature of fragmented political processes in Afghanistan, which are heavily tied to ethnicity, as well as the fact that many of the Hazara respondents were Afghan citizens hosted in Pakistan as so likely to be somewhat disengaged from politics.

TABLE 8.1 Problems faced in origin country by major ethnic groups

	Hazara (%)	Pashtun (%)	Persian (%)	Kurdish (%)	Arab (%)
<b>Protection</b>					
Discrimination against [ethnicity] people	84.2	32.5	4.8	82.4	44.9
Religious discrimination	76.6	75.9	40.2	30.8	42.2
Serious harassment	58.3	28.5	46.3	67.6	33.7
Persecution <sup>(1)</sup>	53.2	55.1	34.9	54.2	58.3
Political oppression	32.3	42.2	54.5	35.4	31.9
Torture	38.3	32.1	35.8	45.9	30.9
At least one protection-related problem	96.7	97.6	82.7	93.4	86.3
<b>Non-protection</b>					
General insecurity	62.7	54.5	48.7	56.8	57.9
Widespread violence	37.8	42.7	33.4	38.7	41.7
Unemployment	19.4	0	22.3	63.9	44.0
Poor education facilities	28.7	4.8	12.5	56.0	44.1
Lack of job opportunities	17.0	0	21.9	56.6	57.4
Eviction/loss of home/nowhere to live	17.4	0	3.6	24.1	39.3
Corruption	29.9	2.0	33.4	45.4	39.6
Poverty	16.8	2.0	11.6	56.0	43.8
Poor health facilities	19.5	4.4	4.5	35.3	40.5
At least one non-protection-related problem	76.5	76.1	73.5	86.1	90.2

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker survey dataset (2013). Weighted. Question 25. (n=899).

Note: It is possible that some 'non-protection' factors (e.g. eviction/loss of home/nowhere to live') could be protection-related, depending on the exact nature of claims made. For the purposes of this analysis, these factors have been interpreted as being non-protection factors. (1) The term 'persecution' with its specific legal/technical meaning was, along with other terms, subjected to cognitive testing to ensure the term was understood in all survey languages. Survey instruments were also back translated to ensure consistency and clarity as far as possible.

Hazaras were among the groups who indicated that they almost all (97%) faced at least one protection-related problem prior to migrating. While this is to be expected from a survey of people granted protection, there was marked and significant variation between the groups, with Persians reporting the lowest levels of protection problems faced (83%).<sup>2</sup>

#### *Variation by country of residence*

When the problems faced by Hazaras are examined by country of residence, it is evident that strong similarities existed between those living in Afghanistan and Pakistan whereas Hazaras living in Iran faced different circumstances (Table 8.2). For example, only 4.5% of Hazaras living in Iran reported religious discrimination compared with



81% and 90% in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and general insecurity was much less of an issue in Iran. Other problems, however, appear to have been more prevalent in Iran such as harassment, persecution and poor education facilities.

**TABLE 8.2 Problems faced by Hazaras by last country of residence**

	Afghanistan (%)	Pakistan (%)	Iran (%)
<b>Protection</b>			
Discrimination against [ethnicity] people	85.9	87.9	72.3
Religious discrimination	81.1	89.7	4.5
Serious harassment	57.6	54.0	85.9
Persecution <sup>(1)</sup>	54.1	49.0	76.2
Political oppression	35.7	31.6	24.9
Torture	40.3	34.8	48.9
At least one protection-related problem	95.3	98.5	97.5
<b>Non-protection</b>			
General insecurity	66.1	66.6	38.2
Widespread violence	38.8	36.7	40.3
Unemployment	13.4	21.1	23.9
Poor education facilities	27.2	23.0	61.4
Lack of job opportunities	14.7	14.2	36.4
Eviction/loss of home/nowhere to live	20.3	12.9	30.4
Corruption	33.1	30.3	20.9
Poverty	13.2	19.1	14.8
Poor health facilities	21.7	17.4	16.9
At least one non-protection-related problem	76.0	75.4	81.9

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker survey dataset (2013). Weighted. Question 25. (n=413).

Note: It is possible that some 'non-protection' factors (e.g. eviction/loss of home/nowhere to live) could be protection-related, depending on the exact nature of claims made. For the purposes of this analysis, these factors have been interpreted as being non-protection factors. (1) The term 'persecution' with its specific legal/technical meaning was, along with other terms, subjected to cognitive testing to ensure the term was understood in all survey languages. Survey instruments were also back translated to ensure consistency and clarity as far as possible.

As outlined in Chapter 6, these results resonate strongly with research findings and analysis in the literature, particularly on the targeting of Shia Hazaras in Quetta and the much greater tolerance of Hazaras' religious beliefs in Iran (Houk 2010; Jayasuriya et al 2016; Maley 2001; Marie 2013; Monsutti 2005; Mousavi 1998). Despite greater religious freedom, the results indicate that discrimination and persecution due to ethnicity were significant issues in Iran, as was harassment. The limited education access in Iran for Hazaras, which in turn is related to employment opportunities and prospects, has been highlighted in some of the small body of research conducted on Afghans in Iran (Abbasi-Shavazi & Glazebrook 2006; Jamshidiha & Ali Babaie 2002<sup>3</sup>).

It has also been a feature of qualitative research on decision making of Hazaras conducted in Australia, in which access to education was cited as a significant issue (Nadone & Correa-Velez 2015, 5):

I left Iran and came to Australia, because Iran is a country for Iranians not for Afghans...I was not allowed to go to school and get education because I was an Afghan. So because of all these issues I had to leave Iran and travel to a country where I would feel safe, where there is right for human beings. And where I could get education.

Issues of poverty, corruption, health facilities and unemployment were being faced by Hazara respondents at fairly similar levels across the region.

### **Factors involved in the decision to leave**

Drawing on the literature on forced and irregular migration discussed in detail in Chapter 2, and in particular the multiplicity of reasons for migrating as asylum seekers (Betts 2013; Koser 2010; Martin 2014; Monsutti 2005; Turton 2003), analysis was undertaken to answer the research question on whether both protection and non-protection factors were significant in Hazara irregular maritime asylum seekers' decision making. The analytical approach incorporates protection reasons as well as those related to the concept of 'fragile state' involving poor governance, poor services, general insecurity, poverty, etc (Betts 2013; Icydygu & Akcapar 2016). The analytical approach also includes reasons that related to both negative conditions or circumstances in origin as well as perceived positive conditions or circumstances in the eventual destination (i.e. Australia). In this way, the incentives to move were able to incorporate the aspirational factors that may have had an impact on decisions to leave, which lie beyond the immediate reality of a migrant's own situation (Carling 2002; de Haas 2011).

In order to examine this issue respondents were asked about the reasons they migrated as well as whether any incident triggered their migration event. Overall, the aggregate survey results showed that both protection and non-protection reasons featured heavily in deciding to leave the country of origin all the while occurring within evolving environments (McAuliffe 2013, 10-11):

...(potential) migrants and their families, are likely to be continually assessing and re-assessing their migration options, and...these assessments involve a range of complex interrelated and perhaps conflicting factors that have to be carefully balanced within dynamic environments. That a high proportion of respondents indicated that their migration was ‘triggered’ by an event or situation resonates with this notion.

The disaggregated results, however, show that notwithstanding the general findings that both protection and non-protection factors feature in decision about whether to migrate, very significant differences are apparent between ethnic groups.

Persecution on the basis of ethnicity, for example, was very high for Hazara respondents (73.4%) and the highest of all ethnic groups from the region included in the survey, the lowest being Persians, of whom 1.4% reported persecution on the basis of ethnicity. Again, the high levels of ethnic persecution reported by Hazara resonates strongly with the literature, including the literature on Hazara identity, which has been forged out of the need to cooperate and survive as an ethnic minority in a hostile environment (Canfield 2004; Harpkvin 1996; Ibrahim 2012)—ethnic persecution has, in some ways, become part of Hazara identity in the region (but not necessarily beyond the region).

What is perhaps of more interest is that where a person from the same (persecuted) ethnic group migrated from had a significant impact on their reasons for migrating. When country of residence is examined for Hazara, the most prominent reason for leaving for Hazaras for all three countries of residence was ethnic persecution. However, there was considerable variation between Hazaras who had lived in Afghanistan and Pakistan compared with those who had lived in Iran. While all Hazaras indicated a multiplicity of reasons for leaving, the emphasis was quite different as can be seen from the results in Table 8.3.

TABLE 8.3 Hazara respondents' reasons for leaving by last country of residence

	Afghanistan (%)	Pakistan (%)	Iran (%)
<b>Protection</b>			
Persecution <sup>(1)</sup> against [ethnicity] people	75.5	74.0	68.0
Religious persecution	73.8	78.3	21.4
Political Persecution	13.5	10.3	2.5
Australia accepts refugees	21.6	26.1	29.6
Persecution against women	6.6	6.5	5.7
At least one protection-related reason	91.5	92.6	82.0
<b>Non-protection</b>			
General insecurity/conflict	46.0	40.3	32.5
Australia treats asylum seekers well	29.5	29.1	40.2
For a better life	10.6	18.2	27.4
Issue with country's authorities	4.2	5.4	14.6
For better education services	8.6	9.9	21.4
To get Australian citizenship	3.9	2.9	10.5
To work	1.1	4.6	5.0
For better health services	2.1	3.5	13.4
Lack of economic opportunity	0.0	5.9	12.0
For better housing	3.6	5.2	10.5
To join family/community	0.6	2.7	2.5
Australia is safe	0.0	1.2	0.0
At least one non-protection-related reason	63.9	64.2	68.7

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker survey dataset (2013). Weighted. Questions 12 & 26. (n=413).

Note: It is possible that some 'non-protection' factors (e.g. eviction/loss of home/nowhere to live') could be protection-related, depending on the exact nature of claims made. For the purposes of this analysis, these factors have been interpreted as being non-protection factors. (1) The term 'persecution' with its specific legal/technical meaning was, along with other terms, subjected to cognitive testing to ensure the term was understood in all survey languages. Survey instruments were also back translated to ensure consistency and clarity as far as possible.

Of particular note is the striking difference reported in reasons related to religious persecution, again reflecting sectarian issues and that predominantly Shia Hazaras are more easily able to practice their religious beliefs in Shia-dominated Iran. The reasons related to leaving Iran tended to have more emphasis on the practical 'civil society' issues, such as education, health, housing and interactions with authorities, rather than security (persecution and general insecurity). This accord with research undertaken in Iran on Afghan migrants (many of whom are Hazaras), which has found that issues such as accessing education, housing security and freedom of movement are common difficulties experienced in Iran (Abbasi-Shavazi et al 2017; Abbasi-Shavazi & Glazebrook 2007; Jamshidiha & Ali Babaie 2002). It is also reflective of the way

transnational mobility and conflict have been conceptualised in the broader literature. Ibrahim Sirkeci, for example, has drawn on Maslow's hierarchy of needs in his analysis of migration from conflict zones, in which he places security and safety above lower order needs (Sirkeci 2009, 5; Maslow 1943). In the case of Hazara in Iran, who are living in a country that is much safer than Afghanistan and Pakistan, and has a much greater degree of religious tolerance of Shia Muslims, 'second order' issues are more of a focus in terms of problems experienced and reasons for leaving. Insecurity and war are cited by Hazaras in Iran as reasons to not return to Afghanistan and Pakistan (Jamshidiha & Ali Babaie 2002).

Interestingly Hazaras who had been living in Iran also appeared to place more weight on Australia's asylum policy and practice in the context of reasons for leaving, with higher results for both "Australia treats asylum seekers well" and "Australia accept refugees" compared with those from Afghanistan and Pakistan. Other practical aspects, such as gaining Australian citizenship, also feature more heavily. We can see that with less emphasis on the more immediate and fundamental human security issues (such as persecution, discrimination, exclusion and conflict), there is more 'room' for other issues to be afforded greater weight, such as aspects related to the operation of civil society (services) and practical considerations (refugee acceptance, eventual citizenship).

That aspects related to Australia do feature in respondents' reflections on the reasons they left their home country needs to be critically examined, and with particular reference to methodological limitations. The potential for blurring of lines between reasons for leaving and reasons for choosing a destination may be related (understandably) to issues of recall, although the time between migrating and the conduct of the survey was reduced as far as possible as part of the methodology.<sup>3</sup> *Post facto* justification for prior behaviour is also a potential issue, as outlined in literature on social research (Black 1999; Kothari 2004). Recent research in origin countries with potential migrants, however, indicates that issues of recall may be overstated and that how potential migrants think about whether to migrate and where to go (amongst other things) while still in their home countries is inter-linked and non-linear. Results of large-scale surveys of Hazara in Pakistan and Afghanistan undertaken in 2014 indicate, for example, that potential asylum seekers actively contemplate different destination countries (both their asylum policies and civil society aspects) as part of broader

migration/non-migration considerations (McAuliffe & Jayasuriya 2016). It is also important to acknowledge that, as we will see in Chapter 9 on examinations of *where to migrate*, asylum policy factors appear to feature more heavily in these deliberations than the higher order needs of security and safety.

### **Social proximity to a ‘culture of migration’**

Within the broader migration literature, social network theory and cumulative causation have been used to explain migration patterns and processes that occur between two locations (Boyd 1989; Fussell & Massey 2004; Massey 1987; Massey 1990). These theories have focused on, or included as primary determinants, social links between origin and destination, however, there has been much more limited enquiry into social links as it relates to asylum migration. The background and reasons for the much more limited enquiry into asylum migration and social determinants, and the much greater focus on destination choice is set out in Chapter 2—it primarily relates to a general assumption that asylum seekers, refugees and/or other forced migrants must migrate, effectively rendering exploration of whether to migrate a largely redundant area of research. However, to more fully account for the array of aspects of agency, and particularly as it relates to protracted and discrete migration flows over great distances, I have drawn from the broader migration literature on social network theory for this specific aspect of analysis as it relates to the concept of ‘cultures of migration’ (Kandel & Massey 2002; Massey et al 1998; Ali 2007). Kandel and Massey define the concept as: ‘The essence of the culture-of-migration argument is that non-migrants observe migrants to whom they are socially connected and seek to emulate their migratory behavior’ (2002, 983). In their study of the Mexican-US corridor, they found that the development of a culture of migration had an impact on migration patterns and processes: “Young people who grow up and come of age increasingly expect to migrate internationally in the course of their lives...” (Kandel & Massey 2002, 982). The concept resonates with Monsutti’s research on Hazara migration developed within the sub-region during decades of war and displacement, and as a survival strategy for Hazaras over many generations: “...aside from their dislocating effects, war and exile have also been a vector of social change...for many young male Hazaras, migration to Iran became a socially obligatory stage in their lives...” (Monsutti 2007, 184).

Respondents' social proximity to a culture of migration prior to their departure was explored in the 2013 survey. The results are relevant to both *whether* to migrate and *where* to migrate, and I acknowledge that the two aspects are linked but are treated separately for analytical purposes.<sup>4</sup> The survey results on social proximity to migration are discussed in this section, with further discussion, specifically on links to the Australian diaspora, included in Chapter 9 on *where* to migrate.

Overall, the survey results indicate that Hazaras displayed a higher social proximity to a culture of migration compared with other ethnic groups from the region, which is consistent with the results on whether respondents lived outside their country of birth. For example, Hazara respondents were much more likely to indicate their ethnic group travelled to another country for work (43.7%), which was more than double that of non-Hazara (21.4%).

**TABLE 8.4 Hazara and non-Hazara respondents' social proximity to migration**

	Hazara			Non-Hazara		
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Not sure (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	Not sure (%)
In [origin country], was it common for people to travel to another country to find work?	36.4	30.3	33.3	25.2	43.1	31.6
Did the majority of [your ethnic] community travel to another country to find work?	43.7	28.9	27.4	21.4	46.1	32.6
Did you have any friends who travelled to another country to find work?	21.4	6.6	12.9	13.7	7.7	8.5
Did you have any family members who travelled to another country to find work?	15.1	79.4	5.5	9.6	86.2	4.2
Prior to leaving [origin country], had you ever applied for a visa to travel to any other country? <i>NS</i>	7.3	89.2	3.6	10.5	85.8	3.8
Prior to leaving [origin country], did you know of people who had travelled to another country without a visa?	22.8	59.8	17.4	14.2	73.7	12.1
Had [family, friends, members of ethnic community] in Australia prior to travel? (Yes / No)	44.2	55.8	-	31.8	68.2	-

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker survey dataset (2013).

Notes: n=888 to 894 depending on the question. Weighted. Questions 20, 21, 22 & 24. *NS* indicates that the crosstab results were not significant. See endnote 8 for what constitutes 'non-Hazara' respondents.

The focus on migrating for work is also reflected in the existing literature, which highlights that while migration is often related to security (including to seek protection), economic livelihoods are also important considerations for families, and have been so for many generations (McAuliffe & Jayasuriya 2016; Monsutti 2005; Koser & Marsden 2013). This is also apparent in recent qualitative research conducted in Afghanistan, which found that many families expressed the importance of both security issues and economic livelihoods as important in migration decision making (Linke 2016). The pressure to provide for families at home through remittances was also apparent, and that families often viewed pooling resources for a family member to migrate as an ‘investment’ (Linke 2016, 7). The importance of remitting funds to families back home is reflected in the survey results as far as they relate to asylum seeker behaviour, as show in Table 8.5. Hazaras were much more likely to indicate that they were working in Australia and that they were sending money to family and/or friends compared with other ethnic groups. Monsutti describes Hazaras’ ability to remit as a key component in their economic and social survival during and following periods of war and displacement (Monsutti 2004, 240):

Facing a very difficult situation, Hazara...have demonstrated their adaptive capabilities. Using their existing cultural assets, while moving constantly between Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran, they have been able to open new social, economic, and political horizons. ...the vast amount of money remitted to Afghanistan are some of the most striking features of the social strategies set up by the Hazaras.

The pronounced results on working in Australia and remitting (Table 8.5 below) are at odds with the low results for work on ‘reasons for leaving’ (Table 8.3 above), however, this is likely to reflect the nature of the focus on leaving origin countries, and in the context of labour-related migration within the region and to other regions, such as the Gulf Cooperation Council (Hassain 2016; Khadria 2016; Koser & Marsden 2013; Monsutti 2005). The results on *where to migrate*, for example, indicate that employment and livelihoods are more relevant to destination considerations than whether to migrate, as discussed in Chapter 9.



**TABLE 8.5 Levels of work in Australia and remitting**

	Hazara (%)	Pashtun (%)	Persian (%)	Kurdish (%)	Arab (%)
In fulltime or part-time paid work in Australia	36.0	10.8	15.0	8.5	6.8
Sending money to family/friends in origin	52.7	34.1	5.0	11.3	20.1
Sending money to family/friends in other countries	11.7	3.8	2.4	1.6	3.1

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker survey dataset (2013). Weighted. Questions 11 & 41. (n=917 to 1,006 depending on the question).

A further dimension relating to time of arrival is also important to acknowledge in the analysis. Time of arrival was not collected in the survey, however, the administrative data indicates that Hazaras were much more likely to have arrived earlier in the study period than other groups (discussed further below), and so potentially enabled Hazara respondents more time in Australia to establish themselves, find work and send remittances to family and friends than others by the time the survey was conducted.

Of the Hazaras who indicated that they knew of people who had travelled to another country without a visa, the majority indicated that Iran was in the top three countries to which people travelled (81%), along with Pakistan (45%) and Afghanistan (20%). Other countries also chosen as top three countries included Turkey (10%), Australia (8%) and Indonesia (7%). The strong results for Iran and Pakistan are consistent with the findings on the migration patterns of Hazaras in Chapter 7, which showed movement within the region had taken place prior to migration to Australia, although there is a different emphasis with the corridor between Afghanistan and Pakistan featuring more heavily in the administrative data analysis, which indicates that large numbers of Hazaras migrated from (and through Pakistan). One explanation could be the generic nature of the question (i.e. do you 'know of'...), which was likely to capture perceptions of others' movements unlike the administrative data (which captures migrants' own actual movements). The survey results are consistent with the literature on Afghan movement and mobility within the region, which point to (Shia) Hazaras from Afghanistan generally migrating to Iran and (Sunni) Pashtuns generally preferring to migrate to Pakistan (Abbasi-Shavazi & Glazebrook 2006; Koser & Marsden 2013; Monsutti 2005).

### **Involvement in decision making processes—whether to migrate**

Drawing on the extensive literature on decision making, including in relation to Afghan migration (Abbasi-Shavazi et al 2017; Abbasi-Shavazi & Glazebrook 2006; Abraham & Busbridge 2014; Gilbert & Koser 2006; Glazebrook & Abbasi-Shavazi 2007; McAuliffe & Jayasuriya 2016; McAuliffe 2013; Majidi et al 2016; Stigter 2004; Stigter & Monsutti 2005), regression analysis was conducted to test two hypotheses—(H1) that asylum seekers themselves are active decision makers as it relates to their migration and (H2) that collective decision making was a feature of Hazara decision making processes. Two discrete dependent variables were created from the responses to questions on involvement in migration decision making: whether or not the respondent was involved (1=involved; 0=not involved); whether decision making was collective or not (1=collective; 0=not collective).<sup>4</sup>

Based on the existing literature on Hazara migration and asylum seeker decision making more generally (Chapter 2), the demographic variables include age (1=under21, 0=21 or more), sex (1=male, 0=female), marital status (1=married, 0=not married), education (1=educated, 0= uneducated) and ethnicity (1=Hazara, 0=non-Hazara). In addition to demographic variables, aspects related to reasons for leaving, migration logistics (smuggling, costs) and employment status in Australia were included. Reasons for leaving included persecution (1=yes, 0=no), general security (1=yes, 0=no), family reunion (1=yes, 0=no) and income generation (1=yes, 0=no). These variables were created from the 22 response options to question 26 (see the survey instrument in Appendix A). Migration logistics included whether an agent or smuggler was used (1=yes, 0=no) or whether the cost of travel was greater than USD 15,000 (1=yes, 0=no). Employment status was whether a person worked full-time (1=yes, 0=no).

In the second stage of analysis, logistic regression was used to analyse the influence of independent variables on decision making involvement (decision to leave and decision to go to Australia). A summary of the analytical approach adopted is in Table 8.6. The binary logistic regression models on respondent involvement were appropriate and significant in predicting the level of involvement in both the decision to leave the country of origin and the decision to go to Australia. For the decision to leave regression model, the P value was <0.0001, and the Hosmer-Lemeshow P value was 0.7793; for the decision to go to Australia regression model, the P value was <0.0001 and the Hosmer-Lemeshow P value was 0.9182. The models on the nature of collective

vs individual decision making were appropriate and significant in predicting solo decision making compared with collective. For the decision to leave model, the P value was <0.0001, and the Hosmer-Lemeshow P value was 0.9145. For the decision to go to Australia, the P value was <0.0001, and the Hosmer-Lemeshow P value was 0.1967. The results are presented and discussed below. Interactions were tested, including sex and age, sex and marital status, etc, and were found not to be significant.

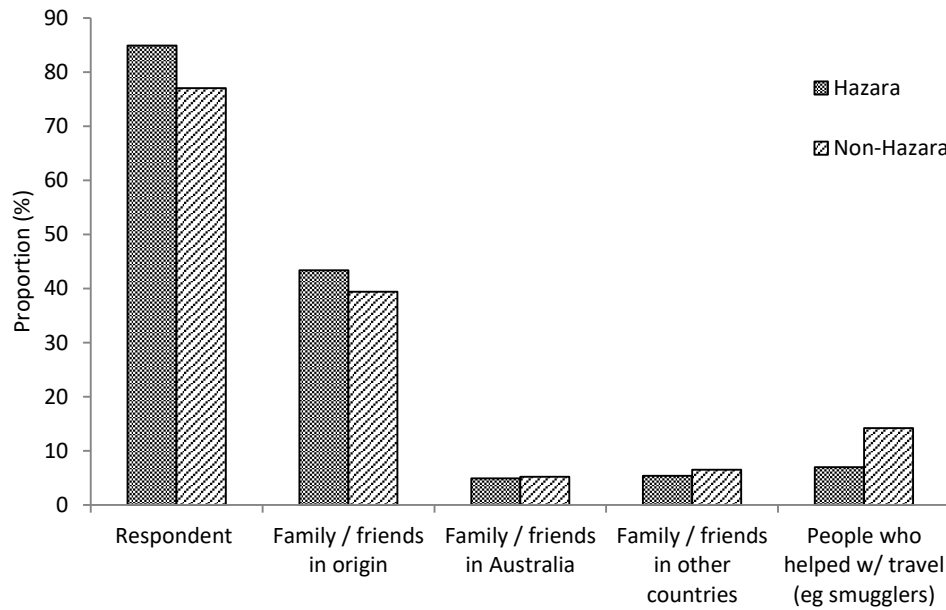
**TABLE 8.6 Analysis of asylum seeker decision making processes**

	<b>Decisions</b>	<b>Dependent variable</b>	<b>Dependent variable description</b>	<b>Analytical techniques</b>
Level of respondent involvement	1. <i>To leave</i>	Dichotomous	1= involved	BLR
	2. Go to Australia (see Chapter 9)		0=not involved	
Collective vs individual decision making	1. <i>To leave</i>	Dichotomous	1=collective	BLR
	2. Go to Australia (see Chapter 9)		2=not collective	

The analytical models incorporated two aspects of decision making processes: involvement and collectivity. These were explored in relation to key demographic and other variables in relation to the decision to leave. Analysis of decision making processes that incorporated *where to migrate* is further presented in Chapter 9.

### *Results*

The summary results of the survey reveal that the vast majority of respondents were themselves involved in the decision making processes about whether to migrate (82%), although there was a significant difference between Hazara (85%) and non-Hazara from the region (77%) (Figure 8.1). Most other differences were not statistically significant, the exception be the extent to which agents/smugglers were involved, which was much lower for Hazara (7%) compared with non-Hazara (14%).



**FIGURE 8.1: People involved in the decision about whether to migrate**

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker survey dataset (2013). Weighted. Question 28. Note: n=880 to 889 depending on the sub-question.

Examination of summary statistics on respondent involvement in the decision about whether to migrate shows that there was marked variation by key demographic variables—namely sex and age—as well as aspects of migration logistics (such as whether an agent or smuggler assisted with travel). In deciding whether to migrate, asylum seekers who were younger were less likely to have been involved in decision making processes with 62% of those under 21 reporting being involved compared with 82% of those 21 or more. Females were less likely to be involved compared with males (69% compared with 83%). In migrations involving the use of agents/smugglers, asylum seekers themselves were more likely to be involved if such services were used (85%) compared with those indicating agents/smugglers were not used (76%).

The regression model controls for other variables so provides a more precise analysis in helping to understand decision making processes compared with cross-tabulated summary statistics.<sup>5</sup>

**TABLE 8.7: Factors associated with involvement in the decision to leave**

Dependent variable 1=involved 0=not involved	Decision to leave	
	Marginal effects	SE
<b>Male</b>	0.097***	0.03
<b>Aged under 21</b>	-0.140***	0.05
<b>Married</b>	0.071**	0.03
<b>Educated</b>	0.021	0.04
<b>Hazara</b>	0.055*	0.03
<b>Work FT in Australia</b>	0.069*	0.04
Reasons for leaving		
<b>Persecution-related</b>	0.104***	0.03
<b>Non-persecution – General Security</b>	-0.021	0.03
<b>Non-persecution – Family Reunion</b>	0.137	0.11
<b>Non-persecution – Income generation</b>	0.113**	0.05
<b>Used Agent/Smuggler</b>	0.070***	0.02
<b>Cost under USD 15,000</b>	-0.049*	0.03
Observations	844	
Model P value	0.0000	

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1.

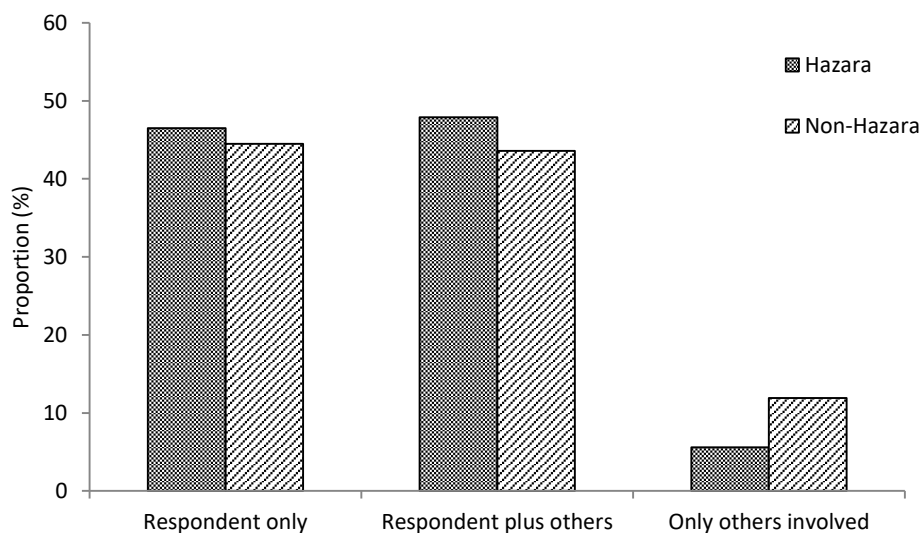
Notwithstanding the aggregate result indicating that most respondents were involved themselves in the decision to leave, the regression model ( $P<0.0001$ ) indicates that for some asylum seekers involvement in decision making prior to travel was not as high, and certainly not anywhere near automatic. Despite having undertaken very lengthy and possibly traumatic journeys, the results indicate that specific groups were less likely to have been involved in pre-migration decisions. For example, all else equal, the probability of being involved in the decision to leave is significantly 14.0% less if the respondent is under 21 years of age.

In addition, the model also shows that respondents were significantly more likely to have been involved in the decision if they were male (9.7% greater probability), married (7.1% greater), or left for reasons of persecution (10.4% greater) or income generation (11.3% greater) or used a smuggler (7.0% greater).

### The extent of collective decision making—whether to migrate

Examination of whether an asylum seeker themselves was involved in decision making highlights significant differences based on demographic characteristics as well as underlying migration factors and the use of agents/smugglers. It is, however, limited in what it can reveal about the extent of individual versus collective decision making processes. The literature on Hazaras, along with other ethnic groups, indicates that migration (and in particular asylum seeking) is related to long-term survival strategies for families and communities (Betts 2013; Horst 2006; Monsutti 2008). The extent and nature of collective decision making can point to processes shaping distinctive migration patterns of discrete populations.

As Figure 8.2 shows, there was little difference between results for Hazara and non-Hazara from the region, except in relation to the extent to which decisions were made by others only. Non-Hazaras were much more likely to report others having made the decision for them to migrate without their involvement.



**FIGURE 8.2: Collective and individual migration decision making—whether to migrate**

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker dataset (2013). Weighted. Questions 7 and 28. Note: n=781.

Examination of summary statistics on collective versus individual decision making varied by a range of independent variables. Results shows that there was again marked variation by key demographic variables—namely sex and age—as well as the involvement of an agent/smuggler who assisted with travel. In terms of the decision to leave, asylum seekers who were younger were less likely to have been a solo decision maker (23% compared with 47% for those 21 or more), and more likely to have had the decision made by others only (33% compared with 7%). Females were less likely to be solo decision makers (39% compare with 47% of males), and more likely to have had the decision made by others only (13% compared with 8% of males). Once again the use of an agent/smuggler had an impact on decision making processes, with collective decision making being much higher for migrations involving the use of agents/smugglers (51% compared with 39%), and solo decision making being lower (41% compared with 51% if an agent/smuggler was not involved in the migration). This does not necessarily mean that the agent/smuggler was him or herself involved in the decision making but that in situations in which an agent/smuggler was used, collective decision making of some sort was more likely.

A model was developed to help explain the extent to which collective decision making occurred for the decision to leave. The results of the modelling are in Table 8.8.

**TABLE 8.8: Factors associated with collective vs individual decision making processes**

Dependent variable	Decision to leave	
	Marginal effects	SE
1=collective		
0=not collective		
<b>Male</b>	-0.069	0.05
<b>Aged under 21</b>	0.295***	0.09
<b>Married</b>	-0.019	0.04
<b>Educated</b>	-0.035	0.05
<b>Hazara</b>	0.010	0.04
<b>Work FT in Australia</b>	-0.018	0.05
Reasons for leaving		
<b>Persecution-related</b>	0.025	0.05
<b>Non-persecution – General Security</b>	0.070*	0.04
<b>Non-persecution – Family Reunion</b>	0.072	0.10
<b>Non-persecution – Income generation</b>	0.070	0.06
<b>Used Agent/Smuggler</b>	0.100***	0.04
<b>Cost under USD 15,000</b>	-0.056	0.04
Observations	752	
Model P value	0.0024	

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1.

Similar to the results for the logistic regression models on whether or not an asylum seeker was involved in decision making, the models on collectivity indicate that age was a significant factor, with decisions related to the migration of those under 21 years being more likely to have been collective. For example, all else equal, the probability of collective decision making for the decision to leave is significantly 29.5% greater if the respondent is under 21 years of age.

Once again, the use of an agent/smuggler was significant, and was associated with collective decision making. The probability of collective decision making for the



decision to leave is significantly 10.0% greater if the respondent used an agent/smuggler.

The reasons for leaving were not generally significant for the decision to leave, except for general security ( $p < 0.1$ ), with the probability of collective decision making for the decision to leave being significantly 7.0% greater if the respondent left for reasons that included general insecurity. Importantly, the model indicates that there was no statistically significant difference between Hazaras and non-Hazaras.

### **Whether to migrate: A short summary**

In examining the temporal dimensions of asylum seeker agency as part of the Hazara case study, this first section analysed administrative data and survey results within the context of the existing literature on whether to migrate. In doing so, three research questions were answered on factors underpinning asylum seeking, the extent and nature of asylum seekers' involvement in decision making, and the nature of collective decision making processes. The results of the analysis show that both protection and non-protection factors were relevant to decisions about whether to migrate, although protection factors featured much more heavily. For Hazaras in the region this was about discrimination and persecution on the basis of ethnicity and religion, and was in contrast to other groups from the region. While Hazaras were highly likely to be involved in the decision about whether to migrate, there were some significant caveats. Females and people under 21 were much less likely to be involved in such decision making, reflecting their tendency to engage or resort to 'soft power' in familial situations (Monsutti 2005), rendering them less likely to exert individual agency directly in decision making processes. This resonates with recent research undertaken in Afghanistan on decision making processes undertaken prior to irregular migration to Europe in 2015, which found that according to family members who remained in Afghanistan, some young (male) members of families resisted leaving but had to migrate for the sake of the entire family (Linke 2016, 5). While there is no suggestion that this is the norm for all young people, it is clear that it is a reality for some. As has been found in Monsutti's research on Hazara migration within the region, there exist complex social dynamics evident in who and how family members are able to decide upon and shape their own migrations.

The analysis also found that while collective decision making processes relating to whether to leave were evident for around half of all survey respondents, there was no significant difference between Hazaras and non-Hazaras. So while the underpinning factors involved in whether to migrate may differ markedly by ethnicity, the decision making processes undertaken largely did not. Overall, the analysis shows that security and social aspects indicate that agency was exercised by Hazara maritime asylum seekers in relation to whether to migrate but not equally for all.

## **8.2 When to migrate**

Unlike acute situations involving mass displacement, such as the onset, worsening or shifting of civil or transnational conflict (e.g. the current Syrian civil war, Da'esh fighting/incursions in Iraq and Syria), protracted irregular migration of asylum seekers and refugees involves greater degrees of freedom in terms of when to migrate. This is the case for Afghan Hazaras, who have been involved in mass displacement events in the past but not since 2007, which saw an increase in refugees from Afghanistan of around 1 million (Schmeidl 2016). Between 2007 and 2013, the number of Afghan refugees dropped from 3 to 2.5 million (Schmeidl 2016), which coincides with the study period of this thesis. Notwithstanding well documented insecurity, ongoing issues of persecution of Hazaras in the region and tremendous instability and governance issues, protracted flows rather than mass displacement characterises recent years, making the issue of when to migrate a critical one for Hazaras in the region.

In the context of the current body of literature as well as the limited statistical data available on Hazara migration, the administrative data and survey data shed important light on when Hazara migrated and arrived in Australia. Broadly, the data are consistent with the existing literature, however, the granularity of the data provide important new insights that cause us to re-think how potential and actual irregular asylum seekers outside of mass migration episodes contemplate and decide upon when to migrate.

**'Triggered' migration**

A very high proportion of Hazara survey respondents (88%) indicated that their migration was triggered by a specific event, although the type of event varied depending on where they had lived. As shown in Table 8.9, a significant security incident or threat was more likely to have triggered Hazara departures from Afghanistan and Pakistan, which is consistent with the survey results on the problems experienced prior to departure (general insecurity was the most widely reported problem by those who had lived in Afghanistan or Pakistan). This also accords with the findings of Koser and Marsden on Afghan migration and displacement, in which they refer to the impact of specific events on family decision making on migration (2013, 11):

Family ties are very strong and family members will generally wish to stay in regular contact. Very often, therefore, a decision to opt for the departure of one or more of their number to another country, especially outside Afghanistan's immediate neighbourhood, may result from a particular trigger – a targeted security threat to an individual, an outbreak of major violence, a dramatic fall in the harvest, a natural disaster, or the destruction of a home.

The impact of 'triggers' or specific circumstances also accord with recent qualitative research undertaken in Afghanistan with families of people who migrated to Europe in 2015 (Bjelica 2016; Linke 2016). The research found that while precise discussions, factors and processes differed between families, many indicated that events occurring during decision making had an impact on the decision to leave, as the brother of an Afghan migrant explained (Linke 2016, 3):

After the insurgents killed our brother and set our house on fire, the decision was made to send our brother away.... All the family decided together that we would send our brother to Europe so he could help out the whole family financially once he made it ... We expected that our brother would be accepted as an asylum seeker in Germany and that he would be able to bring the whole family to Germany, because there is nothing left for us in Afghanistan (Brother of a 25-year old migrant from Takhar).

**TABLE 8.9 Migration trigger events of Hazaras by last country of residence**

	<b>Afghanistan (%)</b>	<b>Pakistan (%)</b>	<b>Iran (%)</b>
Significant security threat or incident	76.4	75.4	24.9
Threat against family	28.1	31.5	23.4
Loss of family member / close friend	26.7	18.7	12.8
Imminent threat of deportation	6.9	9.9	68.2
Loss of home or shelter (or threat of)	13.8	4.6	10.0
Lost job / or income (or threat of)	5.1	5.5	6.0
Family / friend successfully migrated	1.7	1.1	2.5
Money became available to leave	0.0	1.5	0.0
None of these / no answer	8.5	11.4	21.4

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker survey dataset (2013). Weighted. Questions 12 and 27. (n=402).

In contrast to the results for Afghanistan and Pakistan, people who had lived in Iran prior to departure did not report a security threat or incident trigger to the same degree as those who had lived in Afghanistan or Pakistan. For Hazara in Iran an imminent threat of deportation was by far the most common trigger, and it would appear to be with good reason. While 15% of all Hazaras indicated that they had previously been deported, most of these deportations were reported by Hazara who had been living in Iran (75% of those in Iran reported having been previously deported) compared with Pakistan (just 2.2% reported having been previously deported) and Afghanistan (0%). While the result for those living in Iran may seem high (and acknowledging that the past deportation(s) may not necessarily have been from Iran), it does accord with the well documented phases of deportations of Afghans from Iran to Afghanistan in the academic and grey literature (Abbasi-Shavazi & Glazebrook 2007; IRIN 2009; Koser & Marsden 2013).

Given that the ongoing instability of Afghanistan and Pakistan in particular may result in ‘triggers’ occurring regularly (and perhaps frequently) other factors impacting on when migration occurred were explored. The unique administrative data allowed for deeper exploration on this particular aspect of agency, notwithstanding the limitations posed by a lack of contextual and other data on the underlying populations of Hazaras in the region. The analytical approach was based on the existing migration literature, and in particular the link between how sedentary a population is/was and the likelihood of migration or non-migration, including in conflict zones (Adikhari 2013; Jayasuriya et al 2016). Given what we know about the study population—principally, that they all

migrated—this examination extended the line of thinking on sedentariness and migration to explore whether stable residence in the previous decade was associated with when migration occurred.

### **Stable residency and its impact on migration**

One way of measuring how stable a population is in terms of its long-term residency is to calculate a ratio based on the number of people who migrate versus the number of people in that population who remain resident in that location (be it city, country, state/province, as preferred). In the case of this study, a lack of data on: i) the Hazara populations in Afghanistan and Pakistan; ii) the migration outflows of Hazaras to other countries; iii) the extent of circular migration in the region, prevents an examination of the extent to which Hazara populations maintained stable residency and/or engaged in international migration. However, the detailed administrative data on the Hazara maritime asylum seeker population to Australia does allow for some exploration of possible differences in the stability of long-term residency between those Hazara asylum seekers born in Afghanistan compared with those born in Pakistan and Iran. Based on the literature—most notably Monsutti's work on the migration of Hazara in the sub-region and the broader literature on the relationship between internal and international migration (rural-urban migration) and proximity to a 'culture of migration' (Fussell & Massey 2004; Kandel & Massey 2002; Massey 1987; Massey 1990; Massey et al 1989; Ali 2007)—as well as UNHCR data on populations displaced from Afghanistan to Pakistan (Population Census Organization & UNHCR 2005) and data available on Afghans in Iran (see, for example, UNHCR 2015; Abbasi-Shavazi et al 2017; Abbasi-Shavazi & Glazebrook 2007), it is hypothesised that Hazara populations with a higher stable residency ratio were likely to migrate to Australia later in the study period. In other words, those with longer and more stable ties to their place of residence would have been less likely to sever them early in the flow and migrate to Australia.

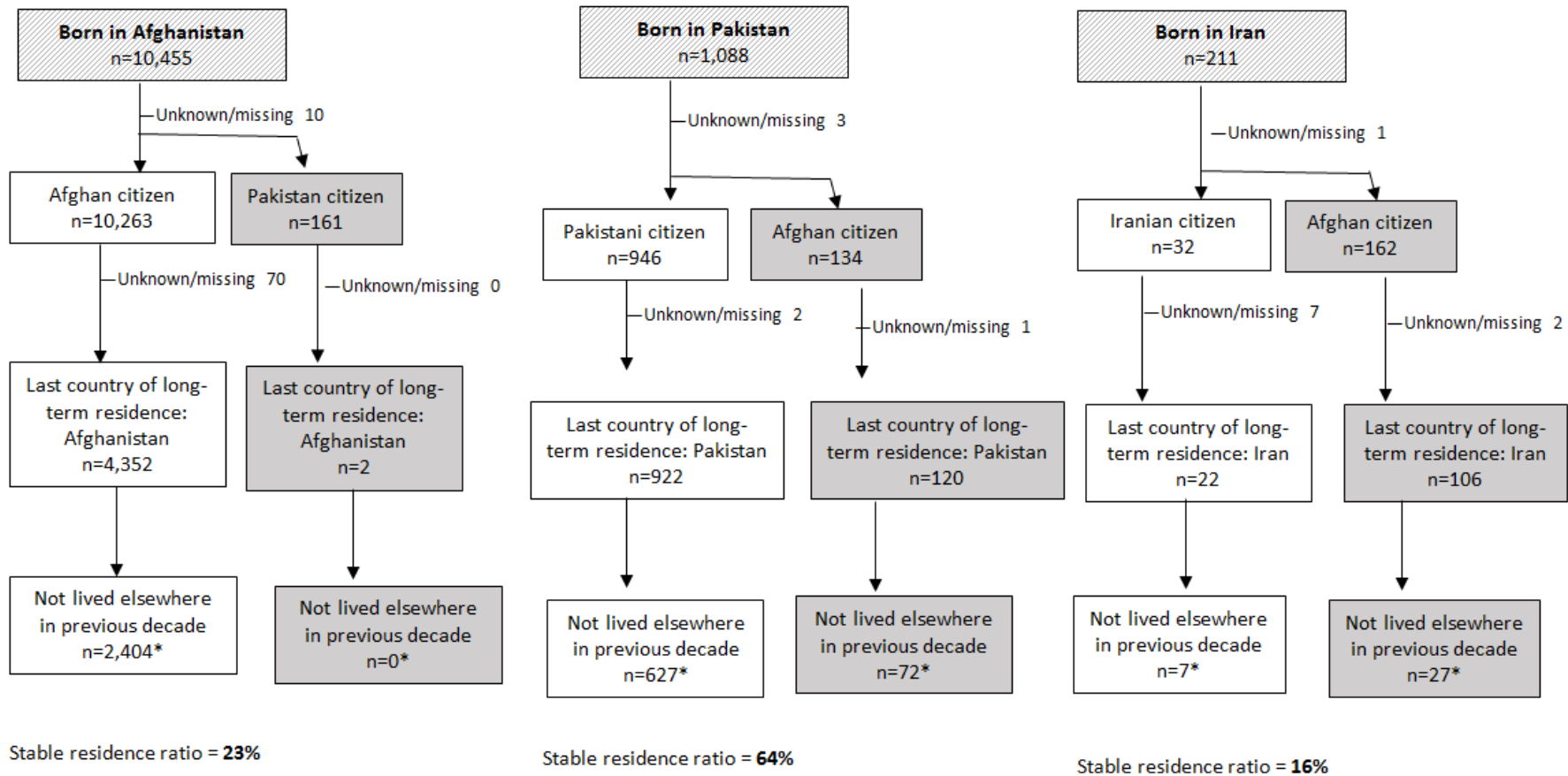
A stable residency ratio was calculated by analysing data on populations born in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran, including 'country of birth', 'citizenship', 'last country of long-term residence' and the duration of that residence (in this case, a minimum of ten years was applied). Hazaras under the age of 15 years were excluded from the

analysis as their residency is likely to be heavily related to that of their parents or other family members. Given the existing literature on the international migration of Afghan (and Hazara) minors, those 15 years or more were included.

The stable residency ratio has been modelled on the dependency ratio used to compare countries' dependent populations (World Bank 2012, 500). The stable residency ratio applies a similar logic by determining the proportion of the Hazara asylum seeker population who had been residing in one country for at least ten years prior to their departure to Australia; it was not possible to determine if internal migration was undertaken and so the ratio only measures residency at the country level.<sup>6</sup>

The analysis shows that Hazaras born in Iran had the lowest stable residency ratio (16%) compared with those born in Afghanistan (23%) and Pakistan (64%)—see Figure 8.3. This means that only 16% of the Hazaras born in Iran lived in the country prior to their departure, and had been doing so for at least the previous decade. The ratio, therefore, cannot account for whether a person remained in a country their entire lives but it can account for the previous decade.

Hazaras in Pakistan had a relatively high stable residency ratio of 64%, however, it was significantly higher for Pakistani citizens (66%) than Afghan citizens (54%). There was a noticeable difference in the ratios of citizens and non-citizens also in Iran (22% for Iranian citizens compared with 15% for Afghan citizens) and Afghanistan (23% for Afghan citizens and 0% for Pakistani citizens). Citizenship, therefore, would appear to be a significant factor in Hazara mobility prior to travel to Australia. Hazaras who were born in a country but not citizens of that country were much more likely to not have exhibited stable residency, compared with Hazaras who were citizens of the country they were born in.



**FIGURE 8.3: Estimate of stable residency of Hazara asylum seeker population aged 15 years or over by country of birth**

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014). Notes: n=12,136. \* Length of long-term residence was not collected in the first two years. The combined result for the last three years was applied to the first two years to determine a total study period estimate. The stable residency ratio = [no. of persons not lived elsewhere in previous decade / no. of persons born in country] \* 100.

In this context, existing literature and the data available on Afghans indicate that significant displacement from Afghanistan to Pakistan and Iran has also occurred. This is consistent with the data on the Hazara asylum seeker population, which shows that substantial numbers of Afghan Hazaras were living in Pakistan (4,789) and Iran (1,470) as long-term residents prior to their departure to Australia.

*Did stable residence affect when Hazara migrated?*

Given the significant differences in the stable residence ratios of Hazaras born in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran, as well as between citizens and non-citizens of those countries, these and other aspects were tested in a multivariate model. One of the hypotheses tested was that the relative stability of residence of sub-populations prior to departure from their origin country was related to when they travelled to Australia as asylum seekers, with stable populations being more likely to arrive in Australia later than mobile populations. I further hypothesised that key demographic characteristics were related to later arrival, such as (older) age, (positive) marital status, (family) migrating family status. Finally, transit country pathways were tested in the model, with easier transit via Southeast Asia hypothesised as being related to earlier arrival.<sup>7</sup>

The strength of the full model was tested in a hierarchical regression. The dependent variable was derived from the arrival date of the asylum seeker over the five-year study period, with the first arrival date (an elapsed date in Stata) being 17,804 (29 September 2008) and the last being 19,538 (29 June 2013). In the first step, stable residence was measured using four dichotomous independent variables: (i) whether or not an asylum seeker was a citizen of their country of birth; (ii) whether or not an asylum seeker was a resident of their country of birth; (iii) whether or not an asylum seeker was born in Afghanistan; (iv) whether or not an asylum seeker lived in their last country of long-term residence for at least a decade. In the second step, three demographic variables were included: (i) age; (ii) whether or not an asylum seeker was married; (iii) whether or not an asylum seeker travelled with family members. Finally, a dichotomous transit country variable was included: (i) whether or not the first transit country was in Southeast Asia (i.e. Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand or Singapore).

Table 8.10 shows the results of the regression analysis. Stable residence accounted for 10% of the variance in arrival date, with demographic characteristics accounting for an additional 6% and Southeast Asia transit an additional 1%. All of the model variables



were statistically significant. The full model was statistically significant ( $F_{6,4834}=160.52, P<0.0000$ ), accounting for a substantive 17% of the variance in arrival date. Holding everything constant, being married brought arrival forward by 114 days. Consistent with the stable residency ratio results, being a citizen of a birth country delayed arrival (88 days) as did being a citizen of the last country of long-term residence (64 days). Being born in Afghanistan brought arrival forward by 58 days. Somewhat surprisingly, having lived in a country for at least a decade brought forward arrival but only marginally (15 days). Age too had a marginal effect, with every year of age bringing arrival forward by 20 days. The final two variables in the model had opposing effects, with travelling with family delaying arrival by 81 days and having a Southeast Asian country as the first transit point bringing forward arrival by 46 days.

**TABLE 8.10 Step wise Linear Regression predicting arrival date:  
Hazara asylum seekers aged 15 years or more**

Step	Variable	Coef.	SE	t.	P	$\Delta R^2$	$R^2$
1	Citizen of birth country	87.58	13.46	6.5	0.000	...	...
	Citizen of last country	64.45	14.14	4.56	0.000	...	...
	Born in Afghanistan	-58.32	8.99	-6.49	0.000	...	...
	Decade plus in last country	-14.58	5.92	-2.46	0.014	0.1032	0.1032
2	Age	-20.17	7.56	-2.67	0.008	...	...
	Married	-114.50	10.71	-10.69	0.000	...	...
	Travelled with family	80.55	16.05	5.02	0.000	0.0613	0.1645
3	Southeast Asia first transit	-46.06	8.58	-5.37	0.000	0.0085	0.1730
	_cons	19223	19.75	974.52	0.000	19184	19262

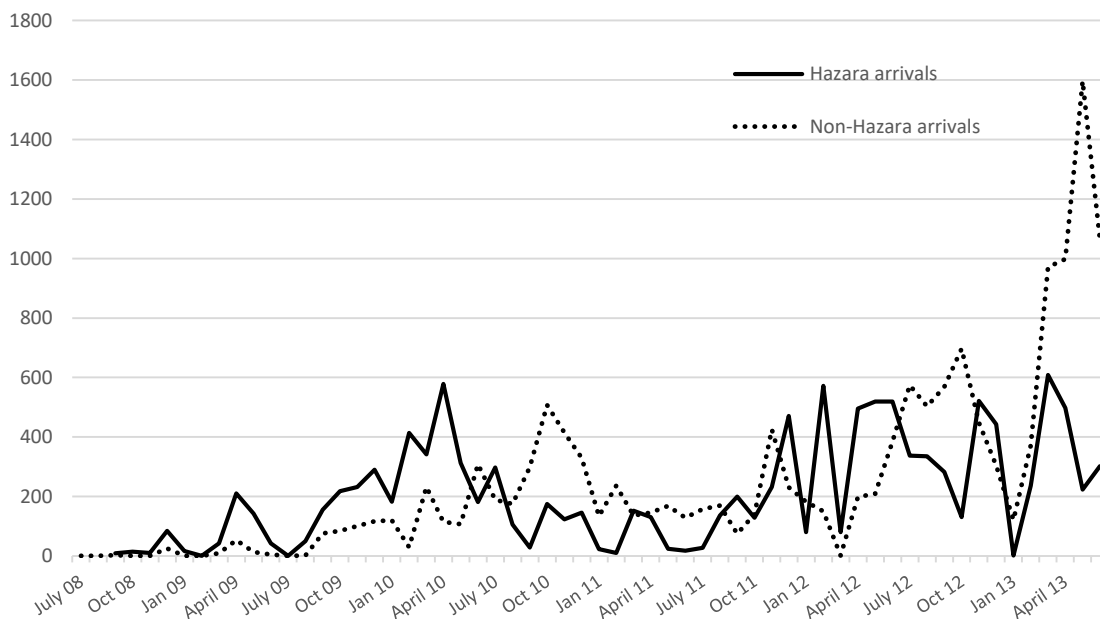
Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014). Notes: Step 1 n=7,111; Step 2 n = 5,025; Step 3 n=4,767. All independent variables are derived dichotomous variables, except age.

The model is useful in that it confirms that there is a relationship between residency factors (citizenship, country of birth and length of residence) and arrival date. Demographic variable and ease of transit were also significant. The full model accounts

for 17% of the variance, which indicates that other factors (such as protection, security and livelihood factors or events) are likely to affect variance. Notwithstanding other factors, the model does show that those with relatively more stable residency over the previous decade were more likely to arrive later in the study period.

### Hazara arrival numbers during the study period

The numbers of Hazara asylum seekers who arrived during the study period increased (while fluctuating) over time. Hazaras, unlike any other group, could be said to have been a constant—they were present on both the first and last vessels of the study period. When Hazara arrivals are compared with arrivals of non-Hazara from the region<sup>8</sup>, as shown in Figure 8.4, we can see that Hazara arrivals remained under 600 per month. In contrast, the non-Hazara arrival numbers increased dramatically toward the end of the study period, with the very large increases in early 2013 due particularly to substantial increases in Iranian ethnic groups (i.e. Persians and Arabs).



**FIGURE 8.4** Hazara and non-Hazara asylum seekers by arrival month, July 2008 to June 2013

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014). Note: Hazara n=12,136; Non-Hazara n=14,804. Endnote 3 provides details of the non-Hazara ethnicity variable applied in this analysis.

There is a noticeable ‘peak-lull’ dynamic evident in Hazara arrivals over the study period, culminating in peak periods in mid-2010 and from early 2012. This ‘peak-lull’ pattern appears to be linked to smuggling practices, particularly in the final transit

country of Indonesia—this issue is discussed in the next section on ‘how people migrated’. It is also evident that there was a more sustained ‘lull’ in Hazara arrivals during the first half of 2011 (and one that was consistent with other major ethnic groups from the region as shown in Figures 8.4 and 8.5). This ‘lull’ in arrivals to Australia coincided with increased numbers of irregular migrants entering Europe by sea and land (Frontex 2015), although caution needs to be taken in an attempt to link the flows, particularly the increase maritime arrivals in the Mediterranean Sea, which are generally regarded as being a result of the 2011 Libyan crisis (Frontex 2012). As we have seen with other irregular flows to Europe, however, a large movement caused by civil conflict involving one group or country may grow in both scale and diversity once it becomes established (McAuliffe 2016). A lack of detailed data on the demographic characteristics of irregular migrants involved in such movements and arrivals can seriously limit related analysis. Nevertheless, there are indications that Hazaras were moving in increasing numbers to Europe in 2011 (Boone & Bakhshi 2012). This is reflected in UNHCR figures, which show that Afghanistan was the top origin country for asylum seekers to Europe in 2011, and that the number of Afghan applications had increased between 2010 and 2011 by around 10,000 (an increase of 45%) (UNHCR 2012, 23). Anecdotal information indicates that some countries in Europe, including Austria, receive asylum applications lodged by Afghan mainly from Hazaras (VIDC 2016). Being able to access and analyse irregular migration data, including by a range of variables such as ethnicity, would enable the development of a significantly improved understanding of the inter-connectedness of irregular migration pathways regionally and globally.

In terms of the 2011 drop in arrivals to Australia, and given the significant focus in the forced migration literature on origin country factors as significant determinants in refugee and asylum flows (Davenport, Moore & Poe 2003; Moore & Shellman 2004; Schmeidl 1997; Zolberg, Suhrke & Aguayo 1989), it could be expected that situations in Afghanistan, Pakistan and/or Iran had dramatically improved, thereby reducing the need to migrate. On the contrary, and as outlined in Chapter 6, long-term marginalisation, discrimination and persecution of Hazaras has been a persistent feature in the region, including throughout the study period. While not comprehensive, examination of English news media of violent extremist incidents in Pakistan and Afghanistan indicate that Hazaras continued to be targeted by Sunni extremists, including the Taleban and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi. In fact, one of the most severe incidents

took place just prior to the ‘lull’ in Hazara arrivals—73 people were killed by a bomb blast at a Shia procession Quetta in September 2010, for which the extremist group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi claimed responsibility (Nashipuri 2013). With the rise in Afghan asylum applications in Europe and the ongoing persecution in the region, it is important to examine the transit and arrivals aspects. In particular, any impact of the sinking of SIEV 221 off the rocks at Christmas Island on 15 December 2010, which resulted in the drowning of 50 asylum seekers, is pertinent. Research indicates that the event had an adverse impact on the local community on Christmas Island, and it is possible that it also impacted arrivals (Briskman et al 2012). Graphic scenes of SIEV 221 crashing against the rocky shore of Christmas Island in large swell were broadcast around the world and covered in Hazara community websites, such as *hazaraasylumseekers.wordpress.com*, *hazarawa.blogspot.com*, *Hazarapress.com*, *afghans-asylum.mihanblog.com*, as well as on social media such as Hazara Association UK’s facebook account and Hussaini Hazara Movement’s facebook account.

Prolonged media exposure of the sinking of SIEV 221, including coverage of victims’ funerals and the prolonged inquiry into their deaths by the Western Australian State Coroner (final report of which was released in February 2012), ensured that the sinking of SIEV 221 remained a high profile media topic for several months. While no Hazaras were on the SIEV 221, which was carrying Iranians and Iraqis, the graphic scenes appear to have had an effect on at least some Hazara asylum seekers, as this open letter from Hazaras at Curtin detention centre indicates (Hazara Refugees in Curtin):

Sadly a considerable number of them while carrying lots of hopes on this journey lost their life in depth of the ocean just like Boat SIEV 221 in a very sorrowful, painful and horrible way while sailing across...waters and turned into sea animals’ meal.

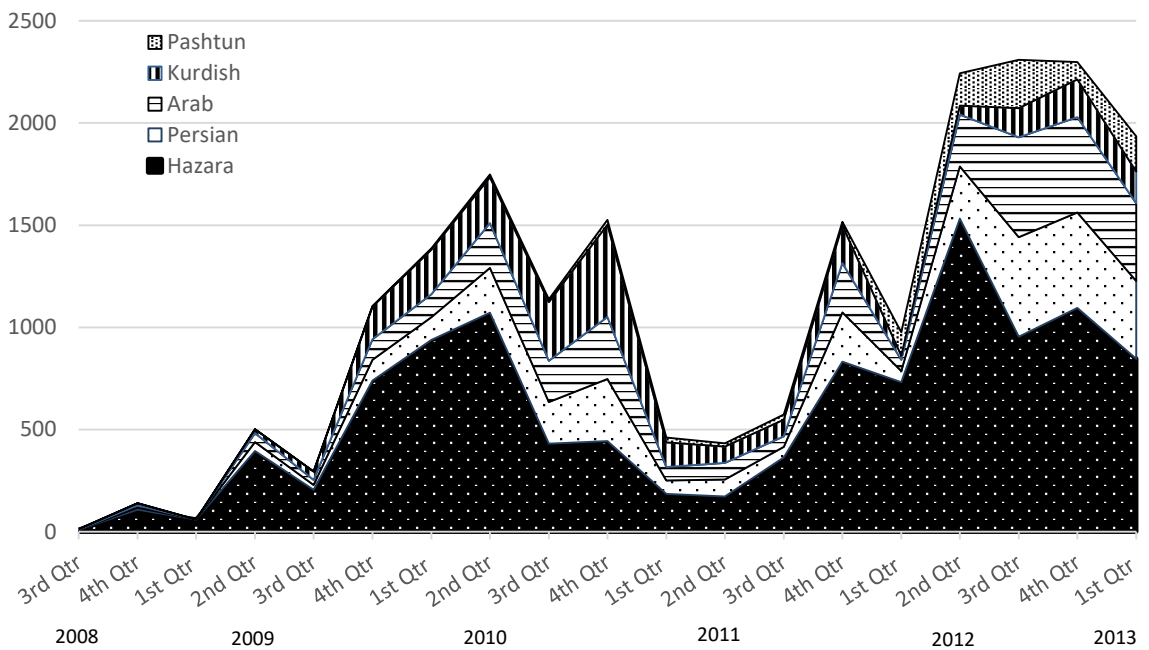
The visual impact and media coverage showing the SIEV 221 drownings, together with the upsurge in irregular migration of Afghans (and others) to Europe, appear to have affected arrival numbers to Australia at this time. Certainly, the increased asylum applications and arrivals of Afghans in Europe and the ongoing insecurity in the region, do not point to improvements in origin country circumstances that would warrant the subdued arrivals to Australia in 2011. Likewise, there were no substantial changes in transit country circumstances during this period, such as natural disasters, increases in conflict or insecurity or visa/entry policy changes. Qualitative research on Hazara decision making and information sources conducted in Indonesia in December 2012

also indicates that a high level of awareness of deaths at sea among Hazara asylum seekers *en route* to Australia had an impact on their travel (Fleay et al 2016, 9):

Many expressed fear about travelling on board a substandard and overcrowded boat. There was widespread awareness about the dangers of sea travel and about recent events, such as the loss of 33 people in late October 2012 when a boat sank and only one passenger survived...Some made the decision to avoid the use of people smuggling agents and they expressed a fear of drowning.

These findings were also confirmed by research undertaken in Indonesia in late 2014 with Afghan Hazaras and Iranians, which found that most asylum seekers expressed knowledge and concern of the risks and dangers associated with boat journeys to Australia, and in particular the risk of drowning (Pickering et al 2016, 35).

When the Hazara arrivals are compared with arrivals of the other major ethnic groups from the region (Persians, Arabs, Kurds and Pashtun), it is clear that Hazaras make up the bulk of the arrivals throughout the study period (Figure 8.5).



**FIGURE 8.5 Asylum seekers by major regional ethnicity and arrival quarter**

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014). Notes: Hazara n=12,136; Persian n=5,174; Arab n=4,126; Kurdish n=2,844; Pashtun n=1,186.

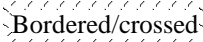


Apart from the 2011 ‘lull’, Hazaras arrived in fairly substantial and reasonably consistent numbers from the end of 2009, usually in the hundreds per quarter (Table 8.11). On only one occasion, Hazara asylum seekers accounted for over 10% of all Hazara asylum seekers in a single quarter (2nd quarter of 2012 during which 1,533 Hazara arrived). In contrast, Persians, Arabs and Pashtuns all arrived in much greater proportions during the last year—almost 30% of all Persian asylum seekers, for example, arrived in the second quarter of 2013. These sharp increases can be seen in Table 8.11.

As Table 8.11 highlights, there were markedly different arrival patterns evident by ethnicity, which point to (amongst other things) migration processes in transit possibly occurring along ethnic lines. The relevance of ethnicity and other characteristics are explored in Chapter 9 in the section on *how to migrate*, which has a particular focus on the transit migration patterns and processes of Hazaras.

**TABLE 8.11 Asylum seeker quarterly arrivals by major regional ethnicity**

Year	Quarter	Hazara (%)	Persian (%)	Arab (%)	Kurdish (%)	Pashtun (%)
2008	3rd	9 (0.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (0.1)	0 (0.0)
	4th	108 (0.9)	3 (0.1)	10 (0.2)	11 (0.4)	1 (0.1)
2009	1st	59 (0.5)	7 (0.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.1)
	2nd	394 (3.2)	6 (0.1)	44 (1.1)	19 (0.7)	1 (0.1)
	3rd	205 (1.7)	11 (0.2)	24 (0.6)	42 (1.5)	0 (0.0)
	4th	740 (6.1)	24 (0.5)	101 (2.4)	159 (5.6)	4 (0.3)
2010	1st	938 (7.7)	34 (0.7)	112 (2.7)	219 (7.7)	5 (0.4)
	2nd	1072 (8.8)	56 (1.1)	219 (5.3)	225 (7.9)	14 (1.2)
	3rd	431 (3.6)	137 (2.6)	203 (4.9)	286 (10.1)	14 (1.2)
	4th	444 (3.7)	407 (7.9)	304 (7.4)	450 (15.8)	24 (2.0)
2011	1st	185 (1.5)	256 (4.9)	66 (1.6)	120 (4.2)	24 (2.0)
	2nd	173 (1.4)	228 (4.4)	82 (2.0)	80 (2.8)	16 (1.3)
	3rd	363 (3.0)	179 (3.5)	52 (1.3)	82 (2.9)	25 (2.1)
	4th	832 (6.9)	279 (5.4)	241 (5.8)	186 (6.5)	16 (1.3)
2012	1st	732 (6.0)	94 (1.8)	55 (1.3)	19 (0.7)	115 (9.7)
	2nd	1533 (12.6)	207 (4.0)	254 (6.2)	45 (1.6)	157 (13.2)
	3rd	954 (7.9)	635 (12.3)	488 (11.8)	142 (5.0)	238 (20.1)
	4th	1095 (9.0)	525 (10.1)	467 (11.3)	184 (6.5)	85 (7.2)
2013	1st	846 (7.0)	542 (10.5)	381 (9.2)	155 (5.5)	172 (14.5)
	2nd	1023 (8.4)	1544 (29.8)	1023 (24.8)	417 (14.7)	274 (23.1)
		12,136 (100)	5,174 (100)	4,126 (100)	2,844 (100)	1,186 (100)

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014).

Notes:  cells denote 20% or more of overall arrivals in a quarter;  cells denote 10% or more in a quarter;  cells denote between 5 and 10% in a quarter. Hazara n=12,136; Persian n=5,174; Arab n=4,126; Kurdish n=2,844; Pashtun n=1,186.

### **When to migrate: A short summary**

In examining the temporal dimensions of asylum seeker agency as part of the Hazara case study, this second section was focused on when to migrate. As discussed in Chapter 2, the scholarly literature that examines the temporal dimensions of asylum seeker movement (and agency) is noticeably subdued—attention is squarely elsewhere. In addition to the conceptual, political and historical issues discussed in Chapter 2 there are likely to be significant limitations on undertaking this type of analysis due to the dearth of data available enabling analysis over time. The administrative data used for this thesis, which spans five-years of an irregular maritime migration flow, allows for such analysis within specific limitations, as discussed above (particularly the lack of origin country population data and overall Hazara flow data). Nevertheless, within these confines, this analysis has shown that there are several factors associated with when Hazaras migrated from different origin countries, including economic, demographic and social aspects. That Hazaras with more stable residency tended to migrate later than others does accord with the broader migration literature, particularly the association between migration and re-migration. There is evidence that security during migration—not just in origin—is a factor in migration patterns and non-arrival patterns. The significant ‘lull’ in arrivals, which was evident for all groups, was very pronounced for Hazaras and there is evidence that the risks of the journey (and drowning at sea in particular) are foremost considerations of Hazaras in relation to the final maritime leg of the journey. Further, a brief examination of arrival data of the main ethnic groups from the region over the entire period indicate distinctive migration patterns of Hazaras that do not correspond with other groups; a more evenly spread arrival pattern is evident. These arrival patterns, including how they relate to transit migration, are examined in greater detail in the next chapter on the spatial dimension of asylum seeker agency.

### **8.3 Conclusions**

In this chapter the main objective was to assess the nature and extent of asylum seeker agency in relation to its temporal dimensions—whether to migrate and when to migrate. In doing so, several research questions were answered in order to assess whether the existing research on Hazara migration has applicability to the narrow irregular migration corridor of asylum seekers over the five-year study period. The findings of the analysis indicate that the findings resonate strongly with the existing literature of



Hazara migration within the region but that certain aspects have been highlighted as needing a more nuanced interpretation—the constrained agency expressed in decision making processes along with the distinctive migration and arrival patterns point to the continuation of Hazara migration traditions as well as some adjustments, including for security *en route*.

Overall, the findings indicate that the temporal dimensions of self-agency of Hazara maritime asylum seekers appears to be circumscribed by important security, economic and social aspects. Insecurity featured heavily in constraining agency concerning whether to and when to migrate. While assessing and re-assessing migration options may have become a way of life and an integral part of ensuring survival during war, as articulated in Alessandro Monsutti's significant scholarly contributions, for some an unconstrained ability to exercise agency remains elusive, no more so than for the teenage boy who sets off on a perilous journey in order to assist the long-term survival of his family. Aspects related directly to the journey—*where to migrate* and *how to migrate*—are additional critical dimensions in the examination of asylum seeker agency, and it is to these spatial dimensions that we now turn.

## Notes

- 1 In the Australian context, for example, reciprocal bilateral migration agreements occasionally result in unintended migration flows and uncomfortable one-sided reciprocity. An example was the reciprocal working holiday maker agreement between Australia and Korea, which saw 35,220 Koreans granted working holiday maker visas to Australia in 2012-13 (DIBP 2013, 94). In contrast, reports indicate that there were only 23 Australians in Korea on working holiday visas as at May 2012 (The Korea Herald 2012).
- 2 Persians were also more likely than any other group to report neither protection or non-protection problems prior to departure (7.5%) compared with 0-1% for all other groups.

- 3 The original text is published in Persian but its relevant parts are heavily cited in Abbasi-Shavazi and Sadeghi (2011).
- 4 It is recognised that decision making is likely to be iterative, messy and involve long-term deliberations and assessments (see McAuliffe 2013). For the purposes of this research and analysis, however, these two aspects are treated separately: whether to migrate (decision to leave) and where to migrate (decision to go to Australia). The two survey questions on these aspects of decision making were: (q28) Were [categories of persons] involved in the final decision to leave [country]?; and (q30) Were [categories of persons] involved in the final decision that Australia would be your final destination?
- 5 Given the high probability of respondents being involved in the decision to leave, I tested the model using a gompit estimation and found that the signs of each coefficient were identical and the significance levels were very similar. The marginal effects of the coefficients were also very similar. This provided confidence that the logit was appropriate, and the logit results are therefore presented.
- 6 A 2014 study of Hazaras in Quetta, Bamiyan, Ghazni and Kabul found that Hazaras in Afghanistan were much more likely to have migrated internally (23%) compared with Hazaras in Pakistan (1%) (Jayasuriya et al 2016).
- 7 In the absence of origin country departure date and transit times, arrival date has been used as a proxy for departure and travel has been assumed as being constant. While there may be some variation in travel times, only Hazaras have been included in the analysis; other groups (such as Tamils, Persians, Arabs, etc) have been excluded from the analysis, including because of the different travel logistics (e.g. irregular/regular, direct/indirect), transit routes and distances involved.
- 8 Non-Hazara ethnic groups from the region include Persians (5,173), Arabs (3,975), Kurds (2,844), Pashtuns (1,186), Turks (540), Azari (390), Tajiks (377), Turkmen (134), and handfuls of other self-identified ethnicities such as Assyrians, Punjabi, Baluchi and Koochis. The total non-Hazara sub-population amounted to 14,804 asylum seekers over the study period.

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## 9 Spatial dimensions\*

In this chapter analysis of the spatial dimensions of asylum seeker agency are critically examined, in terms of the movement patterns, migration processes and views of Hazaras on *where to migrate*—destination and transit—and *how to migrate*.

Consideration and examination of asylum seeker agency in the academic literature is fairly limited for the reasons discussed in Chapter 2. That said, consideration of some aspects of the spatial dimensions of asylum seeker agency—specifically *where to migrate* in terms of the choice of destination country—has been more widely researched than the demographic, social and temporal dimensions. This is partly due to feasibility in that both large N modelling of asylum seeker applications (as a proxy for destination choice) and small n qualitative studies on destination choice have been able to be conducted, albeit with a strong destination country focus. Researchers have sought to find out how and why asylum seekers choose destination countries (or, in some studies, if they do). The greater focus afforded choice of destination over other aspects of agency is also due to the strong policy-focus of such research, particularly the extent to which perceptions of destination country migration policies are involved in migrant decision making and asylum application lodgement. This body of literature is reviewed in Chapter 2, and so I do not propose to repeat it here, although it will be drawn upon in this analytical chapter. Other aspects of the spatial dimensions of asylum seeker agency, particularly transit migration patterns/routes and migration strategies and processes *en route* are less visible in the literature, although transit migration has emerged as a significant research topic in more recent years. Research feasibility is almost certainly a significant challenge, given the lack of data on irregular (and regular) migrant populations in transit countries, difficulties locating and accessing asylum seekers in transit, and the challenging conceptual issues associated with the overlapping categories of host, transit and destination countries.

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\* This chapter draws on a paper presented at the *Afghan Migration: Aspirations, Movements, Demography, Integration & Return Conference*, School of Demography, The Australian National University, 23 & 24 March 2016, titled 'Future seekers in an era of survival migration: The demography and decisions of Afghan maritime asylum seekers to Australia'.

The detailed analysis in this chapter of the behaviour and views of a discrete maritime asylum seeker population allows for examination of the spatial aspects of asylum seeker agency, and specifically the considerations related to *where to migrate*—both the destination country considerations and the transit migration patterns—and aspects of *how to migrate*. Such analysis is, however, necessarily limited in that it is post facto and is not able to consider fully decision making on *where to migrate* of populations in countries of origin. It is also extremely difficult to ascertain with any certainty where Hazaras (other than the 12,136 in this study) migrated to globally during the study period. No data on Hazara movements outside the administrative dataset is available. The existing literature points to some knowledge of Hazara populations as well as their migration patterns and processes (as discussed in Chapter 6), most especially within the region, but no data on the size or composition of Hazara populations or flows are available. The utility, therefore, of this study is on being able to examine in detail the behaviour and views of Hazaras who travelled to Australia as maritime asylum seekers during the study period in considerable granularity while also affording an unusual level of completeness. The detailed administrative data covering a five-year period allows for robust comparisons of different Hazara populations—those who had lived in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran before departure. It also enables an assessment of Hazara patterns and processes in comparison with other ethnic groups from the region who also arrived as maritime asylum seekers, namely Persians, Pashtuns, Kurds and Arabs.

The analysis is situated within and draws upon the existing literature on Hazara migration. It also draws on recent survey findings of the views of Hazara populations in Afghanistan and Pakistan conducted in 2014, after the study period (McAuliffe & Jayasuriya 2016). This allows for further insights on aspects involved in the contemplation of destination country preferences prior to migrating to be incorporated into the analysis, and acts to provide a deeper understanding of how Hazaras contemplate *where to migrate*.

In this chapter, the following research questions on Hazara irregular asylum seeker spatial dimensions of agency are answered:

- Were irregular maritime asylum seekers themselves active decision makers when deciding where to migrate?
- Was collective decision making a feature of Hazara migration decision making processes?

- Was the perceived acceptance of asylum seekers and refugees a factor in irregular asylum seekers choosing Australia as a destination?
- Did Hazara asylum seekers apply similar migration processes and strategies developed within the region (Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran) to the much longer migration corridor to Australia?

The analysis presented in this chapter draws primarily on results of the 2013 survey of former irregular maritime asylum seekers. It also draws on the irregular maritime asylum seeker dataset, which is particularly relevant to the development of a better understanding of the migration patterns and processes Hazaras exhibited through their migratory behaviour. The analysis is placed within the existing body of literature and research findings relevant to the study population, including pertinent qualitative research findings. The first section of this chapter provides an analysis of Hazara migration patterns within the region before going on to analyse decision making on *where to migrate*—both factors and processes are examined. The next section then explores aspects related to how Hazaras migrated and the migration processes they adopted, including aspects related to funding, safe and unsafe practices *en route*, vessel composition, information sources and diaspora assistance.

### **9.1 Where to migrate**

Like much of the literature that examines choice of destination country of asylum seekers (discussed in Chapter 2), the analysis presented in this section draws on *post facto* research on consideration of destination countries, factors considered important by asylum seekers in choosing their final destination and the decision making processes involved. This component of the analysis draws on the results of the 2013 survey of maritime asylum seekers, with particular emphasis on Hazaras, including in comparison with other ethnic groups from the region. Similar to much of the existing research on this topic, it is destination country focused. This is not a new analytical approach but it allows one component of agency to be examined and research questions answered for a discrete but salient group.

Ideally, analysis of the administrative data of all 38,847 maritime asylum seekers (including 12,136 Hazaras plus other groups from the region) would be analysed in a global context so that we could assess how the Hazara flow to Australia during the study period compared with Hazara migration and asylum seeking elsewhere.

Fortunately, the comprehensive administrative data provides the basis for such an approach. Unfortunately, a lack of data on Hazara migration elsewhere precludes it.

Even more ideally, analysis of the extent to which Hazaras' aspirations to seek asylum align (or do not align) with actual migration and asylum seeking in preferred destination countries—and the factors involved—would contribute significantly to the existing scholarly body of work on the topic. Again, a lack of data hampers this type of analysis, although large-scale surveys conducted in Afghanistan and Pakistan in late 2014 (and more specifically in Quetta, Pakistan and Bamyan, Ghazni and Kabul, Afghanistan) on the destination country preferences of potential Hazara asylum seekers allows for aspects of this analysis to be done, notwithstanding the limitations resulting from the different study periods involved. Details of the 2014 survey design and methodology can be found in McAuliffe and Jayasuriya (2016).

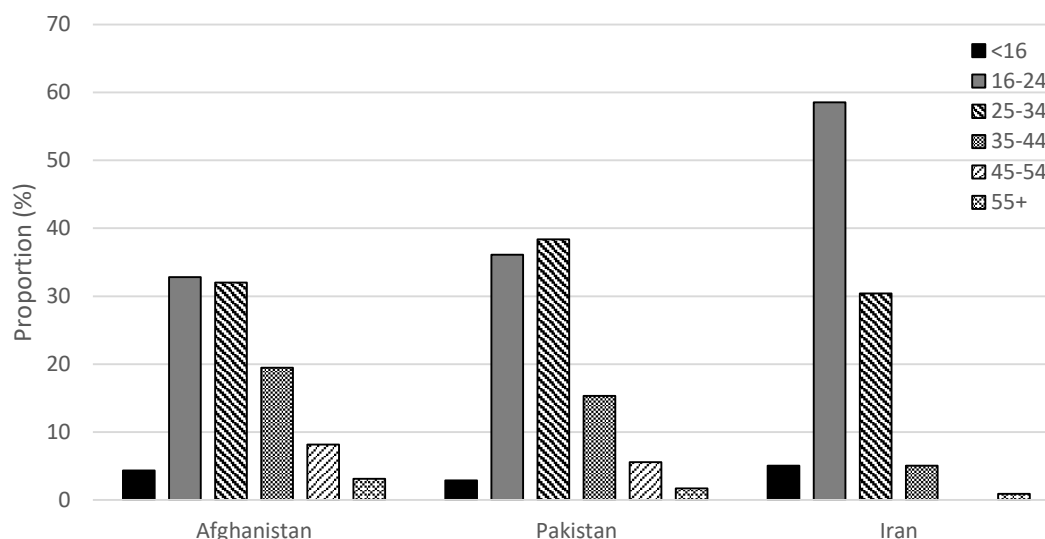
The analysis in this section on *where to migrate*, therefore, draws primarily on the 2013 survey results, including in the context of the subsequent 2014 survey results of Hazaras in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Before doing so, a short descriptive overview is provided of the Hazara maritime asylum seekers who arrived in Australia from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran, with particular emphasis on their previous migrations within the region.

### **Hazara maritime asylum seekers from the region**

In developing a better understanding the migration dynamics of Hazaras, one of the issues to explore is the extent to which Hazaras in different countries migrated to Australia. Unfortunately, an almost complete lack of quantitative data on Hazara populations in the region seriously hampers such analysis. Within the confines of this study, however, the variations by last country of long-term residence enable some comparison of Hazara sub-populations, including in the context of examining the extent and nature of Hazara asylum seekers' agency as it relates to *where to migrate*. In this chapter, a brief re-cap of the three Hazara sub-populations who had lived in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran prior to departure is provided. The variable—last country of long-term residence—is used throughout the rest of the chapter as a key independent variable.

#### *Hazara asylum seekers' countries of origin*

The vast majority of Hazara maritime asylum seekers were born in Afghanistan (87%). Pakistan was the next most significant country of birth with nine per cent of Hazara asylum seekers having been born there. A small number were born in Iran (217 or 1.8%), and the remaining were born in a handful of other countries. As to be expected the age profile of these three groups reflect Hazara displacement and migration in recent decades (Schmeidl 2016), with the youngest age profile being for those born in Iran and the oldest age profile being for those born in Afghanistan (Figure 9.1). It is not possible to compare the asylum seekers' age profiles with the underlying Hazara populations in those countries.



**FIGURE 9.1** Hazara asylum seekers' age distribution by country of birth

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014). Note: n=12,136

Almost all Hazara asylum seekers born in Afghanistan were Afghan citizens (98%)—regardless of the country they were living in prior to departure—with just 1.5% (or 163) presenting as Pakistani citizens. A very high proportion of Hazaras born in Pakistan were Pakistan citizens (87%) with the remainder being Afghan citizens. The reverse was true for Hazara born in Iran, with 77% presenting as Afghan citizens, 15% as Iranian citizens and six per cent as stateless persons. It would appear that the ability of Hazara born in Pakistan to attain Pakistani citizenship (or a Pakistani passport) is much greater than it is for Hazara born in Iran to attain citizenship (or an Iranian passport), which accords with Iran's strict citizenship requirements. A sizeable Hazara community

has lived in Quetta, Pakistan, since the late 1970s following displacement during and after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, acknowledging that some Hazara resided in Quetta before this time (Canfield 2004; Connor 1989), some of whom have become or are Pakistani citizens.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Last country of long-term residence*

Half of all Hazara asylum seekers indicated that their last country of long-term residence prior to departure had been Pakistan (5,892 of 50.4%), with most of these being Afghan citizens (Table 9.1). Just over one-third had been residing in Afghanistan (4,273 or 36.6%)—almost all Afghan citizens—with remainder having lived in Iran long term (1,521 or 13%)—again, almost all Afghan citizens.

TABLE 9.1 Hazaras by citizenship and last country of long-term residence

Citizenship	Last country of long-term residence			Total
	Afghanistan	Pakistan	Iran	
Afghan	4,258	4,789	1,470	10,517 (90%)
Pakistani	9	1,086	9	1,104 (9.5%)
Iranian	3	1	27	31 (0.3%)
Stateless	3	16	15	34 (0.3%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,273</b> (36.6%)	<b>5,892</b> (50.4%)	<b>1,521</b> (13.0%)	<b>11,686</b> (100%)

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014).

Notes: n=11,686. Does not include missing data.

We can see, therefore, from the administrative data that many of the Hazaras who arrived in Australia as maritime asylum seekers during the study period had been living outside their country of citizenship (Afghanistan); many had also migrated within the region at some point prior to their departure. This, of course, creates a complex picture when ethnicity, citizenship, last country of long-term residence and country of birth are taken into account. It does, however, accord with the small body of literature on Hazara migration in the region, which characterises migration as a constant and consistent

feature of survival during and since periods of war engulfed Afghanistan, particularly during the Soviet invasion and against a backdrop of sustained marginalisation, exclusion and persecution in the region (Jamshidiha & Ali Babaie 2002; Koser & Marsden 2013; Monsutti 2005; Monsutti 2007).

Last country of long-term residence is used as a key independent variable to explore variations (if any) in experiences and perceptions based on where Hazaras migrated from.

### **Beyond the region—Destination country considerations and factors**

From the survey results we know that most asylum seekers considered specific destination countries prior to their departure (67%). This of course makes intuitive sense as it is a very long way to Australia and reaching specific locations such as Christmas Island and Cocos-Keeling Islands requires forethought and a degree of planning. It does not involve simply crossing a single border. This result is consistent with research undertaken in Indonesia with 140 Afghan (Hazara) and Iranian irregular migrants in late 2014, the survey component of which found that 62.5% of Afghans indicated that Australia was the final destination. The qualitative component, however, found that not all had Australia in mind as the destination prior to migrating and “the interviews revealed that most migrants had no firm plan at the commencement of their journey” (Pickering et al 2016, 10).

The 2013 survey result also implies that one-third did not consider destination countries prior to departure, although at what point Australia became the destination is unclear as regrettably, views on considerations and decision making in transit countries were not sought. The small but emerging body of literature on decision making in transit highlights that concepts and perceptions of what constitutes ‘transit’ are dynamic—particularly if migrants feel they have become ‘stuck’ in transit—making research on the topic particularly challenging (Collyer 2007; Collyer 2010; Collyer, Düvell & de Haas 2012; Hugo et al 2014; Koser & Kuschminder 2016). The 2014 research in Indonesia confirms, to some extent, that many Afghan (Hazaras) and Iranians made final destination country decisions while in transit taking into account policy aspects as well as safety and security, noting that aspects of Australia’s asylum policy (discussed

below) were significantly different at the time of this research (late 2014) compared to the study period, and so did feature heavily in decision making (Pickering et al 2016).

The 2013 survey results of former irregular maritime asylum seekers conducted in Australia indicate that Australia was by far the most widely considered destination country prior to departure—47% of all respondents indicated Australia was considered, with the next response being ‘none’ (33%) followed by Canada and the United Kingdom (6% and 5% respectively). This strong consideration of Australia prior to migration may in part relate to issues of recall and self-justification but it is also likely to reflect the nature of the ‘migratory’ relationship between origin populations and Australia. Many of the ethnic groups who travelled as maritime asylum seekers have diaspora links to Australia and some have histories of arriving in Australia as maritime asylum seekers (Hazaras and Tamils especially). It is also likely to reflect in part the nature of Hazara migration in the region, which involves regular migration and movement between specific areas in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran (Abbasi-Shavazi & Glazebrook 2006; Harpviken 1996; Ibrahim 2012; Monsutti 2005; Stigter & Monsutti 2005), meaning that some Hazaras may have decided to travel to Australia while outside of their home country.

The results are somewhat at odds with the existing literature on choice of destination of asylum seekers, particularly the research conducted in Europe, which indicates asylum seekers were more likely to have arrived in a country that was not their preference (Bijleveld & Taselaar 2000; Bocker & Havinga 1998; Day & White 2002; Gilbert & Koser 2006). The particularities of Australia’s geography and that it is an isolated destination country means that it is much more likely for asylum seekers to reach Australia if that was their intention compared with asylum seekers trying to reach a particular country in Europe, who may end up in a country they did not originally intend because of agents/smugglers, cost factors, geographic proximity, ease of entry and social networks in more than one destination country (Bijleveld & Taselaar 2000; Gilbert & Koser 2006; Koser 1997). Transit country decision making is likely to be much more important for asylum seekers heading for European countries, with the multitude of final destination countries on offer. In this sense at least, irregular migration and related decision making to Australia is more likely to resemble related transit processes to the United States via Mexico, which has seen very significant increases in the number of people from Central American countries reaching the United States via Mexico. The United States is the primary, if not only, destination country in



the region, although Mexico itself has begun recently evolving into a destination country for some migrants (Alba 2013; Bridges 2013).

Notwithstanding the strong result at the aggregate level, the extent to which different groups considered Australia as the final destination prior to migration varied. Hazaras were more likely to have considered Australia (51%) compared with all the other major ethnic groups from the region: Pashtuns (23%), Persians (42%), Kurds (44%) and Arabs (47%). In addition, Hazaras considered Australia overwhelmingly above other countries, with the next most considered country being Iran (5%). The strong Hazara result is likely to reflect diaspora links since the 1980s as well as previous episodes of maritime asylum seeking to Australia (1999 to 2001). It is worth noting that the survey was undertaken during a time when irregular migration flows to Europe were much more subdued compared with those in 2015 and 2016, and when flows to Australia were at a peak. The impact of policy and operational changes in Australia on potential asylum seekers' perceptions are discussed below.

When the results are further examined by Hazaras' last countries of residence (Table 9.2), results show that considerations varied with Hazaras in Pakistan being much more likely to have considered Australia prior to departure. This finding accords with research conducted in Quetta, Pakistan in late 2014, which found that Hazara potential asylum seekers had considerably more positive perceptions of Australia compared with other destination countries, including the United Kingdom and Canada (McAuliffe & Jayasuriya 2016, 10). Hazaras in Afghanistan, however, did not express more favourable views of Australia, finding Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom more or less the same for a range of factors, including safety, lawfulness, multiculturalism/tolerance and employment opportunities (ibid, 10). These findings were also echoed in research conducted in Indonesia in 2014 with Afghan (Hazara) and Iranian irregular migrants who had become 'stuck' in transit, as highlighted by one of the interviewees (Pickering et al 2016, 30):

...our final destination was Australia and we wanted to come to Australia because the Australian people are loving people, they love immigrants, they admire immigrants and we think they see people from a humanitarian point of view that's why our final destination is Australia.

TABLE 9.2 Destination countries considered while in origin—  
Hazaras by last country of residence

	<b>Afghanistan (%)</b>	<b>Pakistan (%)</b>	<b>Iran (%)</b>
Afghanistan	-	2.7	7.0
Pakistan	8.8	-	3.4
Iran	7.6	3.5	-
Australia	41.7	57.6	49.1
Canada	2.5	2.5	0.0
United Kingdom	3.3	0.9	5.5
United States	1.6	0.9	0.0
Germany	0.0	0.2	0.0
Sweden	0.0	0.8	7.5
Malaysia	2.2	2.1	4.5
Indonesia	3.3	2.2	2.5
None	35.3	30.5	32.5

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker survey dataset (2013). Weighted. Question 29. (n=413).

When those who had indicated they had considered Australia prior to departure were asked about the reasons for considering Australia over other countries, the main reasons were strongly related to perceptions of Australian asylum seeker policy, and that Australia was accepting refugees and does not return refugees. When examined by ethnicity, this tendency remained with the highest result across all groups being ‘Australia was accepting refugees’ (Table 9.3). Similar reasons were also given in recent qualitative research on Afghan asylum seeking to Europe during 2015 (van Bijlert, 2016, 4):

One migrant’s family explained that, “Belgium was his first choice because we believed that people were accepted as migrants easily there.” A respondent from Nangarhar said, “We had decided he would leave Afghanistan for Norway or Belgium. These were chosen because we believed the policies there were easy for asylum seekers. Also, we had a relative already in each country and they said more work was available there.”

**TABLE 9.3 Reasons for considering Australia while in origin—  
Major regional ethnic groups**

	<b>Hazara (%)</b>	<b>Persian (%)</b>	<b>Pashtun (%)</b>	<b>Kurdish (%)</b>	<b>Arab (%)</b>
Australia was accepting refugees	71.5	56.0	91.4	58.6	76.3
Australia does not return refugees	47.3	41.9	65.3	32.0	54.0
Because my family would be able to follow me to Australia	29.2	12.6	10.2	7.7	38.4
Other countries were not accepting refugees	17.8	10.8	25.7	4.2	32.2
Other countries were returning refugees	19.6	6.3	18.7	15.4	17.5
There is work in Australia	6.9	14.6	0.0	22.5	31.3
Because it is easier to travel to Australia than other countries	5.4	24.0	8.6	38.0	18.4
To be with my family	5.5	10.5	10.2	8.1	13.6
To be with [ethnicity] people	6.5	0.0	0.0	6.2	12.3
None of these	8.7	15.7	8.6	15.6	7.1

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker survey dataset (2013). Weighted. Question 30. (n=390).

For Hazaras and Arabs, the prospect of family reunion was also an important factor, and is consistent with the analysis of the demographic dimensions of agency discussed in Chapter 7, which show that many Hazara families appear to have undertaken two-step asylum with males travelling first as maritime asylum seekers and family members following later. From that analysis we also know that most adult male Hazara asylum seekers were married, and that family members did not arrive with them. This is further supported by survey results: Hazara survey respondents who were married were much more likely to cite family reunion as a reason for considering Australia (37.8%) compared with those who were not married (13.4%).

The results also need to be viewed in the context of Australian asylum seeker policy at the time, especially compared with subsequent significant changes in policy under successive federal governments between July and December 2013 (discussed in Chapter 5). At the time of the survey (April to June 2013), finally determined recognition rates of asylum seekers who arrived earlier as maritime asylum seekers were very high for all major citizenship groups from the region (DIBP 2013), offshore asylum processing was occurring in Nauru and Papua New Guinea (PNG) but resettlement in those two countries for those found to be in need of protection was not envisaged, and vessels were allowed to enter Australian waters for disembarkation and registration prior to (eventual) transfer to Nauru or PNG. The key policy changes that occurred on or after

19 July included refugee resettlement in PNG and Nauru (not Australia) and the implementation of Operation Sovereign Borders, a key component of which was ‘turnback’ operations of asylum seekers to Indonesian waters (Campbell 2015). Approximately 15 vessels carrying over 400 passengers were returned via ‘turnbacks’ or other operations between November 2013 and January 2015 (Medhora & Doherty 2015). Just 157 Sri Lankan maritime asylum seekers made it through to Australia during this period, and these people were all transferred to Nauru shortly after their arrival (O’Sullivan 2015). It is widely acknowledged that the range of policy and operational settings instituted by Australia in conjunction with other countries has had a substantial impact on the ability of maritime asylum seekers to arrive in Australia (Koser 2014; Douglas et al 2014).<sup>2</sup> The impact, therefore, on the ability of Hazaras to exercise agency (particularly as it related to where to migrate) and reach Australia was very significant.

The effect of policy changes becomes further evident when the results of the 2014 survey of Hazaras in Pakistan and Afghanistan are examined. While Australia remained the country of preference of potential asylum seekers (well above the next two countries, Canada and Germany), safety and income opportunities were rated much more highly than Australia’s asylum policies. The significance of Australia’s asylum policy was much lower in the 2014 survey results, with only 17% of Hazaras in Pakistan, for example, indicating that Australia’s acceptance of refugees was a factor in their considerations (McAuliffe & Jayasuriya 2016, 11). While the level of understanding of Australia’s policy could explain some of the difference between the 2013 and 2014 results, including in the context of the location of the survey respondents, other research results highlight that potential asylum seekers remain abreast of key policy changes at the destination. The impact of Australia’s policy changes, for example, were evident in the research conducted in late 2014 in Indonesia, which found that (Pickering et al 2016, 11):

...decision[s] sometimes changed once information was gathered about the route to Australia (by boat) being ‘closed’, the risks associated with the boat journey and learning of tow-backs and legal channels for onward migration through UNHCR. All of these factors had an influence on the migrants’ decisions for onward travel to Australia, often causing them to reconsider Australia as an intended final destination or their mode of travel to Australia. ...most of the migrants interviewed just wanted to be safe and reach a place of safety, and to do this legally through registering with UNHCR in an endeavour to be referred for resettlement.

This research indicates that the majority of Afghan and Iranian irregular migrants, some of whom may have intended to go to Australia prior to migrating, still had a desire to

reach Australia (56% indicated Australia was their final destination) but had changed their minds on the migration *processes* they would use. While destination country preferences also included “US, Canada, New Zealand, European countries and Japan”, there was a strong focus on “access to UNHCR registration in Indonesia for resettlement as a means for legal onward travel to a place of safety is also a significant determinant of destination for many respondents” (Pickering et al 2016, 15). It was widely understood by respondents that the boat route to Australia had been ‘closed’.

Results of the 2013 survey indicate that considerations of destination countries while in origin do not neatly translate into the main reasons for travelling to Australia. While perceptions of Australia’s asylum policy were key reasons, other factors were important as can be seen in Table 9.4, and again it is likely that transit countries decision making was an important aspect in movement. The highest result was ‘none of these’.

**TABLE 9.4 Main reasons ended up travelling to Australia—  
Hazaras by last country of residence**

	<b>Hazara (%)</b>	<b>Persian (%)</b>	<b>Pashtun (%)</b>	<b>Kurdish (%)</b>	<b>Arab (%)</b>
Australia was accepting refugees	34.0	29.8	21.2	49.3	42.6
Australia does not return refugees	25.0	7.2	9.1	26.7	14.0
Because my family would be able to follow me to Australia	12.2	0.0	14.9	6.0	13.7
Other countries were not accepting refugees	10.1	3.1	3.2	7.9	8.0
Other countries were returning refugees	11.6	4.0	3.2	6.6	0.0
There is work in Australia	4.6	2.9	0.0	10.9	0.0
Because it is easier to travel to Australia than other countries	2.8	8.9	0.0	16.5	11.6
To be with my family	4.1	0.0	0.0	2.3	1.1
To be with [ethnicity] people	6.4	0.0	0.0	7.2	1.8
None of these	40.8	49.2	70.3	27.6	28.2

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker survey dataset (2013). Weighted. Question 31. (n=429).

Again, the unfortunate and regrettable omission of questions on transit country decision making would have almost certainly shed light on this aspect. However, it is important to also note that the survey instrument was subject to cognitive testing and pilot testing, which in all other instances picked up problematic or otherwise incomplete questions such as this. Research and analysis of irregular migration flows conducted since the 2013 survey suggest that a ‘funnel’ effect is likely to be a key factor as to why Australia

became the destination—once a maritime flow becomes established evidence indicates that it can deepen and diversify quickly, including because of the impact of telecommunications connectivity and the role of agents and smugglers (McAuliffe 2016; McAuliffe & Koser 2015; Zijlstra & van Liempt 2017). Australia had become ‘the place to go’ for an increasing number of people from an increasingly number of locations globally, as shown in Chapter 5. This is also reflected in findings of a qualitative research project conducted on Hazaras in Australia in 2013, which included this salient quote from one of the asylum seekers (Fleay et al 2016, 6):

Through the media we came to know, everyone knows Australia is accepting refugees. [I got information from] television, information available everywhere, you can listen to the radio, you can use Internet if you like.

Similar findings were also evident from research conducted in Indonesia in late 2014 with Afghan (Hazara) and Iranian asylum seekers who had largely become stuck while in transit (Pickering et al 2016, 10):

Plans were made quickly to travel to Indonesia as a transit point for onward travel to Australia...Travel to Australia as a place of safety via Indonesia was known to be a quick route out of Afghanistan or Iran.

Again, similar findings also emerged from recent qualitative research on Afghan asylum seeking to Europe during 2015. The researchers conducted in-depth interviews with family members in Afghanistan of people who had travelled to Europe to seek asylum (Linke 2016, 3):

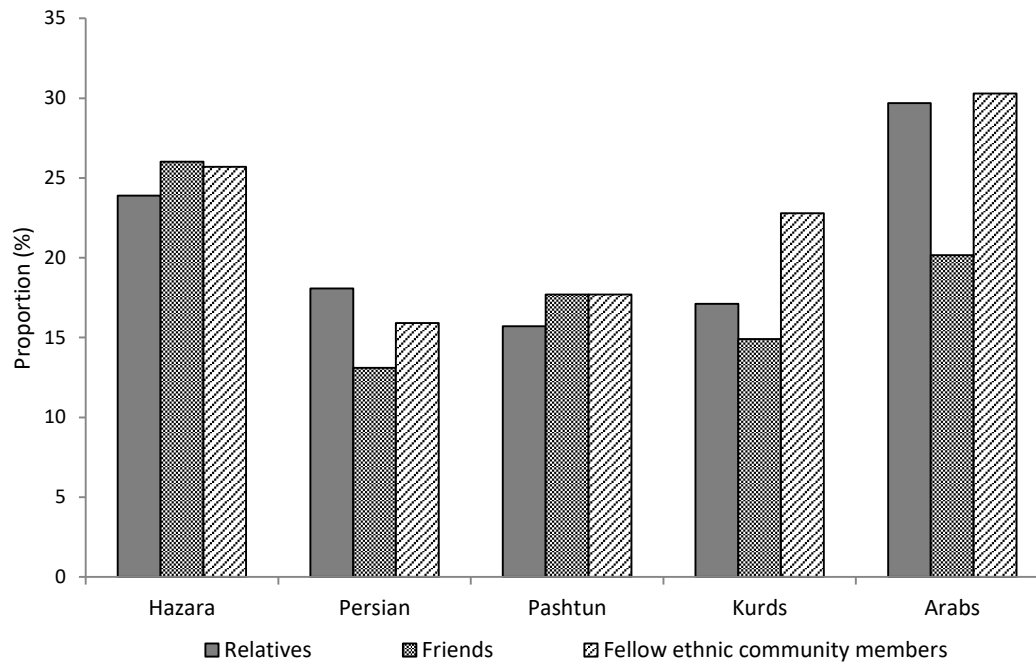
He himself brought up the issue of going to Europe. He used Facebook on a daily basis to read about the situation along the route and he read that the border between Turkey and Greece was open. He might have been motivated by this... (Brother of a 30-year old migrant from Helmand)

...we had never thought about such words as ‘going to Europe’ nor did my brother evoke them. In the end, though, we said, “Where should he go?” We thought, “Should he go to Pakistan or Iran?” The media were broadcasting reports of people leaving for Europe. (Brother of a 22-year old migrant from Sar-e Pul)

### **Social networks and links to diaspora in Australia**

Hazaras have long had links to Australia through migration, starting in the 1980s and including irregular maritime migration as asylum seekers during the 1999 to 2001 period (Fazal 2001; Lange, Kamalkhani & Baldassar 2007; Maley 2001; Monsutti 2007; Monsutti 2008). There exists a small diaspora population of Hazaras in Australia (as discussed in Chapter 6). Within this context, social links between Australia and Hazara communities in the region are discernible, and may influence irregular maritime migration, particularly given the limited options available for Afghan Hazaras to travel to Australia via regular pathways. This section specifically examines Hazara maritime asylum seekers' links to the Australia diaspora community prior to their migration. The analysis draws on results of the 2013 survey, in which a number of aspects of respondents' social proximity to migration as well as the Australian Hazara diaspora prior to departure were explored. The results are relevant to both *whether to migrate* and *where to migrate*, and I acknowledge that the two aspects are linked but are treated separately for analytical purposes.<sup>3</sup> The survey results on social proximity to a 'culture of migration' are discussed in Chapter 8 on *whether to migrate*.

In terms of links to diaspora in Australia, the results indicate that Hazara were much more likely to have had links prior to migrating than most other ethnic groups from the region. Overall just over 44% of Hazara indicated they had some form of social connection to a person(s) in Australia, compared with 22% of Pashtuns, 25% of Persians, and 29% of Kurds. Only Arabs reported comparable social links (47%). Figure 9.2 provides more detail on the extent of those links, which shows considerable difference between the groups—Hazaras and Arabs were most likely to report stronger links to Australia prior to migration.



**FIGURE 9.2: Social links to Australia by major ethnic group**

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker survey dataset (2013). Note: n=886 to 899 depending on the sub-question. Weighted. Question 24.

Despite Hazaras' reasonably strong social links to Australia, friends and family in Australia were not major sources of information on Australia when considering travel (Table 9.5) with several other sources being more prominent, including family/friends in origin, the Australian government, media sources and agent/smugglers. This undoubtedly relates to access issues, with sources closer to hand being relied to a greater degree than others. The Australia government was cited as the second most significant source by Hazaras, which is consistent with the targeted information campaigns by Australia conducted in Afghanistan and Pakistan during (and after) the study period (Fleay et al 2016; Martin 2015).



TABLE 9.5 Key sources of information about Australia by major ethnic groups

	Hazara (%)	Persian (%)	Pashtun (%)	Kurdish (%)	Arab (%)
Friends & family in [country]	25.3	35.5	15.4	22.7	11.9
Friends & family in Australia	9.0	9.4	5.2	3.8	12.5
Friends & family in other countries	6.7	5.0	4.1	6.9	5.8
Agents / smugglers	12.1	12.9	22.9	20	12.7
Australian government	14.7	11.8	9.8	6.7	11.8
Media	14.5	4.5	8.6	5.3	18.9
Social media	3.7	2.1	7.5	3.1	7.7

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker survey dataset (2013).

Notes: n=824 to 834 depending on the question. Weighted. Question 33.

That many asylum seekers accessed a range of information on Australia during decision making on *where to migrate* is evident from the survey results (Table 9.5), although when we delve deeper to examine the extent to which respondents relied on different sources, the results varied considerably. Of those who had accessed the sources listed in Table 9.5, Hazaras placed the most weight on information from Australia both from friends and family in Australia (68.6% relied on it ‘completely or a lot’) and the Australian government (69.6% relied on it ‘completely or a lot’). Other sources that were relied upon ‘completely or a lot’ included friends and family in origin (62.9%) and media sources (63.4%). The lowest reported source in terms of reliance was agents/smugglers, of which 39.8% of relevant respondents relied on it ‘completely or a lot’.

There are several interesting and pertinent aspects related to these results. The first is that the reliance and influence of Australian government sources of information is somewhat at odds with existing literature, which has found that information campaigns are generally ineffective and that asylum seekers do not know much about (European) destination countries (Gilbert & Koser 2006; Koser 1997; Black et al 2004). Koser and McAuliffe (2013) refer to potential migrants’ distrust of government information disseminated as part of information campaigns in origin countries, citing evaluations of information campaigns conducted by European countries. The reliance on Australian sources by Hazara indicates that a more nuanced understanding of ‘trust in governments’ is perhaps required. Not all governments are equal in their trustworthiness and Hazaras are likely to recognise this, placing more weight on Australian government

information than that of their own governments (and perhaps other governments). This accords with 2014 survey findings, for example, which shows the high regard Hazaras in Quetta place on Australia's lawfulness, multiculturalism and other aspects above other countries, including Canada and the United Kingdom (McAuliffe & Jayasuriya 2016). It also accords with research conducted in Indonesia with Afghan (Hazaras) and Iranians in late 2014, which found that 39% of Afghan respondents indicated that "their most trusted source of information to inform them of their onward journey to Australia was the Australian Government", the second most trusted source was family and friends (Pickering et al 2016, 15). Earlier research and evaluation findings on information campaigns are also likely to be dated in terms of the impact of telecommunications in both information campaigns and migration decision making. Telecommunications has changed dramatically in the last decade, including in Afghanistan, which has seen mobile telephone subscriptions increase nationally from five percent of the population in 2005 to 75% in 2014, impacting the ability of people to access information on a range of issues including migration (McAuliffe 2016; World Bank 2015). Others have noted that Hazaras in particular remain well informed about Australia prior to their arrival (Koser 2010, 8).

The 2013 survey results also call in to question findings of a small-scale qualitative study on information sources used by Hazara maritime asylum seekers to Australia, which found (Fleay et al 2016, 7):

All but one of the interviewees in Perth and Sydney had very little access to information aside from people smuggling agents before leaving Afghanistan or Pakistan. None had any significant access to information except from agents and, in some cases, did not know their destination.... For these asylum seekers, little information was known about Australian policies both prior to and during their journeys to Australia. Very few sources of information were accessed prior to their arrival to Australia other than the information provided by friends or people smuggling agents.

It is important to note that this research relied on only eight interviewees and so while it undoubtedly reflects the experiences of these individuals, the results of the large-scale representative survey of 1,008 maritime asylum seekers (including 413 Hazaras) suggest that this was almost certainly not the norm.

### Involvement in decision making processes—where to migrate

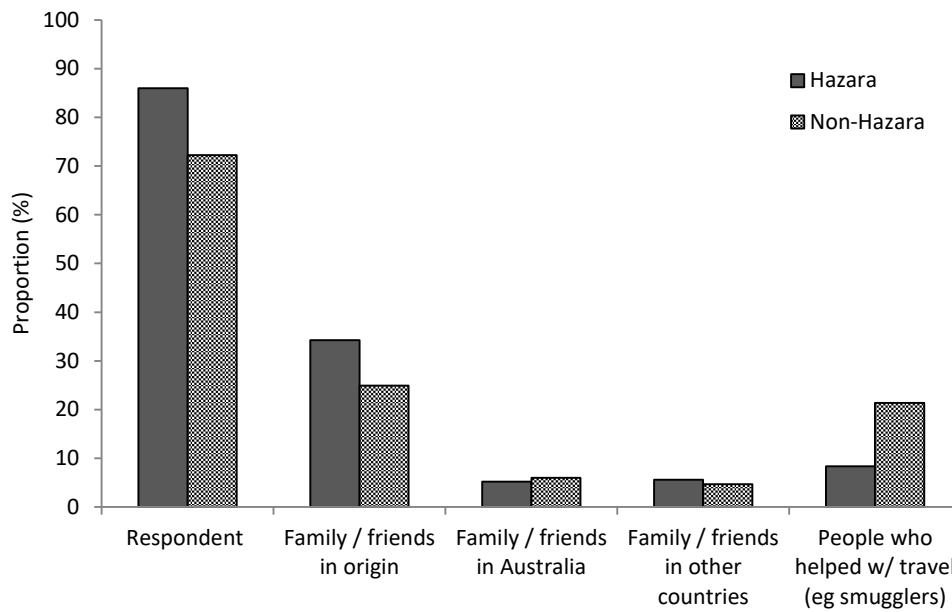
In Chapter 8 analyses of survey results on both respondents' involvement in decision making and the extent of collective decision making were provide in relation to *whether to migrate*. In this and the next section we examine involvement and collectivity of decision making in relation to *where to migrate*. The background and method is detailed in chapter 8, and summarised in Table 9.6.

TABLE 9.6 Analysis of asylum seeker decision making processes

	Decisions	Dependent variable	Dependent variable description	Analytical techniques
Level of respondent involvement	1. To leave (see Chapter 8) 2. <i>Go to Australia</i>	Dichotomous	1= involved 0=not involved	BLR
Collective vs individual decision making	1. To leave (see Chapter 8) 2. <i>Go to Australia</i>	Dichotomous	1=collective 2=not collective	BLR

### Results

The summary results of the survey reveal that the vast majority of respondents were themselves involved in the decision making processes about *where to migrate* (79%), although there was a significant difference between Hazara (86%) and non-Hazara from the region (72%) (Figure 9.3). Hazara were also more likely to have had family and friends in origin involved in the decision (34% compared with 25% for non-Hazara). The extent to which agents/smugglers were involved was much lower for Hazara (8%) compared with non-Hazara (21%).



**FIGURE 9.3: People involved in the decision about going to Australia**

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker survey dataset (2013). Weighted. Question 32. Note: n=876 to 892 depending on the sub-question.

Examination of summary statistics on respondent involvement in the two decisions shows that there were significant differences by key demographic variables—namely sex and age—as well as aspects of migration logistics (such as whether an agent or smuggler assisted with travel). In terms of the decision to go to Australia, asylum seekers who were younger were less likely to have been involved in decision making with 71% of those under 21 reporting being involved compared with 81% of those 21 or more. Females were less likely to be involved compared with males (71% compared with 82%). In migrations involving the use of agents/smugglers, asylum seekers themselves were more likely to be involved if such services were used (83%) compared with those indicating agents/smugglers were not used (77%). Of those who had indicated they decided to seek asylum in Australia for (among other reasons) an income-generation reason, 94% indicated they had been involved in the decision; of those who indicated persecution was a reason, 83% indicated they had been involved.

Based on the existing literature on asylum seeker decision making, a regression model was developed to help explain the extent to which respondents were themselves involved in the decision to go to Australia. The regression model controls for other

variables so provide a more precise analysis in helping to understand decision making processes.<sup>4</sup>

Table 9.7: Factors associated with involvement in the decision to seek asylum in Australia

Dependent variable 1=involved 0=not involved	Decision to go to Australia	
	Marginal effects	SE
<b>Male</b>	0.008	0.03
<b>Aged under 21</b>	0.011	0.05
<b>Married</b>	0.014	0.02
<b>Educated</b>	-0.024	0.04
<b>Hazara</b>	0.077***	0.03
<b>Work FT in Australia</b>	0.016	0.03
Reasons for leaving		
<b>Persecution-related</b>	0.015	0.03
<b>Non-persecution – General Security</b>	0.016	0.02
<b>Non-persecution – Family Reunion</b>	0.065	0.08
<b>Non-persecution – Income generation</b>	0.152***	0.05
<b>Used Agent/Smuggler</b>	0.004	0.02
<b>Cost under USD 15,000</b>	0.025	0.03
<b>Involved in decision to leave</b>	0.286***	0.02
Observations	828	
Model P value	0.0000	

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1.

The model (P<0.0001) indicates that that asylum seekers from the region were significantly more likely to have themselves been involved in the decision to seek asylum in Australia if they were also involved in the decision to leave. All else being equal, the probability of being involved in the decision to go to Australia is significantly 28.6% greater if the respondent was involved in the decision to leave. Respondents who left for reasons including income generation were significantly more likely to be

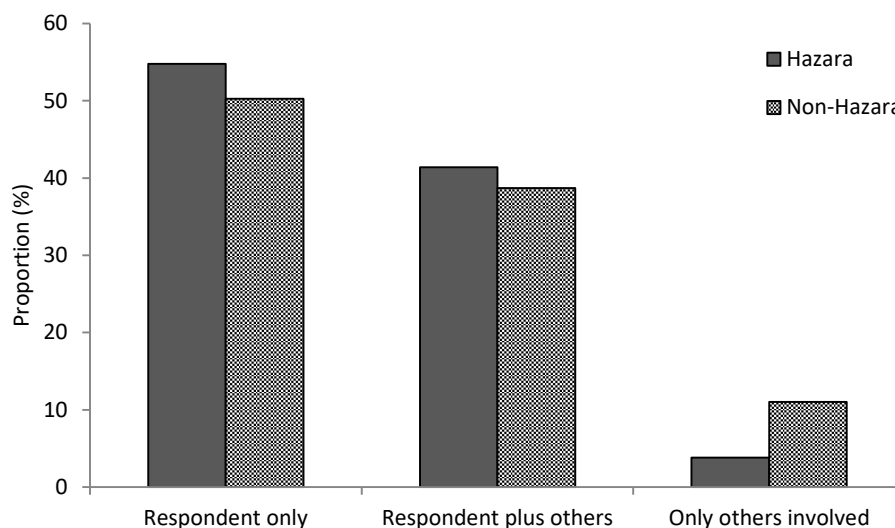
involved in the decision to go to Australia (15.2% greater); Hazaras were also more likely to be involved (7.7% greater).

It is unsurprising that those involved in the decision to leave were much more likely to be involved in the destination decision, including because in some situations decision making on the two aspects would necessarily overlap.<sup>3</sup> Even when decisions were made separately, it is reasonable that those who were involved in the decision to go would also be involved in other aspects of migration decision making, such as the destination country.

### **The extent of collective decision making—where to migrate**

Examination of whether an asylum seeker themselves was involved in decision making highlights significant differences based on demographic characteristics as well as underlying migration factors and the use of agents/smugglers. It is, however, limited in what it can reveal about the extent of individual versus collective decision making processes. The literature on Hazaras, along with other ethnic groups, indicates that migration (and in particular asylum seeking) is related to long-term survival strategies for families and communities (Betts 2013; Horst 2006; Monsutti 2008; Stigter & Monsutti 2005). The extent and nature of collective decision making can point to processes shaping distinctive migration patterns of discrete populations.

As Figure 9.4 shows, there was little difference between results for Hazara and non-Hazara from the region, except in relation to the extent to which decisions were made by others only. Non-Hazaras (11%) were much more likely to report others having made the decision for them to migrate without their involvement compared with Hazaras (4%).



**FIGURE 9.4: Collective and individual migration decision making**

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker survey dataset (2013). Weighted. Question 32. Note: n=758.

Examination of summary statistics on collective versus individual decision making varied by a range of independent variables. Results shows that there was again marked variation by key demographic variables—namely sex and age—as well as the involvement of an agent/smuggler who assisted with travel. In terms of the decision to leave, asylum seekers who were younger were less likely to have been a solo decision maker (43% compared with 53% for those 21 or more), and more likely to have had the decision made by others only (19% compared with 7%). Females were less likely to be solo decision makers (47% compare with 53% of males), and more likely to have had the decision made by others only (12% compared with 7% of males). Once again the use of an agent/smuggler had an impact on decision making processes, with collective decision making being much higher for migrations involving the use of agents/smugglers (47% compared with 29%), and solo decision making being lower (44% compared with 64% if an agent/smuggler was not involved in the migration). This does not necessarily mean that the agent/smuggler was him or herself involved in the decision but that in situations in which an agent/smuggler was used, collective decision making of some sort was more likely.

Two regression models were then developed to help explain the extent to which collective decision making occurred for both the decision to leave and the decision to go to Australia. The results of the modelling are in Table 9.8.

Table 9.8: Factors associated with collective vs individual decision making

Dependent variable	Decision to go to Australia	
	Marginal effects	SE
1=collective		
0=not collective		
<b>Male</b>	-0.047	0.06
<b>Aged under 21</b>	0.079	0.09
<b>Married</b>	-0.024	0.04
<b>Educated</b>	-0.023	0.05
<b>Hazara</b>	-0.027	0.04
<b>Work FT in Australia</b>	-0.021	0.05
Reasons for leaving		
<b>Persecution-related</b>	0.009	0.05
<b>Non-persecution – General Security</b>	-0.004	0.04
<b>Non-persecution – Family Reunion</b>	0.290***	0.10
<b>Non-persecution – Income generation</b>	-0.120**	0.03
<b>Used Agent/Smuggler</b>	0.209***	0.04
<b>Cost under USD 15,000</b>	-0.056	0.04
<b>Involved in decision to leave</b>	-0.167***	0.05
Observations	727	
Model P value	0.0000	

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1.

Consistent with results on the extent of respondent involvement, those who had been involved in the decision to leave were much more likely to be solo decision makers and collective decision making was less prominent. The probability of collective decision making is significantly 16.7% less if the respondent was involved in the decision to leave. In addition, the model also shows that collective processes were significantly more likely to have occurred if the respondent left for reasons including family reunion



(29.0% greater probability), or used an agent/smuggler (10.9% greater). However, collective processes were significantly less likely to have occurred, all else equal, if the respondent left for reasons including income generation (12.0% lower probability). The need/intention to work may have provided particular motivation for the asylum seeker themselves to choose the destination country without the involvement of others. Importantly, the model indicates that there was no statistically significant difference between Hazaras and non-Hazaras.

### **Where to migrate: A short summary**

In examining the spatial dimensions of asylum seeker agency as part of the Hazara case study, this first section presents analysis of the administrative data and survey results within the context of the existing literature on *where to migrate*. In doing so, three research questions were answered about the extent and nature of asylum seekers' involvement in decision making, the nature of collective decision making processes and the influence of Australia's perceived acceptance of asylum seekers and refugees on deciding where to migrate. Consistent with the findings in Chapter 8, analysis of survey results on *where to migrate* indicate that Hazaras were highly likely to be involved in this decision, however, there were some significant caveats. Those who had been involved in the decision about *whether to migrate* were much more likely to be involved in the decision about where to do so. Again, females and people under 21 were much less likely to be involved in such decision making. This adds further weight to the findings of chapters 7 and 8, painting a picture of uneven power balances within a context of cohesive ethnic identity and extraordinary resilience.

The analysis in this chapter found that individual decision making was more common for considerations of where to migrate than whether to migrate, and while collective decision making processes were evident for around half of all survey respondents, there was no significant difference between Hazaras and non-Hazaras. In fact, Hazaras were more likely to be the sole decision maker in relation to *where to migrate*. Part of the reason for this is related to the need to generate income and remit to family in origin, which was much higher for Hazaras than some other groups (Table 8.5, Chapter 8). The logistic regression model shows that survey respondents who choose Australia for income generation reasons were more likely to be the sole decision maker; in contrast

those who travelled to Australia for family reunion purposes were more likely to be involved in collective decision making. These results make intuitive sense but they also show that a calculated rationality occurs well before departure—to be safe in a destination country is clearly critical for Hazaras, but life goes on and determination and purpose do not dissipate upon arrival in a safe land, necessitating considerations of life well into the future. Overall, the findings indicate that aspects of policy, considerations of lives beyond arrival (especially working and sponsoring family members), and demographic characteristics were all important factors impinging on the extent and nature of asylum seeker agency as it related to *where to migrate*. It could be said that agency was exercised by Hazara maritime asylum seekers in relation to *where to migrate* but not equally for all.

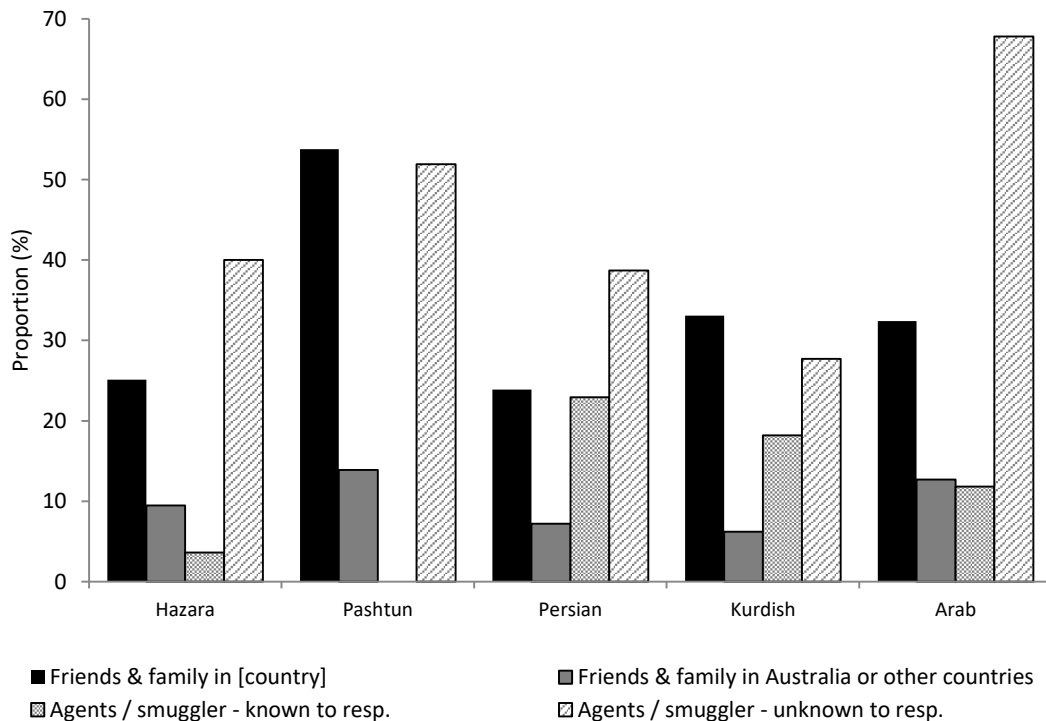
## 9.2 How to migrate to destination

Migration journeys of asylum seekers and irregular migrants tend to not be studied to the same degree as other aspects of their migration, such as choice of destination, for a number of reasons, including the difficulties accessing relevant administrative or other data on transit patterns and processes, the sensitive nature of illicit migratory practices such as smuggling or false documentation, the dominant ‘destination country’ perspective that tends to focus enquiry on the effects of destination country policies and practices rather than migrants’ experiences *en route*, the inherent difficulties accessing migrants *en route*, and the strong focus on other related topics such as asylum processing, immigration detention, and border control/management. The actual migration processes people navigate, which are very important to migrants themselves, have tended to remain under-researched, particularly outside of ethnographic research, which lends itself more to in-depth qualitative research involving small numbers of research subjects (see, for example, Carling 2007; Horst 2006; Monsutti 2005). There are some recent notable exceptions to this general observation that are highly relevant to this study, including Graeme Hugo, George Tan and Caven Jonathan Napitupulu’s 2012-13 study in Indonesia (Hugo et al 2014), and Sharon Pickering, Claudia Tazreiter, Rebecca Powell and James Barry’s 2014 study of Afghan (Hazaras) and Iranians in Indonesia (Pickering et al 2016). The unique administrative data and *post facto* survey data, therefore, are analysed by also drawing on the results of these pertinent mixed methods studies.

A number of aspects related to *how to migrate* are examined in this section, and the following research question is answered: Did Hazara asylum seekers apply similar migration processes and strategies developed within the region (Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran) to the much longer migration corridor to Australia? In doing so, administrative data on transit migration patterns and arrivals patterns are analysed alongside the 2013 survey data, which provides useful information on asylum seekers’ sources of assistance (including funds), links to Australia, and various practices *en route* such as registering with UNHCR and staying with fellow ethnic group members.

**Sources of assistance to travel**

Once the decision was made to leave home and travel to Australia, a range of assistance was received, including from family and friends in origin, Australia and elsewhere and agents/smugglers (Figure 9.5).



**FIGURE 9.5 Sources of help received to travel to Australia by major ethnic group**

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker survey dataset (2013). Weighted. Question 35. (n=823 to 831 depending on the sub-question).

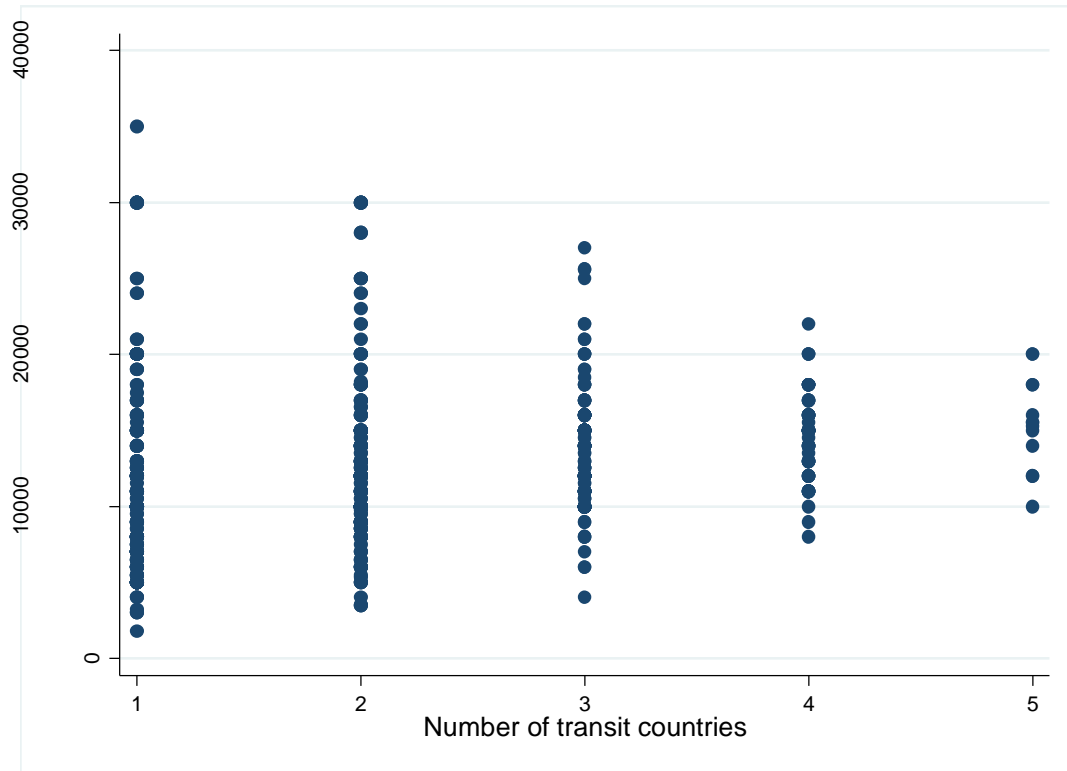
The most widely reported source of assistance was ‘agent/smugglers that you didn’t know’, with 43% of respondents reporting they received help from this group and a further 11% indicating help came from ‘agents/smugglers that were known to you’. Hazaras were less likely to use smugglers known to them (3.6%) than other groups (22.9% of Persians, for example), and so felt less safe using smugglers overall, and were much more likely to feel very unsafe using an agent/smuggler that was unknown to them (Table 9.9).

**TABLE 9.9 Sense of safety using smugglers—Hazaras**

	<b>Very safe (%)</b>	<b>Quite Safe (%)</b>	<b>Neither (%)</b>	<b>Quite unsafe (%)</b>	<b>Very unsafe (%)</b>
Used agent/smuggler known to me	-	39.1	31.6	-	29.4
Used agent/smuggler unknown to me	2.2	9.7	13.1	16.7	53.1

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker survey dataset (2013). Weighted. Questions 35 & 40. n=228.

Survey results revealed that different groups paid quite different prices for their total travel, notwithstanding the similar significant distances to Australia from the region (in excess of 6,000 kilometres). Hazaras, for example, paid on average USD 13,430 to travel to Australia, which was the highest amount for any ethnic group from the region. The lowest average amount was USD 9,698 (Kurdish), with others varying: USD 10,133 for Pashtuns, USD 12,908 for Arabs; and USD 13,017 for Persians. Given the analysis of the administrative data on migration routes and transit countries, closer examination of the relationship between the total funds used and the number of transit countries passed through was undertaken. Interestingly, the survey results show that there was a relationship between the two. The greater the number of transit countries, the higher the average funds spent, as shown in Table 9.10 and Figure 9.6. Hazaras, therefore, with their much longer, more transitory migration journeys spent more on average than other groups to get to Australia.



**FIGURE 9.6 Total funding spent on travelling to Australia —  
by number of transit countries**

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker survey dataset (2013). Weighted. Questions 37 & 38. (n=780).  
Notes: Includes regional ethnic groups only. Excludes outliers.

Hazaras, who were mostly Afghan citizens, would have had very little or no access to visa on arrival arrangements unlike other groups (e.g. Persian Iranians, Arabic Iranians and Kurdish Iranians). This would have meant that indirect routes involving greater irregularity would have been required. Many Iranians, for example, with visa on arrival arrangements in Indonesia at the time would have only become irregular once they arrived in Australian waters. It also translated into higher costs on average, particularly when the number of transit countries are taken into account, as can be seen in Table 9.10. This also holds true for Hazaras from different last country of residence—average funds spent by Hazaras who had lived in Pakistan (USD 11,936) was considerably less than for those from Afghanistan (USD 14,988) and Iran (USD 14,935). Analysis of transit migration patterns (discussed below) shows that Pakistan was the main departure country for Hazaras from the region.

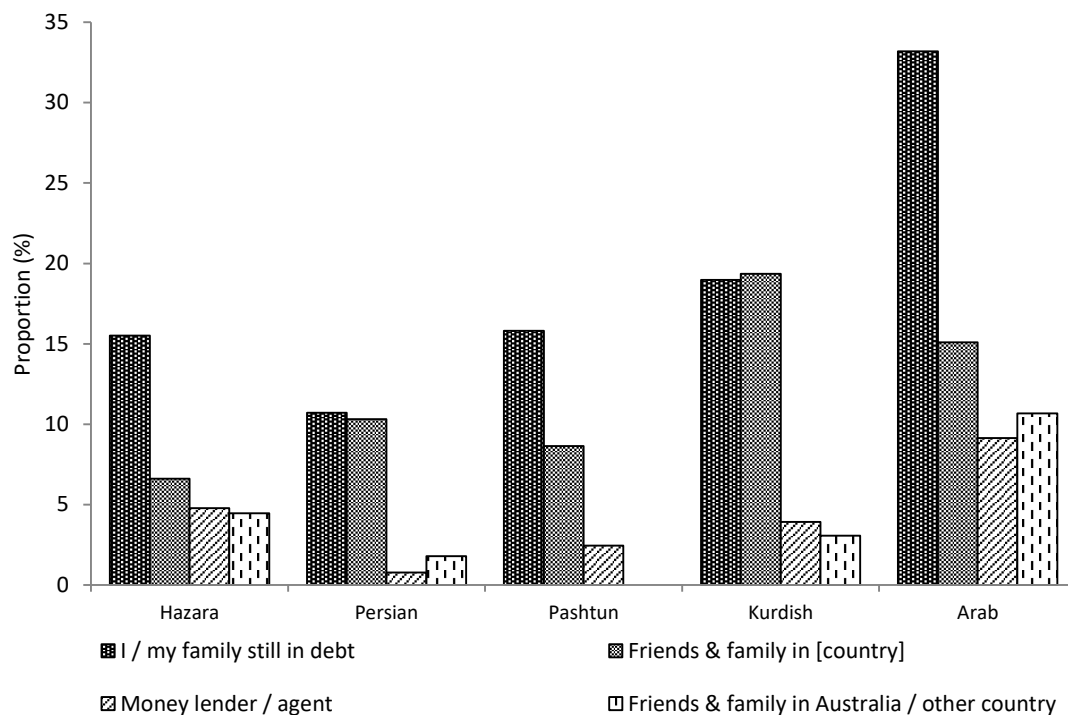
**TABLE 9.10** Average total funding spent on travelling to Australia —  
by number of transit countries

<i>Number of transit countries</i>	<i>Total cost USD (x)</i>	<i>Obs</i>
One	11,452	280
Two	12,735	249
Three	13,530	181
Four	14,866	66
Five	15,623	13

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker survey dataset (2013). Weighted. Questions 37 & 38. (n=789). Note: Includes regional ethnic groups only.

Conversely, the higher prices paid by Iranians is likely to relate to both capacity to pay and greater reliance on air travel, which increases costs overall. In its analysis of migrant smuggling practices, for example, UNODC has found that air travel is typically much more expensive for migrants, including because of the more sophisticated smuggling operations it requires, the increased safety during transit it provides as well as the significantly faster travel it affords (UNODC 2010, 8).

In order to fund lengthy and expensive journeys, a range of funding sources were relied upon. By far the greatest source of funding was from migrants themselves and/or their immediate families, with around 80% of respondents indicating that their family unit funded travel. This result was reasonably consistent across ethnicities, ranging from 73.3% (Arab) to 85.6% (Persian), with Hazaras at 82.3%. The secondary sources, however, differed significantly. As can be seen in Figure 9.7, Hazaras and Arabs had diverse secondary sources. Debt featured heavily, although more prominently for Arabs, Hazaras and Pashtuns. Overall, and taking into account all funding sources, Persians were most self-sufficient, with lower reporting of debt, borrowing from money lenders/agent, and funding from other countries (including Australia). This is likely to be related to socio-economic status, and their capacity to pay for migration. Survey results indicate that Persians were much more likely to be tertiary educated (38.8%) than all other groups (6.3% of Hazaras; 20.8% of Pashtuns; 15.1% of Kurds and 21.3% of Arabs). This also accords with the administrative data, which shows that Persians were more likely to have been employed in higher skilled occupations prior to departure.<sup>5</sup>



**FIGURE 9.7 Secondary sources of funding to travel to Australia by regional ethnic group**

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker survey dataset (2013). Weighted. Question 35. (n=877 to 884 depending on the sub-question).

The pooling of funding and resources from families to support migration of one family member has been found to be a feature of Hazara migration, particularly given the high costs and circuitous travel. Often young males are financially supported by parents and other relatives to reach safer areas that also offer the ability to save money and send back remittances, but unavoidable debt required to fund journeys also features (Monsutti 2005, 154). Monsutti's ethnographic study of Hazara migration patterns and strategies between Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran highlights that (2007, 182):

For young male Hazaras, going to Iran is a way to achieve a certain idea of their personal autonomy. For their families, their migration is a way to diversify the domestic economy and to spread risk. It is then a survival and coping strategy...

Gathering funds to support one (typically young male) family member was found to be a major issue in recent research conducted on Afghan asylum flows to Europe, and acquiring debt was not uncommon. Families routinely supported sons and brothers' migrations financially (Bjelica 2016, 6-7):

...most families discussed at length the difficulties they faced in getting the funds together. For many, it required borrowing money from relatives and friends

and/or mortgaging their homes... Some families said that their brothers or sons would contact them when they needed money while on their journey, and that they would provide them with instructions on how to pay... Some migrants' families were able to negotiate that payment would only be made once their family member had reached Europe, while others paid after each leg of the trip was completed (generally Iran, Turkey and Europe).

Similar issues appear to be relevant to the flow to Australia during the study period, which also goes some way to explaining the strong focus of Hazara maritime asylum seekers on remitting (as discussed in Chapter 8).

### Transit migration patterns

The administrative data provides information on the transit migration patterns of Hazaras, including in comparison with other ethnic groups from the region who had to travel very similar distances. As shown in Table 9.11, Hazaras had the longest transit country journeys of all groups. It should be noted that the analysis is based on 46% of the entire maritime asylum seeker population from the region as only incomplete transit data was available for the remainder; first country of transit was available but second and subsequent transit country data was incomplete for some asylum seekers. Nevertheless, it does indicate that significantly different transit patterns were evident. Part of the reason for this, as discussed in Chapter 6, relates to visa access. Iranian citizens, for example, were able to obtain visas on arrival in Indonesia and Malaysia until late 2013 making transit much easier than for Afghan citizens who are required to apply for visas ahead of travel (and have low visa grant rates globally).

TABLE 9.11 Number of transit countries by major ethnic group

	Hazaras	Persians	Pashtuns	Kurds	Arabs
Number of transit countries - range	1 - 8	1 - 4	1 - 5	1 - 5	1 - 5
Number of transit countries - mean	2.8	1.8	2.7	1.8	2.3
Proportion who went through 1 or 2 transit countries (%)	36.5	90.4	28.1	86.5	55.5
Proportion who went through 4 or more transit countries (%)	19.3	1.0	14.6	0.8	8.2

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014). Notes: Does not include missing data. n=5,849 (Hazaras); n=1,935 (Persians); n=349 (Pashtuns); n=1,791 (Kurds); n=1,678 (Arabs).



The easier transit migration of Iranian citizens, however, was affected when visa-on-arrival arrangements for some citizens seeking to enter Indonesia and Malaysia were abolished (Surya 2014; McAuliffe & Mence 2014: 44). Changes to Indonesia's visa policy took effect in July 2013 and Malaysia's occurred in October 2013. In Indonesia, the effect was dramatic and immediate with the number of Iranians arriving in Indonesia dropping from 1,608 in September 2013 to 296 in December (Surya 2014).

Data on first transit countries highlight interesting dynamics. Unfortunately, data on second and subsequent transit countries is incomplete, thereby limiting detailed analysis of transit country routes. Nevertheless, the data in Table 9.12 show that air travel was common for initial movement, with major air transit hubs being UAE, Malaysia, Thailand and Qatar (also refer Figure 5.1 in Chapter 5). Land travel between Afghanistan and Pakistan was also substantial, and was the only major land transit route in the region. This route was used mostly (but not exclusively) by Hazaras, as we will see in the next section.

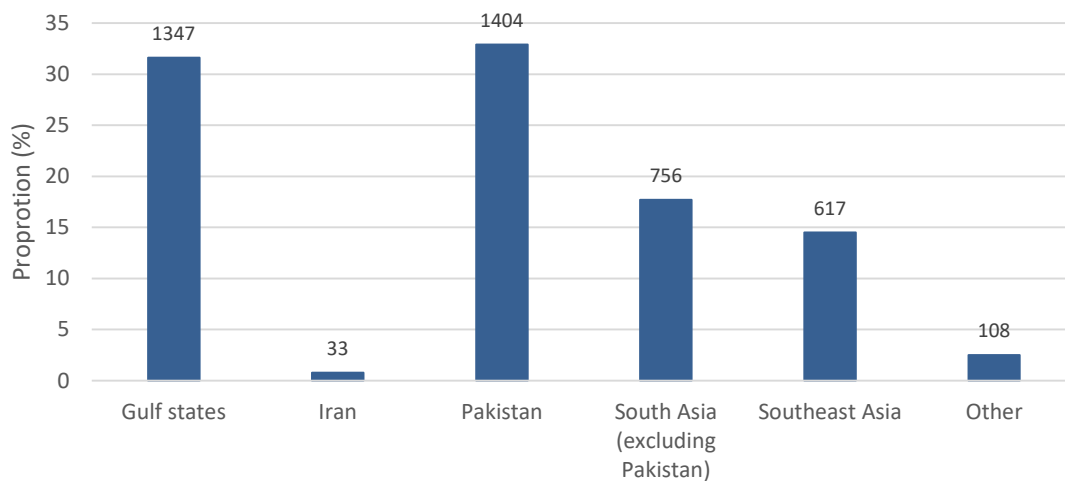
**TABLE 9.12: First country of transit by last country of long-term residence  
—major ethnic groups only**

Last country of long-term residence	Major first transit country						United Arab Emirates
	India	Indonesia	Malaysia	Pakistan	Qatar	Thailand	
Afghanistan	738	86	329	1,500	*	219	1,372
Iran	75	596	1,996	269	1,628	119	3,976
Iraq	*	*	246	*	82	*	1,026
Pakistan	47	252	1,583	NA	*	3,077	473

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014). Notes: \* denotes cells less than 50. Includes major ethnic groups from the region (Hazaras, Persians, Pashtuns, Arabs and Kurds) so not all maritime asylum seekers. Does not include missing data or minor transit countries; n=19,956.

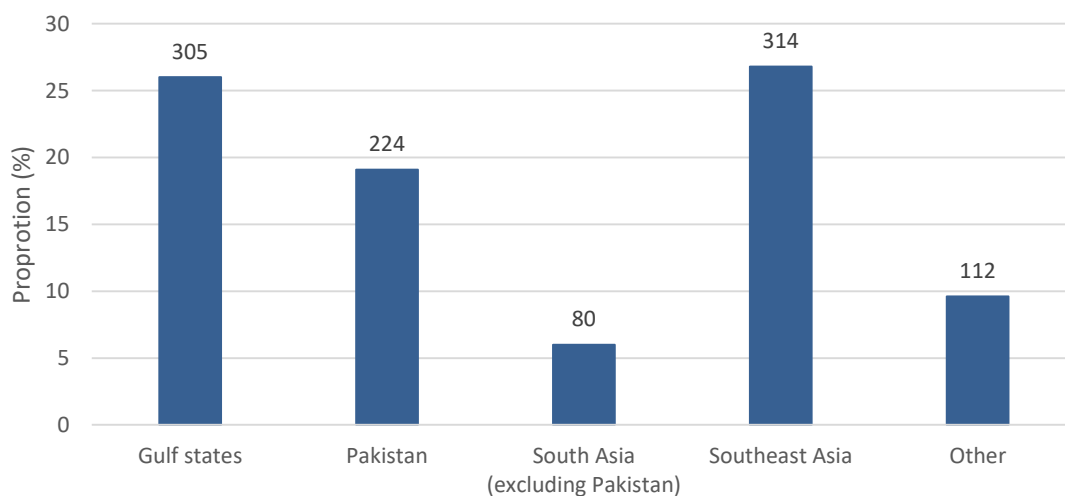
### *Hazaras from the region*

By examining last country of long-term residence, we can see that the first transit country varied markedly between Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran. It is clear that travel directly to Southeast Asia (as the major transit hub for all Hazaras) was much more common from Pakistan compared with Afghanistan and Iran (Figures 9.8, 9.9 and 9.10). In addition, Pakistan was the most common first transit country for Hazaras living in Iran and Afghanistan, making Pakistan the major departure country for Hazaras in the region. Overall, just over 7,000 Hazaras (or almost 60%) departed the region from Pakistan, with the majority of those (4,244 or 61%) travelling directly to Southeast Asia (mainly Thailand and Malaysia, but also Indonesia and other countries).



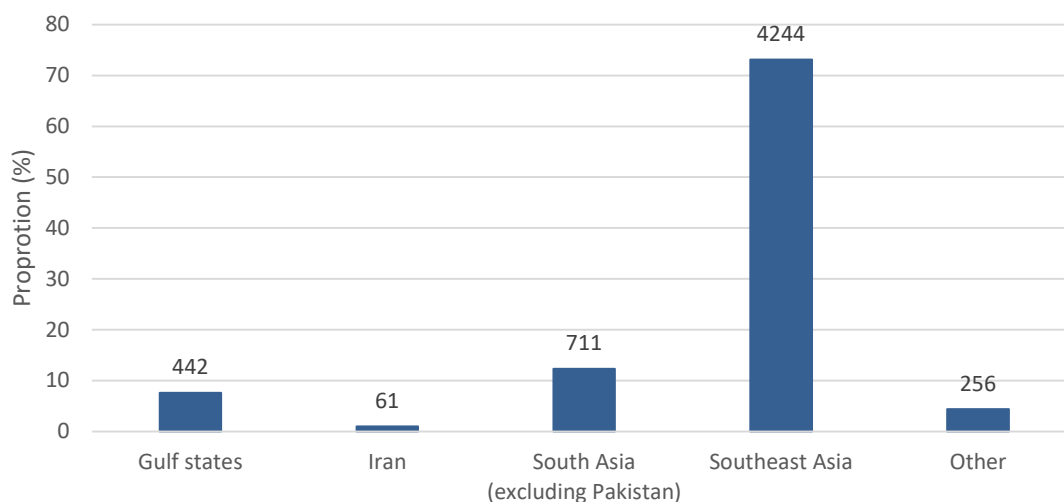
**FIGURE 9.8: Hazaras' first transit country after long-term residence in Afghanistan**

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014). Notes: n=4,265.



**FIGURE 9.9: Hazaras' first transit country after long-term residence in Iran**

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014). Notes: n=1,173.



**FIGURE 9.10: Hazaras' first transit country after long-term residence in Pakistan**

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014). Notes: n=5,806.

As to be expected in light of the results above, the number of transit countries varied by Hazaras' last country of long-term residence (Table 9.13). Long-term residents of Pakistan travelled through fewer transit countries compared with those living in Iran and Afghanistan. Almost half living in Pakistan travelled through only one or two transit countries prior to arrival in Australia. Hazaras living in Afghanistan, however, typically went through more transit countries (including Pakistan and the Gulf states). These findings call into question existing literature on transit migration of irregular migrants in Europe, which has found that there is a relationship between geographic proximity and the number of transits undertaken. Icduygu, for example has found that "...as distance from the destination country increases, so does the likelihood of step-by-step migration" (2007, 152). While this may apply in Europe, and does to a certain extent in the case of irregular movements to Australia—the vast majority of Sri Lankans, for example, travelled directly to Australia without transiting another country—this analysis indicates that there are also other factors at play. The similar distances between Australia and all three countries (Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran) are in contrast to the significant differences in transit experiences of people from the sub-region are likely to relate to aspects associated with transport links from the region, and existing migration patterns within the sub-region. There more limited air travel links, for example, between Afghanistan and Southeast Asia and a substantial body of literature on the back-and-forth movements of Afghans (including Hazaras) between Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as between Afghanistan and Iran (Koser & Marsden

2013; Monsutti 2005; Majidi & Danziger 2016; Majidi et al 2016; Schmeidl 2016; Stigter & Monsutti 2005). Hazaras who had been living in Afghanistan, for example, were more likely to depart the region from Pakistan than from Afghanistan, including because well-established movement patterns between the two countries.

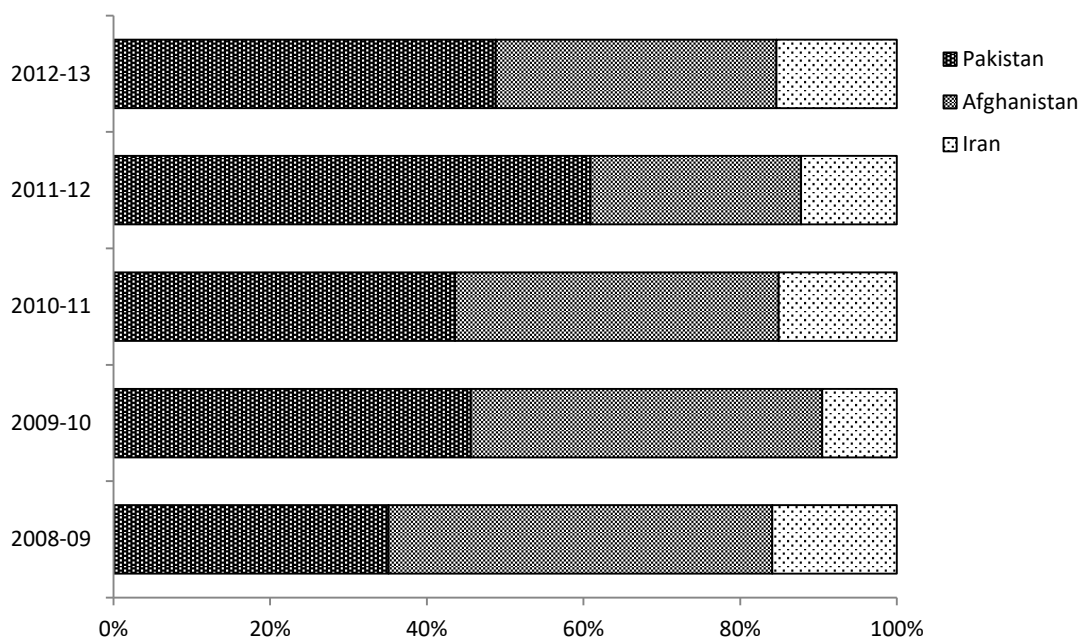
TABLE 9.13: Number of transit countries by last country of long-term residence (Hazaras)

	Afghanistan	Pakistan	Iran
Number of transit countries - range	1 - 8	1 - 6	1 - 6
Number of transit countries - mean	3.1	2.6	2.9
Proportion who went through 1 or 2 transit countries (%)	22.3	46.7	31.9
Proportion who went through 4 or more transit countries (%)	26.5	12.3	26.0

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014).

Note: Does not include missing, n=5,849.

This may help to explain why the nature of the Hazara migration flow to Australia shifted over time with Pakistan becoming the main origin country over the study period. From 2009-10 onwards, for example, Pakistan became the major Hazara origin country, and at its peak in 2011-12, 60% of all Hazara who arrived in Australia had been living in Pakistan prior to their departure (Figure 9.11). The transit migration patterns and the ease of migration from Pakistan compared with Iran and Afghanistan indicates that this is likely to have had an effect on the ability of Hazaras in Pakistan to exercise agency compared with those who had been living in Afghanistan and Iran—not only would an extra migration leg be involved but there would be cost and risk implications. Hazaras travelling on buses within the region, and particularly between Quetta and parts of Afghanistan, were targeted by extremists during the study period, as outlined in Chapter 6—an issue that continues at the time of writing.



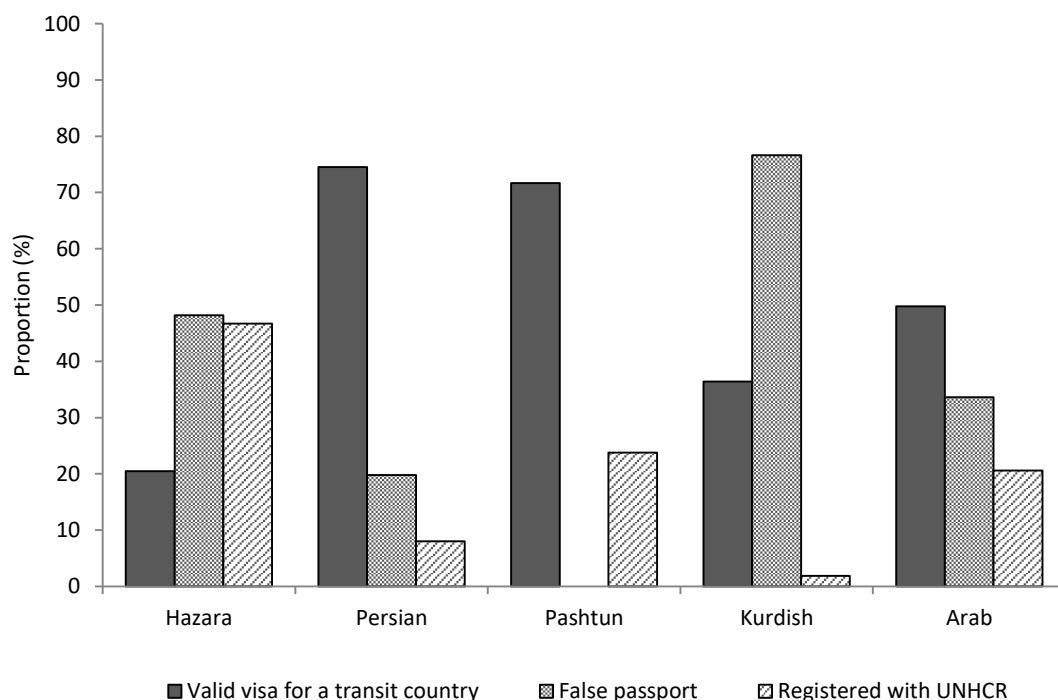
**FIGURE 9.11 Hazara asylum seekers' last country of long-term residence by program year of arrival**

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014). Note: n=11,703

### Practices *en route* and arrival

Migration practices varied *en route* by ethnicity and were related in part to migration policies and practices in transit countries. Visa-on-arrival arrangements to enter Malaysia and Indonesia for citizens of Iran, for example, was reflected in the high proportions of Persians who indicated in the 2013 survey that they used a valid visa to enter a transit country and the low proportion who indicated they used a false passport. In contrast, Hazaras reported the lowest level of using a valid visa (20%); they were the most likely to stay with fellow Hazaras *en route* (66%). Hazaras also reported the highest rate of registration with UNHCR at 47%, which accords with UNHCR data indicating that Afghans were the largest citizenship group of registered asylum seekers in Indonesia in both 2011 and 2012 (UNHCR Statistical Online database, accessed 9 May 2016). It also accords with qualitative research on Hazaras in Indonesia conducted in late 2012, which found that Hazara registration was commonplace, including as a means of providing immigration status while *en route* to Australia, which may take “many months or even years in Indonesia” (Fleay et al 2016, 9). Similarly, research

conducted in 2012-13 in Indonesia found that the vast majority of Afghans (over 80%) registered for asylum with UNHCR while in transit (Hugo et al 2014).



**FIGURE 9.12 Selected migration practices *en route* by major ethnic group**

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker survey dataset (2013). Weighted. Question 40. n=837.

**TABLE 9.14 Migration practices *en route* by major ethnic group**

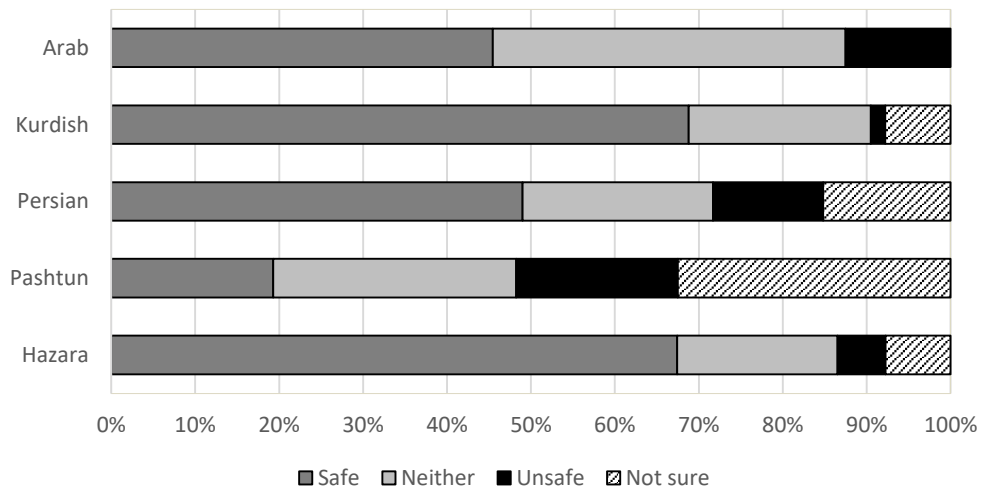
	Hazaras	Persians	Pashtuns	Kurds	Arabs
Valid visa for a transit country	20.5	74.5	71.7	63.4	49.8
Used false passport	48.2	19.8	0.0	76.6	33.6
Registered with UNHCR	46.7	8.0	23.8	1.9	20.6
Used agent/smuggler	58.1	50.2	54.8	47.3	68.8
Stayed with [ethnic] people <i>en route</i>	65.6	59.8	21.4	27.8	39.9
Practised religion	54.1	41.8	72.6	39.1	65.9

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker survey dataset (2013). Weighted. Question 40. Notes: Does not include missing data. n=837.

As to be expected, the various practices adopted by asylum seekers had an impact on how safe they felt during the journey. The practices that made asylum seekers feel unsafe included ‘using a false passport’ (73% of relevant respondents) and ‘using an

agent/smuggler’ (52% of relevant respondents). The practice that the highest proportion of relevant asylum seekers indicated made them feel safe was ‘registering with UNHCR’ (64%), followed closely by ‘using a valid visa to enter a transit country’ (62%) and ‘staying with [ethnic] people *en route*’ (61%). Just over half of relevant respondents indicated that ‘practicing their religion *en route*’ made them feel safe (56%).

There was significant difference in perceptions of safety by ethnicity for ‘staying with [ethnic] people’, noting that only those who had indicated they had undertaken the practice were asked how safe or unsafe it made them feel. Hazaras and Kurds were much more likely than others to gain a sense of safety from staying with other Hazaras or Kurds respectively compared with other groups (and the lowest levels of feeling unsafe when staying with fellow ethnic people).



**FIGURE 9.13** Sense of safety from staying with [ethnic] people by major ethnic group

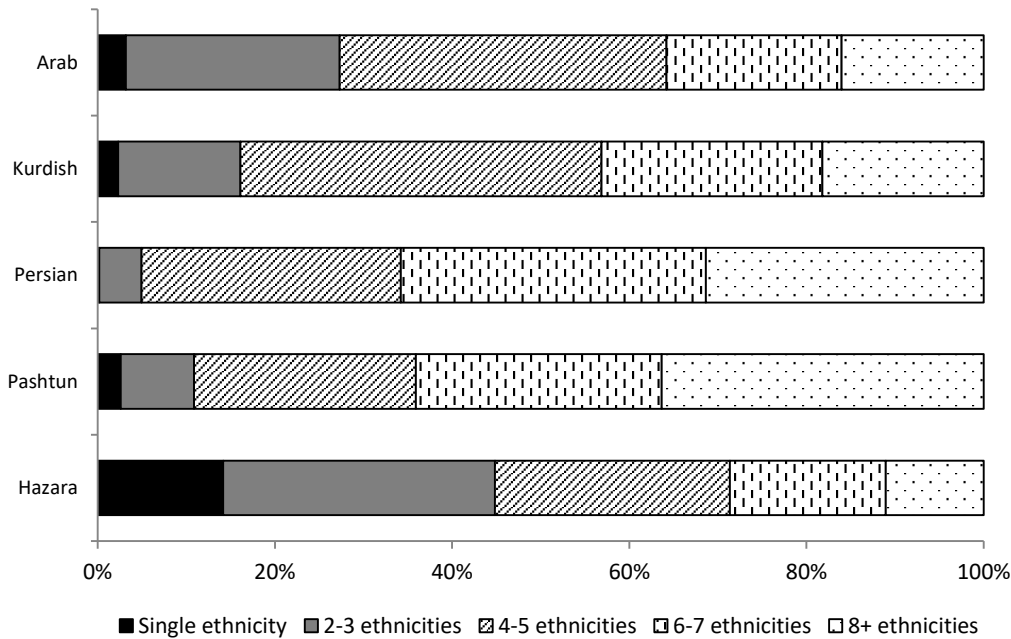
Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker survey dataset (2013). Weighted. Question 40. n=458

Given that Hazaras and Kurds are widely recognised as groups who have been subjected to discrimination, marginalisation and persecution over many decades, the results would indicate that minimising contact with other groups, including those who may have targeted them in the past, is an important aspect of transit migration safety for them. Part of the reason also relate to the need to connect with other asylum seekers to organise the final leg of the journey to Australia. Fleay et al (2016) found that while

most Hazara asylum seekers did not actually personally meet the agent who organised the boat trip to Australia, the strong person-to-person, word-of-mouth communication was a strong feature of living in Indonesia and organising the last part of the migration. This involved disengaging from the local Indonesian community with “asylum seekers generally opt[ing] not to engage deeply with Indonesian society...few learn even basic Bahasa Indonesia” (Fleay et al 2016, 9). Instead, Hazaras relied on social and online media to connect to Hazara blogsites and with family and friends elsewhere; they lived in crowded accommodation with other Hazaras and gravitated to areas close to UNHCR, where they registered as asylum seekers as a means of providing immigration status while *en route* (Fleay et al 2016).

*Ethnicity and boat journeys*

Analysis of the administrative data indicate that arrival vessel was related to ethnicity, in that Hazaras were much more likely to arrive on vessels with only other Hazaras on board or with one or two other ethnic groups. Figure 9.14, for example, shows that 15% of Hazaras arrived on vessels of single ethnicity, and 30% of Hazaras arrived on vessels with two or three ethnic groups on board.



**FIGURE 9.14 Breakdown of number of ethnic groups on vessels by major ethnic group**

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker administrative dataset (2014). n=25,466



While this may be related to the high volume of Hazaras who arrived during the study period, given that there would be more opportunity to ‘fill a boat’ with only Hazaras, there is undoubtedly more involved than volume. The next most prevalent group, Persians accounted for 5,174 maritime asylum seekers, and yet this group was much more likely to arrive in ethnically diverse vessels. It accords with the survey results on the sense of safety Hazaras feel when with other Hazaras *en route* (Figure 10.13) and is also likely to be related to feeling more vulnerable than other ethnic groups when dealing with agents or smugglers (Table 9.9). Qualitative research conducted in Indonesia in December 2012 provides further insights into these aspects, including that it was very common for Hazaras to temporarily reside in specific locations in Indonesia (such as Jalan Jaksa and Cisarua), including as a means of accessing information and making connections to assist with onward journeys to Australia (Fleay et al 2016). The research also found that there was widespread awareness about the dangers of the sea crossing on substandard and overcrowded vessels, with some Hazaras having “made the decision to avoid the use of people smuggling agents...express[ing] a fear of drowning” (Fleay et al 2016, 9).

The vessel arrival data showing strong ethnic dimensions accords with the findings of Alessandro Monsutti’s ethnographic research on Hazara migration in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran (2005, 172):

Shiites and Sunnis do not readily mix with each other. But, apart from this polarization, we should speak more of local groupings than ethnic segregation as the basis of migratory networks. Of course the destinations differ from one country to another. Shiites tend to go more to Iran...*When Hazaras travel, they prefer to be with other Hazaras.* But, as these networks are based on trust, the only real cooperation is with permanent contacts whose origin is known—that is to say, with relatives or neighbours. (emphasis added)

Importantly, Monsutti stresses that local groupings is more important than ethnicity. However, given Monsutti’s work was of a much smaller geographic migratory area, and was conducted more than a decade ago, this aspect of his findings needs to be treated with caution in that it appears less applicable to this study. Regular and seasonal migration between Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran, for example, would allow for personal contact between actual and would-be migrants (as well as agents and facilitators) to a much greater degree than migration to Australia given the distances and multiple transit countries involved. Also, the much reduced telecommunications

capacity of the time is likely to have had an effect on how migration was organised. The findings on strong Hazara dimensions in arrivals from Indonesia to Australia suggest that there were likely to be agents, facilitators or smugglers who worked with particular ethnicities, and Hazaras in particular. This in part reflects Monsutti research on Hazaras and the preference for Hazaras to travel together, however, the data also indicates that when a bigger, more recent geographic migratory system is examined more (not less) weight may need to be placed on ethnicity in migration patterns and processes.

### **How to migrate: A short summary**

In examining the spatial dimensions of asylum seeker agency as part of the Hazara case study, this second section was focused on *how to migrate*. As discussed in Chapter 2, the scholarly literature on the spatial dimensions of asylum seeker movement (and agency) is well developed as it relates to where to migrate but much more subdued on how to migrate. In addition to the conceptual, political and historical issues discussed in Chapter 2 there are likely to be significant limitations on undertaking this type of analysis due to research feasibility. Qualitative research on migrants' journeys is challenging but quantitative research and analysis is even more rare. The administrative and survey data used for this thesis allows for analysis of transit migration journey patterns and processes, acknowledging that ideally a greater focus could have been afforded these aspects in the 2013 survey. Nevertheless, the findings highlight that strategies previously developed by Hazaras undertaking migration within their origin region have, to a large extent, been applied to a much longer migration corridor to Australia. The distinctiveness of the Hazara journey, and tendency to rely on ethnic bonds, is borne out of risk and experience. However, it is also related to the considerable constraints affecting Hazara mobility internationally, which are greater than for other groups and are related to regulatory, economic, social and security aspects. The manifest and demonstrable dangers of the journey have affected Hazara migration patterns and processes, including from a demographic perspective. To minimise insecurity while maximising future prosperity, Hazaras have sought to lessen the dangers involved on a collective basis, including through travelling on 'Hazara' vessels and staying with other Hazaras en route.

### 9.3 Conclusions

In this chapter the main objective was to assess the nature and extent of asylum seeker agency in relation to its spatial dimensions—*where to migrate* and *how to migrate*. In doing so, several research questions were answered in order to assess whether the existing research on Hazara migration has applicability to the narrow irregular migration corridor of asylum seekers over the five-year study period. The findings of the analysis indicate that the findings resonate strongly with the existing literature of Hazara migration within the region but that certain aspects have been highlighted as needing a more nuanced interpretation—the constrained agency expressed in decision making processes along with the distinctive migration and arrival patterns point to the continuation of Hazara migration traditions as well as some adjustments, including for security *en route*.

Overall, the findings indicate that the spatial dimensions of self-agency of Hazara maritime asylum seekers appear to be circumscribed by important regulatory, security, economic and social aspects. Considerations of Australia as a destination prior to migration related to regulatory aspects and in particular the perception that Australia is positively disposed toward asylum seekers and refugees. There is also evidence that beyond the more immediate considerations of safety and security, income generation and family reunion were important. Importantly, a calculated rationality occurs well before departure—to be safe in a destination country is clearly critical for Hazaras, but life goes on and determination and purpose do not dissipate upon arrival in a safe land, including because of the need to financially support family who remain in the origin country. Thinking beyond more immediate needs, through an inter-generational lens that has been developed out of necessity during periods of war in Afghanistan is also evident. The existing body of work on Hazara migration points to resilient and proactive migration strategies that rely on strong but carefully-chosen social links limited largely to people whose origin is known, namely relatives and neighbours (Monsutti 2005, 172). This is also evident in the irregular maritime migration flow to Australia. Monsutti's findings—written about migration between Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran—could well have been written about irregular maritime migration to Australia (Monsutti 2004, 224):

Afghan—and not only Hazara—migrants have set up numerous transnational networks which are compartmentalized along different lines (religious, social,

regional, ethnic, etc.). ...Though the migratory networks of Afghans cover long distances, they are characterized by ever increasing social closure and by withdrawal into narrow groups of solidarity.

Finally, while there is some evidence of the number of people who have died at sea during maritime migration journeys to Australia—just under 1000 between October 2001 and June 2012 (EPAS 2012)—little is known about those who have perished before being able to embark vessels off the coast of Java or elsewhere. Given the nature of the journeys involved it is likely that the number of people, including Hazaras, who have died or been seriously injured are not insignificant. A better understanding of this aspect warrants further research despite the obvious challenges.

## Notes

- 1 It may also be that obtaining a genuine Pakistani passport through corrupt practices and despite not having Pakistani citizenship is easier than obtaining an Iranian passport. This may account for some Hazaras presenting as Pakistani citizens.
- 2 One of the key policy changes implemented by transit countries at the time were the removal of visa-on-arrival arrangements for some citizens seeking to enter Indonesia and Malaysia (Surya 2014; McAuliffe & Mence 2014: 44). This reduced the ability of cohorts to enter the region prior to onward journeys to Australia, particularly for Iranians whose arrivals had increased markedly in 2013. Changes to Indonesia's visa policy took effect in July 2013 and Malaysia's occurred in October 2013. In Indonesia, the effect was dramatic and immediate with the number of Iranians arriving in Indonesia dropping from 1,608 in September 2013 to 296 in December (Surya 2014). These changes did not affect Hazaras as Afghan and Pakistani citizens required a visa prior to arrival, although many entered Indonesia irregularly (Hugo et al 2014).
- 3 It is recognised that decision making is likely to be iterative, messy and involve long-term deliberations and assessments (see McAuliffe 2013). For the purposes of this research and analysis, however, these two aspects treated separately: whether to migrate (decision to leave) and where to migrate (decision to go to Australia). The two survey questions on these aspects of decision making were: (q28) Were [categories of persons] involved in the final decision to leave [country]?; and (q30) Were [categories of persons] involved in the final decision that Australia would be your final destination?

- 4 Given the high probability of respondents being involved in the decision to go to Australia, I tested the model using a gompit estimation and found that the signs of each coefficient were identical and the significance levels were very similar. The marginal effects of the coefficients were also very similar. This provided confidence that the logit was appropriate, and the logit results are therefore presented.
- 5 Occupational grouping is a derived variable based on reporting of main occupation with 'higher skilled' including those employed in the following occupational industry categories: 'Government and Defence', 'Professional, Scientific and Technical Services', 'Personal and other services' and 'Telecommunications'.

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## **PART FOUR**

### **Conclusions**



## 10 Key findings and implications for data, research and policy

Today, just as it happens every day, many thousands of people throughout the world are setting off on journeys in the hope of being able to forge safe and meaningful lives in a new country. They will be facing a range of different circumstances. While many will be secure in the knowledge that they have a visa for their new country, their travel is scheduled and straightforward, that a new job beckons or their family awaits them, many others will face the prospect of long, dangerous and uncertain journeys involving considerable physical, emotional and financial risk. Our understandings of the migration journeys people undertake when seeking a new life abroad are evolving. As our global, regional, national and local contexts change—politically, socially, economically, technologically—there remains the need to continuously re-examine how people migrate, including the extent to which they are able to exercise agency in doing so. This study, with its focus on Hazara irregular maritime asylum seekers, has sought to contribute to deeper and more nuanced understandings of self-agency and asylum.

This study is situated in a small but growing body of research that has sought to look beyond the continuum of force and choice and more deeply into the specific nature of circumscribed but nevertheless existing self-agency of a small but significant group of people: Hazara irregular maritime asylum seekers. Critically, and central to this study, has been the need to apply an inter-disciplinary approach. While the study is primarily one of applied demography involving the analysis of secondary data, it necessarily draws on a range of other disciplines. An inter-disciplinary approach has been adopted in order to answer the research questions, and make the most useful and relevant contribution possible. By undertaking a quantitative study employing analytical techniques from an applied demography perspective built on a disciplinary bedrock of research from other disciplines, a better account of the nature and extent of asylum seeker agency is able to be presented. A nuanced analysis of unique data situated within this small but significant body of literature is intended to be one of the study's major contributions. It has drawn on the views of former asylum seekers as well as unique administrative data to reveal where and how a specific group of people have realised livelihood strategies through

international migration, and in doing so it has also highlighted those missing from our collective view: the many thousands of family members left behind.

This chapter provides a summary of the main findings of the study as they relate to the four dimensions of agency, assesses the overall nature and extent of Hazara irregular maritime asylum seekers’ agency, considers the applicability of the multifaceted model of asylum seeker agency beyond this study and outlines the main implications for data, research and policy.

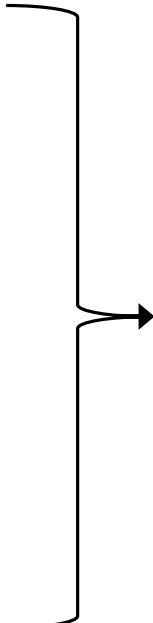
**10.1 Main findings: Assessing the nature and extent of asylum seeker agency**

The objective of the study has been to increase understandings of asylum seeking through a prism of multi-faceted self-agency, including to gain better understandings of who, how and why people undertake long and dangerous migration journeys to claim asylum. The principal research question the study has been designed to answer is: *What is the extent and nature of Hazara asylum seeker agency?*

In order to undertake a relevant, robust and thorough study, a framework to guide the analysis was developed following an extensive review of the literature, particularly as it relates to the topics of ‘forced migration’ and ‘irregular migration’ (Table 10.1).

TABLE 10.1: Analytical framework: Multi-faceted asylum seeker agency

Dimension	Components	Aspects/ characteristics
Temporal	i) Whether to migrate	Security; economic; social; legal/regulatory
	ii) When to migrate	Security; economic; social; legal/regulatory
Demographic	Who migrates	Sex; Age; Citizenship; Ethnicity; Education; Employment; Marital status
Social	Who with	Migrating family status; Friends and other networks
Spatial	i) Where to migrate (transit and destination)	Security; economic; social; legal/regulatory
	ii) How to migrate	Security; economic; social; legal/regulatory



Resulting in actions that are:

**Effective**

**Intentional**

**Unconstrained**

**Reflexive**

With regard to the **demographic dimensions**, the analysis of demographic data indicate that strong and very distinctive demographic patterns were evident in the migration of irregular maritime asylum seekers, and that this was even more pronounced for Hazaras. The Hazara population who arrived was almost exclusively male, with the majority being young males, many of whom were married. We can determine with a reasonable degree of certainty, therefore, that people with particular demographic characteristics (e.g. males, younger adults) were much more likely to exercise agency and be irregular maritime asylum seekers than other groups (e.g. females, minors under 15 years of age and the aged). There was also a high proportion of unaccompanied male minors amongst the Hazara population. The extreme distribution of the Hazara maritime asylum seeker population, which does not resemble the national population of Afghanistan, the Afghan resettled refugee population, or other ethnic groups from the region, strongly indicates that migration decision making occurred prior to leaving Afghanistan, and that a calculated rationality was involved—migration patterns were not by chance.

That large numbers of people in need of protection (particularly women and children but also perhaps older or elderly parents) remained in origin countries suggests decision making occurred prior to migration, possibly at the family level. One of the more interesting findings is that of migrating family status as it relates to adults who may be travelling without family but are nevertheless married. The use of the term ‘single adult male’ by governments, UNHCR, researchers and others (Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee 2014; Schuster & Majidi 2013; Australian Human Rights Commission 2013; UNHCR 2013), masks the reality that most of these men are part of a (separated) family unit. ‘Solo adult male’ and ‘solo adult female’ for married adults who travel without immediate family provides a more accurate description of individuals’ circumstances.

In addition, the analysis highlights that the extent to which agency was able to be exercised by people with protection needs was highly circumscribed by regulatory aspects related to the migration processes available to them. Examination of the two groups—irregular maritime asylum seekers and resettled refugee arrivals—shows that notwithstanding their very similar protection needs, the demographic groups able to reach Australia differed markedly. Younger minors, women and the aged featured much more as resettled refugee arrivals, with very few arriving as irregular maritime asylum seekers.

With regard to the **social dimensions**, analysis of the administrative and survey data provided rich and illuminating insights into who Hazaras travelled to Australia with, including in comparison to other ethnic groups from the region of origin. The analysis found that Hazaras did not tend to travel in family groups but were much more likely to travel without family, including as unaccompanied minors. The analysis also indicates that important economic, social and regulatory aspects are associated with who Hazaras travelled with, and that family members and friends were most often left behind. Support, safety and companionship for those who migrated was instead found in other Hazaras, who may not have been known before travel but who were relied upon during the journey. The findings also indicate that Hazaras have a highly circumscribed ability to choose who to travel with but that particular groups (especially younger males) are able to exercise agency and undertake migration with fellow Hazaras despite the serious limitations they face.

With regard to the **temporal dimensions**, examination of the entire irregular maritime asylum seeker population shows that distinct flows of groups of people of the same citizenship emerge that highlight the specific and distinct differences between, for example, Afghan and Iranian movements that occurred within a much larger asylum seeker flow. The Iranian migration patterns changed over time, most noticeably in relation to the dramatic increase in volume toward the end of the study period (which then continued into July and August 2013).

The findings of this study also show that in relation to whether to migrate, both protection and non-protection factors were relevant to Hazara decisions, although protection factors featured much more heavily. For Hazaras in the region the main motivating factors were discrimination and persecution on the basis of ethnicity and religion, and was in contrast to other groups from the region. While Hazaras were highly likely to be involved in the decision about whether to migrate, there were some significant caveats. Females and people under 21 years of age were much less likely to be involved in such decision making, reflecting existing research findings on the complex social dynamics involved in who and how family members decide upon and shape their own migrations. The analysis also found that while collective decision making processes relating to whether to leave were evident for around half of all survey respondents, there was no significant difference between Hazaras and non-Hazaras. So while the underpinning factors involved in whether to migrate may differ markedly by ethnicity, the decision making processes undertaken largely did not.

In relation to when to migrate, findings indicate that there are several factors associated with the timing of Hazara migration from different origin countries, including economic, demographic and social aspects. That Hazaras with more stable residency tended to migrate later than others does accord with the broader migration literature, particularly the association between migration and re-migration. There is evidence that security during migration—not just in origin—is a factor in migration patterns. The significant ‘lull’ in arrivals, which was evident for all groups, was very pronounced for Hazaras. There is evidence that the risks of the journey (and drowning at sea in particular) were foremost considerations of Hazaras in relation to the final maritime leg of the journey. Further, examination of arrival data of the main ethnic groups from the region over the entire period indicates distinctive migration patterns of Hazaras that do not correspond to other groups; a more evenly spread arrival pattern is evident.

With regard to the **spatial dimensions**, a very clear and interesting picture emerged of the entire asylum seeker population over time, which reached an extraordinary spread of geographic origins, particularly in the final year. This would indicate transnational connections, including person-to-person but also more general telecommunications connectivity that could be accessed by potential migrants, diaspora communities as well as facilitators of irregular migration.

In examining the spatial dimensions of Hazara asylum seeker agency in relation to *where to migrate* the findings indicate that Hazaras were highly likely to be involved in this decision, however, there were some significant caveats. Those who had been involved in the decision about *whether to migrate* were much more likely to be involved in the decision about where to do so. Again, females and people under 21 were much less likely to be involved in such decision making, adding further weight to the likelihood of uneven power balances within families notwithstanding cohesive ethnic identity locally and transnationally.

Analysis also found that individual decision making was more common for considerations of where to migrate than whether to migrate, and while collective decision making processes were evident for around half of all survey respondents, there was no again significant difference between Hazaras and non-Hazaras. In fact, Hazaras were more likely to be the sole decision makers in relation to *where to migrate*. Part of the reason for this is related to the need to generate income and remit to family in origin,

which was much higher for Hazaras than some other groups. In addition, those who chose Australia for income generation reasons were more likely to be the sole decision maker; in contrast those who travelled to Australia for family reunion purposes were more likely to be involved in collective decision making. These results make intuitive sense but they also show that a calculated rationality occurs well before departure. Overall, the findings indicate that agency was exercised by Hazara maritime asylum seekers in relation to *where to migrate*, but not equally for all.

In relation to *how to migrate* the findings highlight that strategies previously developed by Hazaras undertaking migration within their origin region have, to a large extent, been applied to a much longer migration corridor to Australia. The distinctiveness of the Hazara journey, and tendency to rely on ethnic bonds, is borne out of risk and experience. However, it is also related to the considerable constraints affecting Hazara mobility internationally, which are greater than for other groups and are related to regulatory, economic, social and security factors. The manifest and demonstrable dangers of the journey have affected Hazara migration patterns and processes, including from a demographic perspective. To minimise insecurity while maximising future prosperity, Hazaras have sought to lessen the dangers involved on a collective basis, including through travelling on 'Hazara' vessels and staying with other Hazaras *en route*.

Agency is multi-dimensional and while it is useful to examine the four main dimensions discretely, they are inter-related. A more holistic assessment that brings together these four dimensions is necessary. The application of Dietz and Burns' manifestations of agency provides a useful tool in drawing the dimensions together (1992) with particular reference to whether actions could be said to be *effective, intentional, unconstrained* and *reflexive*. Overall, we can say that the study has found that the self-agency of Hazara maritime asylum seekers appears to be highly circumscribed by a range of economic, social, security and regulatory aspects. Very significant constraints exist on the ability of Hazaras to migrate internationally, particularly beyond their immediate region. While agency is in no way *unconstrained*, the findings highlight that the behaviour of Hazaras, exhibited through their migration patterns as well as views, is to a considerable degree *intentional*. This, of course, has to be acknowledged with a degree of caution for the findings clearly indicate that the ability to act with intention was greater for some demographic groups than others, including males and those over 21 years of age—females as well as those under 21 years of age were much less likely to have been involved



in migration decision making even if they themselves were the asylum seekers. The evolving migration patterns of Hazaras over the study period, including in relation to the reduction in young children arriving, shifting transit patterns, the 2011-11 ‘lull’, and high rate of families left behind, indicate that a reasonable degree of *reflexive* assessment was able to occur and adjustments to migration-related strategies enacted. Thinking beyond more immediate individual needs, through an inter-generational lens that has been developed out of necessity during periods of war in Afghanistan was evident. The existing body of work on Hazara displacement and migration points to resilient and proactive strategies in the region that rely on strong but carefully-chosen social links. This was reflected in the findings of this study. There were many similarities between the findings of research on Hazara migration conducted within the region and this study, including in stark contrast to other ethnic groups in the region, that the findings suggest that Hazaras have been able to adapt existing migration strategies to much long routes and evolving conditions. Lastly, it is very difficult to assess whether agency could be said to be *effective*. Given the paucity of data, it is not known how many Hazaras from the region were unable to make it to Australia or elsewhere, including those persecuted, seriously abused or otherwise dramatically affected either in origin or *en route*. To some extent, the high recognition refugee rates of Hazaras indicate some degree of effectiveness is evident, however, the costs have potentially been very high, including for those who could be considered successful, as illustrated in their reflections on the journey being much more difficult than anticipated. Understandably, trauma related to the journey itself is likely as reflected in survey results as well as the findings of other studies (Fleay et al 2016; Pickering et al 2016).

## 10.2 Applicability to other groups

An important consideration in the design of this study has been the need to be able to decouple protection needs—a group’s ‘refugee-ness’—from migration patterns and processes. While I acknowledge that these are intertwined, there is nevertheless merit in placing protection aspects to one side to enable deeper examinations of who, how and why people seek asylum via long and dangerous migration pathways. Amongst other things, this analytical separation is more able to provide room for migrant-centric rather than policy-focused concepts, processes and practices to be examined. Hazaras, with their

widely recognised experiences of persecution, marginalisation and discrimination as well as their very high finally determined refugee grant rates in Australia, were a significant group who were highly pertinent to this approach. The study has shown that even in circumstances involving considerable constraints, Hazaras were able to exercise a narrow and limited form of agency in the face of adversity and hardship by building upon and adapting the strategies they had developed over several decades, mainly within their immediate region. With this in mind, it is difficult to conclude that the model is not applicable to other groups in a range of other contexts. The large numbers of Syrians and Afghans (probably many Hazaras), for example, who arrived in Greece from Turkey as irregular maritime asylum seekers in 2015—some of whom (Syrians) were *prima facie* refugees—indicates that similar strategies to realise agency were likely to have been enacted. Likewise, the large numbers of Nigerians, Eritreans and Sudanese who have travelled through North Africa to Italy would indicate that some agency of asylum seekers and refugees exists, although the extent and nature of agency would differ between these groups given the different security, economic, social and regulatory circumstances they face.

### **10.3 Implications for data and research**

It is very often the case that studies on international migration, and irregular migration in particular, conclude by calling for more data and research. This is understandable given the paucity of available data on a myriad of aspects of the topic. It is also understandable that some data on irregular migration do not exist or remain patchy given the significant challenges associated with collecting reliable and comprehensive data on illicit practices, as discussed in Chapter 4. This conclusion is no different in that it acknowledges that more data needs to be collected. However, it places a slightly different emphasis on data issues in three main ways. Firstly, greater allowance for a migrant-centric approach to data collection is suggested, which would allow for the creation of better understandings of irregular migration of vulnerable people, including asylum seekers and refugees. Second, I suggest greater emphasis be placed on analysis of existing data, including through better data integration as well as collaborative partnerships between policymakers and academic researchers. Third, I suggest it would be timely to review data reporting while taking into account confidentiality, privacy and other sensitivities.

These issues are discussed in turn and some reflections are offered on how improved data collection, reporting and analysis may be achieved.

Currently, data collected on people who arrive irregularly and those who lodge asylum applications overlap but are not integrated. Datasets have been developed within strong policy and normative frameworks so that, for example, demographic and other characteristics collected on asylum seekers who lodge applications for protection include basic biodata (e.g. citizenship, age, sex) but not information on their migration journeys (e.g. transit, transport mode, smuggling, departure, travel cost, etc) nor of other important characteristics (e.g. ethnicity, language, religion). On the one hand, it could be reasonably argued that such additional data are not relevant to assessing protection claims, which would be correct if a narrow, siloed approach to data collection and analysis is adhered to. However, such data would be useful in better understanding how migration dynamics evolve and people with protection needs undertake independent migration outside of that provided by the international community and current system (such as resettlement).

The corollary, of course, is that data collected on irregular migrant arrivals does not typically include vulnerability markers, including aspects related to protection, evidence of trauma and abuse, or indicators of trafficking, to name a few. And yet there are ongoing calls for such data to better account for migrants' vulnerability (IOM 2017; Koser 2005; Koser & McAuliffe 2013; McAuliffe & Laczko 2016). To some extent, the capturing and analysis of arrivals data may be useful to authorities in determining trends from geopolitical, border management and smuggling perspectives. However, it has limited ability to improve our understandings of the migration patterns and processes of particular groups of asylum seekers and/or irregular migrants. In fact, it can mask more pertinent dynamics relevant to formulating understandings of how, who and why people migrate irregularly. Taking a greater 'migrant-centric' approach to data collection by also better reflecting migrants' circumstances and experiences would enable the development of deeper understandings of irregular migration drivers, processes and practices, including those experienced by particular asylum seekers (and refugees). While this study has been able to access and analyse data on ethnicity, this is atypical and there is a need to better recognise the importance of characteristics beyond citizenship that are highly relevant to migration dynamics, including ethnicity, religion and other aspects related to identity (such as online/virtual identity). This gap is most evident in the European context and in the wake of the 2015 mass migration episode.

In terms of the analysis of existing data, there could be significant benefit in further investing in collaborative partnerships between policymakers and academic researchers. In the Australian context this has been achieved to some extent, including through partnerships between DIBP and ANU, but ongoing joint efforts on irregular migration, migrant smuggling, human trafficking and transnational connectivity would further enhance the ability to build a stronger evidence base in evolving geopolitical contexts, including increased transnational and civil conflict, displacement and radicalisation (IEP 2016; IOM 2017; McAuliffe & Lazcko 2016). The words of Khalid Koser resonate strongly (2014, 10):

...where partnerships are formed between government departments and research institutions...genuine collaboration and partnerships have the ability to recognise the different but complementary expertise that resides inside and outside of government. In the right circumstances, powerful and productive partnerships can be formed that are able to draw on critical thinking to address complex migration issues in a policy-relevant and strategic manner.

Collaboration can be conducted in a considered and strategic manner, including via trusted partnership arrangements, whereby external researchers are able to gain access to data and information for analytical purposes, including on sensitive topics such as migrant smuggling. Migration policy scholars, typically those with experience in both the academic and policy environments such as the late Professor Graeme Hugo AO, are often well placed to contribute their expertise and insights to complex migration policy issues (McAuliffe 2016a).<sup>1</sup>

It may also be useful to continue to review and revisit, as is done regularly, data reporting on asylum seekers and irregular migrants. Changes in reporting in Europe, including on the nature of data and its frequency, suggest that there is growing recognition of the need for better understandings of irregular migration and mass migration episodes, including through reporting of statistical data on people who are moving. The Italian government, for example, regularly releases information on arrivals, including by sex, family status, citizenship and arrival month.

This study confirms that there needs to be much greater recognition of agency within forced migration studies so that increasing legitimacy is afforded examinations of the journeys and related experiences of asylum seekers and refugees. This includes allowing for greater but nevertheless constrained agency of groups who may be extremely

vulnerable and at risk of (onward) migration, including those who have already been displaced internally or to a neighbouring country. In this respect, I concur with Fussell (2012) and BenEzer and Zetter (2015) who acknowledge these gaps. The examination of the nature and extent of agency of other migrants who do not necessarily raise protection needs continues to also be highly relevant, although this framing is more widely accepted in studies related to both regular and irregular forms of migration outside forced migration studies.

One of the main motivations for undertaking this study was the paternalistic way in which people discuss, consider, analyse and opine about migrants, including asylum seekers and refugees. Part of this has involved the tendency in the literature to refer to fleeing refugees and asylum seekers as whole groups (usually on the basis of citizenship or ethnicity) with little reference to family members left behind, including because of people being forced or pushed into migration. The use of the term ‘single adult male’ assists in perpetuating this assumption because it implies that men are not married when in actual fact this study has shown that most men are married. The use of ‘solo adult fe/male’ was used instead because of the greater clarity it provides. This study shows that for most irregular maritime asylum seekers, family members are very often left behind. It highlights the need for further research on the impact of separation of families in need of protection, particularly on children and the elderly left behind, such has been done extensively in relation to children of migrant workers (Lam et al 2013; Jampaklay & Vapattanawong 2013). The gender dimensions are particularly profound, with some groups such as Hazaras, experiencing highly gendered migration patterns, and much more so than compared with other groups from the region. Further examination of the gender aspects and their impacts on communities would undoubtedly help explain the differences as well as how the negative consequences may be ameliorated.

A particularly striking finding was that related to the very high number and proportion of young Hazara males who travelled to Australia as asylum seekers, which mirrors changes that have occurred elsewhere, particularly to Europe. We are also seeing the phenomenon of an increasing number of children on the move occurring in other parts of the world and involving many other nationalities (ethnic or citizenship-related) (UNICEF 2016). The findings of this study pointed to strategies used by people *en route* to increase safety and reduced vulnerability, however, this was not focused on minors because of the methodological restraints that excluded minors from the 2013 survey (in light of ethical

considerations). Further studies on how minors actively navigate perilous journeys and decrease their own exposure to exploitation and abuse would allow for interventions in transit to safeguard children and better support protection outcomes, including through enhanced integration in transit, to be better targeted. There exists a small body of literature on Hazara unaccompanied minors who migrate, although this is within the broader context of the significant increase in Afghan unaccompanied minors, mainly to Europe, and tends to focus on decision making rather than journeys (Boland 2010; Mougne 2010; Verliet et al 2015). A qualitative study of decision making of unaccompanied minors to Australia conducted in 2014 was based on mainly Hazaras (15 of the 17 interviewees were Hazara male minors) (Correa-Velez et al 2014).

#### **10.4 Implications for policy**

The findings of this study raise a number of implications for policy, by which I mean the governance of international migration and the regulation of people undertaking migration as well as non-state actors involved in migration. Before doing so, however, it is worth reiterating that while this study has intentionally focused on a research gap—the migration patterns and processes of irregular maritime asylum seekers to Australia through the prism of agency—I am mindful of the considerable body of critically-important research and analysis that continues to be undertaken on a range of other related topics, such as immigration detention, return and reintegration, asylum claims processing, border management policies and practices, offshore processing and resettlement, migrant integration and other issues. In the Australian and Asia-Pacific regional contexts, these topics continue to be researched and analysed widely by numerous academics and commentators (see, for example, Brennan 2013; Chambers 2015; Crock & Ghezelbash 2010; Hodge 2014; McAdam 2013; McNevin 2011; Markus 2016; Pennington-Hill 2015; Pickering & Weber 2014). The implications for research stemming from this study, however, do not necessarily intersect with this important ongoing work.<sup>2</sup>

At the international level, the main focus on governance and regulation is on asylum seeking and refugees, including through the widely ratified Refugees Convention and Universal Declaration of Human Rights. International migration, for the most part, is regulated at the national level, although there is growing recognition amongst states of the need to better manage migration, including as a means of reducing unsafe, disorderly and irregular migration. These issues, as reflected in the foundation documents outlining

the United Nations process toward the development of the 2018 Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, are urgent priorities for States and migrants.

Overall, and while acknowledging the discrete population examined, the findings suggest that the broader implementation of the international protection system would seem to be working on the basis of a dual or two-tiered system. Highly vulnerable refugees, including children, women and the elderly, generally did not embark on irregular maritime migration to Australia, seemingly relying instead on refugee resettlement and other programs (where possible). Concomitantly, and in the context of the huge number of people in need of resettlement globally, it appears to be more difficult for adult males to be resettled (proportionally) perhaps unless they have some other form of vulnerability (such as a disability). Irregular maritime asylum seekers, on the other hand, tended to be adult males, and for Hazaras almost exclusively so except in the case of UAMs. Over the study period, children under 15 years of age, for example, comprised just 2.7% of those who arrived via maritime migration compared with 34.5% of resettled refugee arrivals. This points to refugee families being separated, particularly where those families do not have the necessary abilities to remain together in pursuit of protection. In the context of the long distances between Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and Australia, the ability to reach Australia as a family group (or part thereof) is demonstrated as being remote for most groups. As a result, young males considered most likely to be able to withstand the high risk journeys travelled as irregular maritime asylum seekers, while other family members remained in origin countries, perhaps with a hope of being resettled.

These findings have implications for policies of destination and origin/host countries as well as international organisations, particularly as they relate to the rights of the child and the ability of populations at risk of displacement to be able to stay together. It would seem that the relatively small resettlement programs (compared to the numbers in need of protection), and the tendency of such programs to favour vulnerable refugees, unintentionally reinforces a two-tiered system of protection involving separation of families, sometimes for many years, and sometimes without the ability of families to reunite. It also may help to partly explain why preferred destination countries that do not have resettlement programs (and only process spontaneous asylum claims once in the claimant is in the territory) would appear to receive more asylum seeker family groups than has been the case to Australia—this may be a factor in the nature of recent and significant asylum flows to Europe, which have been depicted as involving a high

proportion of families. This is also likely to reflect the nature of displacement and host country conditions given that Syrians were more likely than other groups to travel in family groups.

The examination of a group of people who are widely recognised as having a strong need for international protection under the Refugee Convention (as demonstrated by very high finally determined grant rates) has significant implications for global governance and the current operation of the international protection system, including its intersection with national level visa entry policies. The arrival patterns of Hazaras show us clearly that they were the ‘foundation’ of the flow during the study period. In addition to being the largest overall ethnic group, they were also the most consistent to have arrived during the five-years. Hazaras were on the first boat to arrive in the study period and they were on the last. We saw in Chapter 5 that over the life of the flow, the geo-diversity increased very substantially with people travelling from as far away as Morocco, Russia and Norway. A similar pattern appears to have occurred between Turkey and Greece in 2015, which saw the irregular maritime flow massively increase (from 50,000 in 2014 to 850,000 in 2015) but also shows signs of significant diversity. Syrians, of which there are around 2.7 million displaced in Turkey, accounted for only 52% of the 2015 flow to Greece (or around 442,000 Syrians), with the rest of the flow comprising Afghans, Iraqis, Iranians, Moroccans, Pakistanis and others (UNHCR 2016). In this sense, the populations at risk of migration, including onward movement of refugees in host countries, due to conflict, persecution and other forms of disaster, may be the first and most significant groups (numerically) to undertake irregular migration but they are highly likely to be joined by many others once a flow is established. The implications of this are profound and highlight one of the anomalies of the current policy framework with its emphasis on moving across borders (and for destination countries, the point of entry). The findings instead suggest that much greater emphasis need to be placed on specific and identifiable at-risk populations in need of protection in home and host countries, which is likely to include greater geopolitical emphasis on finding solutions to civil and transnational conflict, and more effective international responses to attempts by States at ethnic cleansing. Clearly, responding to the needs of those displaced as close to origin as possible is also critical, such as through improved integration in host countries, and increased resettlement. This makes good sense from a human rights perspective but it also makes sense from a migration management perspective. If key populations who are at risk of onward movement are not adequately supported they will migrate and others will



follow. This is particularly important in the context of the ongoing increase in transnational connectivity, which is emerging as a significant enabling factor of irregular migration globally (Castles 2013; Czaika and de Haas 2014; McAuliffe 2016b; McAuliffe & Goossens forthcoming).

*Are there policy implications specific to Hazaras?*

Policy does not generally differentiate by ethnic or other demographic characteristics, for sound legal, ethical as well as practical reasons. However, the extent to which groups that are widely recognised as being in need of international protection and receive such high refugee recognition rates, raises a critical concern in relation to the protection of such people. It is understandable that countries in all regions are keen to better manage their borders in relation to the movement of goods and people, including those traditionally considered transit and host countries. However, collateral damage is significant and the re-examination of measures that can afford protection close to origin (such as in-country processing, targeted resettlement, family reunion) would seem a particular need. There is also a need to better recognise the inter-related aspects associated with multi-faceted agency, and the need to address issues beyond immediate protection (security) issues but also those related to economic, regulatory, and social aspects. In relations to the May 2015 crisis in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal of Rohingya and Bengali migrants, for example, a range of responses aimed at enhancing protection were suggested that went well beyond protection-specific measures (although these were a key focus). Non-protection responses included: increasing health, education services as well as constructing related infrastructure in host and home countries; supporting grassroots initiatives aimed at preventing violent extremism and encouraging inter-faith dialogue; enhancing anti-corruption programs, including as they relate to the movement of people and human trafficking especially; expanding the opportunities for regular migration through tailored visa pathways (such as the creation of a ‘development’ visa) that seek to manage incentives to migrate more effectively; improving the rights of labour migrants, including via regularisation programs; and improved data collection and research (McAuliffe 2016c). Similar approaches to address circumstances affecting other populations at risk of irregular migration need to be examined, with a focus on tailoring multi-faceted responses to specific groups of people. Just as other areas of policy, such as resettlement, focus on those most in need, similar recognition of the need to improve

the lives of priority groups in home and host countries who are at risk of dangerous migration be prioritised. It could be argued, particularly in light of the increasingly dire situation for Hazaras in the region (especially those who are returning to Afghanistan), that a set of responses focusing on Hazaras and other at-risk groups in the region be developed to support their ability to forge safe and meaningful lives in both their home countries and abroad.

## Notes

1. The term ‘policy scholars’ draws on personal reflections of Dr Demetrios P. Papademetriou, Distinguished Senior Fellow, President Emeritus and Co-founder, Migration Policy Institute, Founder and President, Migration Policy Institute Europe, and is based on his 45 years’ experience working with migration academics and policymakers globally. The concept is discussed in McAuliffe 2016a.
2. The importance of which is amplified by my writing this conclusion in Turkey, where the post-coup environment has seen significant curbing of academic and media freedoms, particularly of those who offer opinions and analysis that are contrary to the current political elite.

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## Appendix A

## Declarations of co-authors of peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters

**Declaration in relation to an article or chapter drawn upon as part of a thesis to be submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Australian National University**

The below signatories declare that the following journal article was written primarily by Marie McAuliffe prior to submission to *International Migration* for its review:

McAuliffe, M. & Jayasuriya, D. (2016) 'Do asylum seekers and refugees choose destination countries? Evidence from large-scale surveys in Australia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka' in *International Migration*, 54(4), pp. 44 – 59.

The journal was accepted by the journal and published initially online (February 2016) and subsequently in an issue (August 2016).

Signed:



Marie McAuliffe  
PhD candidate  
25 March 2017, Geneva



Dr Dinuk Jayasuriya  
ANU / Red Elephant Research  
March 2017, Colombo

**Declaration in relation to an article or chapter drawn upon as part of a thesis to be submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Australian National University**

The below signatories declare that the following book chapter was written primarily by Marie McAuliffe prior to submission to ANU Press for peer review:

McAuliffe, M. & Mence, V. (2017) 'Irregular maritime migration as a global phenomenon' in McAuliffe, M. & Koser, K. (eds) *A long way to go: Irregular migration patterns, processes, drivers and decision making*, ANU Press: Canberra (forthcoming).

The book manuscript has been accepted by ANU Press with minor revisions and is due to be published late in 2017.

Signed:



Marie McAuliffe  
PhD candidate  
8 June 2017, Geneva



Victoria Mence  
Senior Researcher  
Department of Immigration and Border  
Protection  
6 June 2017, Canberra

**Declaration in relation to an article or chapter drawn upon as part of a thesis to be submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Australian National University**

The below signatories declare that the following book chapter was written primarily by Marie McAuliffe prior to submission to ANU Press for peer review:

McAuliffe, M. & Koser, K. (2017) 'Introduction' in McAuliffe, M. & Koser, K. (eds) *A long way to go: Irregular migration patterns, processes, drivers and decision making*, ANU Press: Canberra (forthcoming).

The book manuscript has been accepted by ANU Press with minor revisions and is due to be published late in 2017.

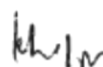
Signed:




Marie McAuliffe  
PhD candidate  
School of Demography  
The Australian National University

Date: 12 July 2017

Geneva, Switzerland



Dr Khalid Koser MBE  
Extraordinary Professor in Conflict, Peace and  
Security  
Faculty of Humanities and Sciences  
Maastricht University

Date: 12/07/17

Geneva, Switzerland





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**Irregular Maritime Asylum Seeker Survey Methodology<sup>1</sup>**

Large-scale quantitative surveys of migrants provide useful data for researchers and policymakers alike. Surveys of migrants covering pre-arrival and post-arrival issues are routinely conducted as a basis for research and analysis (Huddleston & Tjaden 2012; Jasso et al 2003; McKenzie & Mistiaen 2007). In the Australian context, this has included surveying migrants who have arrived through managed migration programs on aspects of decision making as well as on employment and settlement outcomes; the three Longitudinal Surveys of Immigrants to Australia included several waves of each survey process between 1993 and 2007, with particular emphasis on post-arrival settlement and integration (DIAC 2007).

The conduct of a quantitative survey of irregular maritime asylum seekers, with a specific focus on pre-arrival experiences, in much the same way as other migrant surveys are conducted, was considered an important means to improve the current evidence base. There were several methodological challenges to overcome.

**Methodological challenges**

Conducting research among potential and actual irregular migrants themselves is difficult from a methodological perspective. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, there is a genuine feasibility issue. It can be difficult to locate irregular migrants for research purposes. This places limitations on methodological approaches, including as it relates to the feasibility or otherwise of large-scale, quantitative analysis. Most research, therefore, has been qualitative in nature involving, for example, structured interview and focus group techniques.

Secondly, locating irregular migrants who are willing to engage with researchers, particularly in light of the sensitive and profound nature of their experiences poses additional challenges. The ‘irregular’ nature of travel, and the related risks that people are either considering (potential migrants) or have undertaken (actual migrants), would be likely to raise questions in people’s minds as to the risks to themselves (and perhaps their families) in engaging with researchers.

Thirdly, and given the sensitive nature of the topic, people may be tempted to misrepresent their motivations for moving. This is more likely to be the case in situations involving interviewers who are authority figures of one kind or another (e.g.

government authorities, community leaders/members, etc.). The inclination to temper views or provide more socially acceptable responses when placed in this type of interview situation is a well-documented issue in social research (Bowling 2005).

Finally, understanding decision making among actual migrants is more difficult because it relies on reflection and post facto rationalization. This is particularly likely to be the case for migrants who have been through some form of processing (e.g. refugee status determination processing) and have been granted a visa (including protection visas), regardless of the complexity of the decision making processes prior to and during their migration journey. In contrast, these issues are less likely to be relevant to potential irregular migrants, although other challenges emerge, such as the likelihood (or otherwise) of following through on stated intentions to migrate.

### **Privacy, anonymity and confidentiality**

Maintaining confidentiality throughout the entire survey process was a primary concern. A small number of departmental and McNair Ingenuity Research (McNair) staff had access to the sample. All responses to the survey were de-identified, and the use of technology (as discussed above) reinforced the anonymous nature of the survey.

As members of the market research industry association in Australia (AMSRO), McNair is bound to compliance with a range of specific regulations around privacy, including taking reasonable steps to protect any identified information that it holds from misuse and loss and from unauthorised access, modification, disclosure and transfer. In particular, in conjunction with accreditation under AS ISO 20252, the International Standard for Market and Social Research, McNair has access to concessions under the Privacy Act, by virtue of the Market and Social Research Privacy Principles. McNair assigned a unique and anonymous numerical identifier to all participants in order to ensure data remains non-identifiable. Upon completion of the survey fieldwork all identifiable information about participants was destroyed.

### **Survey instrument design and development**

The survey instrument was designed to be as impartial as possible, with care taken to ensure questions were emotionally neutral. The questionnaire sought to avoid, as far as possible, questions that indicated pre-existing conclusions about the ethical dimension of behaviour associated with irregular migration.

The draft survey instrument was the subject of consultations both internally within the department, as well as externally via the Irregular Migration Research Advisory Group and the Irregular Migration Research International Reference Panel.

The survey was subjected to two testing phases: cognitive testing of the instrument (10 people) and pilot testing of the electronic delivery (51 people).

Cognitive testing was focussed on ensuring acceptable levels of comprehension and to eliminate as much as possible any potential ambiguities in the survey instrument and response biases on the part of the participants. During this phase, a written questionnaire was administered by an interviewer with the assistance of an interpreter. After each section of structured questions, the interviewer asked a series of questions to gauge whether participants had understood the survey questions, and whether the questions had caused any level of discomfort, which might have led to dishonesty in answering the questions. Participants were also asked about their interpretation of questions, particularly in relation to specific words or phrases such as ‘people smuggler’, ‘agent’, ‘trigger’, ‘ethnicity’, ‘migrating’, ‘gender’, ‘religion’, ‘primary language’, ‘visa/visa status’ and ‘legal status/recognition’.

As a result of the cognitive testing phase, adjustments to questions were made to improve comprehension and clarity. This included the removal of some Likert 5-point scales, which participants routinely found difficult to understand. Some questions that had previously involved a Likert 5-point scale were converted into binary response options in response to cognitive testing results.

As cognitive testing was conducted on a paper survey, this posed some difficulties, particularly as it related to filter questions and routing. These issues were not relevant to the final survey instrument, which was delivered in an online format so seamlessly adjusted for filtering and routing.

Following the results of the cognitive testing, the questionnaire was refined and shortened and programmed into an online format. The second phase of the survey was a technical pilot survey of a larger number of participants (51) in order to test the delivery of the refined questionnaire in the field, particularly in relation to delivery and data capture.

The proposed length of the questionnaire for the technical pilot phase was 45 minutes. The actual timings for the questionnaire in the technical pilot phase fell within the range of 30-90 minutes, with an average completion time of 56 minutes. Given the fact that

there was only a very small amount of stated respondent burden (to do with perceived question repetition) and that the large majority of respondents were comfortable with the time taken to complete the survey, it was felt that this was a reasonable length of time and that the questionnaire, therefore, was not shortened

No significant technical difficulties were reported with regards to the computer tablets used in the deployment of the questionnaire. The general interface, as well as specific aspects such as the size of the font on the screen, the rendering of foreign language fonts and the use of foreign language character keyboards generated no significantly adverse reactions amongst respondents or interviewers.

A small proportion of respondents were reluctant to handle the tablet technology, preferring to sit with the interviewer and indicate their responses in order to have the interviewer enter them on their behalf. In addition, an even smaller proportion were not literate, which necessitated more involved, but still neutral, mediation on the part of the interviewer in order to have the questionnaire completed and submitted for analysis. This latter aspect had been anticipated at the previous cognitive pilot testing phase.

### **Ethics review and approval**

An ethics review of the project was undertaken by Bellberry Limited (Bellberry), a national, private not-for-profit Human Research Ethics Committee that provides an ethics review service on a fee-for-service basis. Bellberry is accredited by the NHMRC to conduct ethics reviews of and approve human research. An ethics review of the project was undertaken in recognition of the potential sensitivities associated with conducting a survey of former irregular maritime asylum seekers, who have been in vulnerable situations during their migration journey.

The ethics review involved two stages: cognitive testing and pilot/main fieldwork stage. Approval for both stages was provided by Bellberry following a number of adjustments and clarifications.

Bellberry's review recommended the provision to participants of information about the survey, including its purpose, who was conducting it (i.e. McNair on behalf of the department), and why participants had been selected for the survey. This information was provided in the recruitment letter from McNair as well as a Participant Information Sheet to potential respondents. Bellberry also sought assurances that participants' privacy, anonymity and confidentiality were maintained; McNair provided such assurances, confirming compliance with associated requirements.

Participants were advised that they did not have to provide an answer to any question that would make them feel uncomfortable and assured that they could terminate the interview at any time without detriment, including that they would retain the \$30 (pilot or main survey) or \$50 (cognitive testing) incentive offered to all participants. McNair put in place processes to refer participants to appropriate support services in each state where the survey was conducted. Contact details of support services were provided to participants, and confirmation was obtained by McNair that participants would be able to utilise them.

### **Weighting and estimation**

The survey responses were re-weighted to reflect the characteristics of the underlying population. The re-weighting was based on citizenship, age and sex. The weighting approach adopted assumed that respondents respond in the same way as non-respondents for the characteristics of interest. The weighting method above assumes that the responding persons represent the non-responding persons.

As with any survey, the data collected from a sample is used to make estimates of the population. The desired sample structure of the survey embodied a statistically accurate representation of the wider population. As this real-world population is proportionally skewed towards males, the sample itself has been designed to capture this proportional bias, as it seeks to mirror the wider population on all its demographic characteristics in microcosm, in order to paint the most accurate picture possible. In the instance of any of the key sampling quotas placed on the fieldwork failing to be met, the data was weighted to match the demographic make-up of the wider population.

The result of the survey was a clean, usable, high-quality data set, broadly representative of the irregular maritime asylum seeker population, which was sufficiently detailed to provide evidence that directly contributes to addressing knowledge gaps on the drivers and determinants of irregular migration.

### **Measures of error and accuracy**

Two types of error can occur in sample surveys: sampling error and non-sampling error. Sampling error arises because in a sample survey not all of the population are surveyed. Hence a measured sample statistic is not usually identical with the true population behaviour. Non-sampling errors cause bias in statistical results and can occur at any stage of a survey and can also occur with censuses (i.e. when every member of the target population is included). Sampling error can be estimated mathematically whereas

estimating non-sampling error can be difficult. It is important to be aware of these errors, in particular non-sampling error, so they can be either minimised or eliminated from the survey.

#### *Non-sampling error*

A total of 1,008 respondents participated in the survey. The survey received a response rate of 47% (calculated by dividing the number of responses by the number of the sample able to be reached). This response rate excludes those that were unreachable based on the contact details drawn from administrative records. A total of 407 people declined to participate.

Non-sampling errors can result from imperfections in reporting by respondents, errors made in recording and coding of responses, and errors made in processing the data. No quantifiable estimates are available on the effect of non-sampling errors. However, every effort was made to reduce the non-sampling errors to a minimum by careful survey design and efficient operating procedures. In particular, the online survey design minimised the possibility of errors made in recording and coding of responses, as the respondents themselves entered the data when responding to the survey.

In addition, identifiable errors made by respondents while completing the survey were removed from the results database. The exception to this practice arose where responses were needed for demographic items for weighting purposes. In instances where this occurred, survey responses were disregarded.

#### *Sampling error*

One measure of the sampling error of an estimate is the standard error. There are about 19 chances in 20 that a sample estimate will be within two standard errors of the true population value. This is known as the 95% Confidence Interval. For instance, we are 95% confident that the estimate of the population that was personally involved in the final decision to leave their home/host country is between 79.5% and 84.3% (an estimate of 81.9% and a confidence interval of +/-2.4% based on a standard error of 1.22%).

The following table illustrates the standard errors from the sample design associated with estimates from 10 questions in the employee survey. Generally, the higher the sample size for a question, the lower the standard error. For example, questions

following a ‘filter’ question are more likely to have a higher standard error because the population size responding to that question is lower than for ‘non-filtered’ questions.

TABLE B.1: Examples of standard errors

Question	Estimate result (%)	Sample size (n)	95% Confidence Interval
Applied for a visa to another country prior to departing home/host country	9.8	1003	+/- 1.8
Between one and five family members in Australia prior to leaving home/host country	19.5	998	+/- 2.5
Religious discrimination experienced in home/host country prior to leaving	59.9	1008	+/- 3.0
Imminent threat of deportation from host triggered departure	17.1	1008	+/- 2.3
Personally involved in the final decision to leave home/host country	81.9	998	+/- 2.4
People who helped with travel (e.g. people smugglers) involved in the final decision to leave home/host country	11.1	989	+/- 2.0
‘Australia was accepting refugees’ was the main reason ended up travelling to Australia	29.9	554	+/- 3.8
Had a visa to validly enter transit country during the journey to Australia	39.5	983	+/- 3.1
Using a false passport made respondent feel very unsafe	56.8	359	+/- 5.1
Making the journey to Australia was much more difficult than expected	70.9	991	+/- 2.8

#### Notes

- 1 For a more detailed discussion of the survey background, rationale and aspects of the methodology please see McAuliffe (2013).

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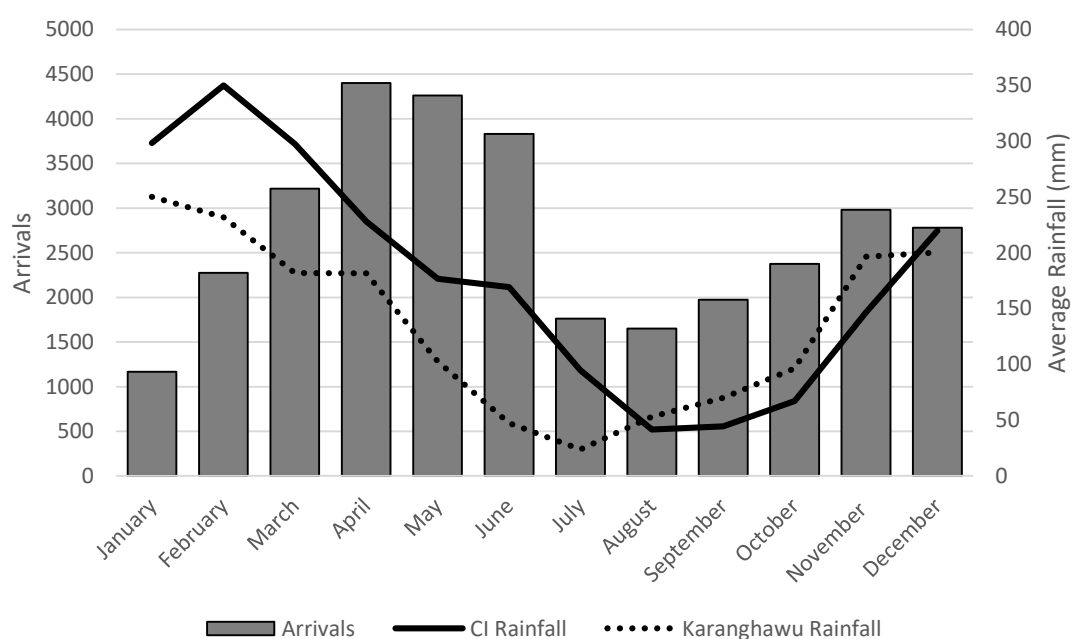
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## Appendix C

**Monsoon season and its effect on arrival numbers**

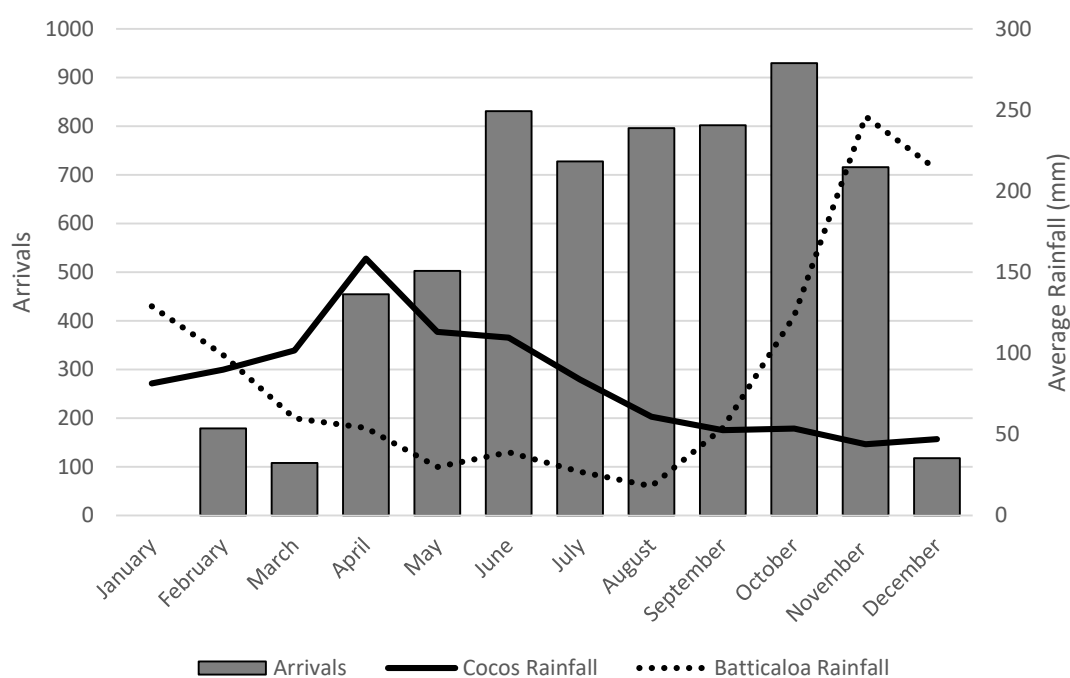
There may have been a seasonal weather effect on arrival numbers during the study period when data on the two main maritime corridors are examined. As can be seen from Figure C.1, total arrival numbers to Australia in the month of January (encompassing the years 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013) were the lowest, which correlates with high monthly rainfall averages for both the departure location (West Java) and the arrival point (Christmas Island). The month with the lowest arrival figures was January, which has the highest rainfall in Karanghawu, Indonesia. The monsoon season adds further risks to maritime travel, particularly in fishing vessels that may not be built for open sea travel, and it appears that this aspect of travel may have been taken into account by asylum seekers and/or agents/smugglers. ‘Sailing season’ appears to have started in earnest in April, with April, March and May accounting for the largest monthly arrivals during the five-year study period. Further exploration would be required to ascertain the reasons for the sharp decline in arrivals in July and August.



**FIGURE C.1: Number of asylum seeker arrivals (month of arrival) between 2008 and 2013 and local average monthly rainfall—West Java to Christmas Island Corridor**

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker dataset (n=32,681); Worldweatheronline.com. Notes: Arrivals are of asylum seekers whose last country of long-term residence was not Sri Lanka; Average monthly rainfall is based on rainfall between 2000 and 2012. The two rainfall sites were: Flying Fish Cove in Christmas Island and Karanghawu on the south coast of West Java.

Any monsoon effect is less apparent in the Sri Lanka to Cocos-Keeling corridor, which is likely to be for two main reasons. Firstly, the two locations are distant making sea voyages longer, and sometimes over a month. A lag effect may occur, meaning that estimated weather conditions at the destination would be largely unknown, which would not be the case for the West Java to Christmas Island corridor given their proximity. Secondly, the very substantial ‘spike’ in Sri Lanka asylum seekers in 2012 (see Jayasuriya & McAuliffe 2013) may have had a greater effect on monthly arrivals than weather patterns.



**FIGURE C.2: Number of asylum seeker arrivals (month of arrival) between 2008 and 2013 and local average monthly rainfall—Sri Lanka to Cocos-Keeling Islands Corridor**

Source: Irregular maritime asylum seeker dataset (n=6,166); Worldweatheronline.com. Notes: Arrivals are of asylum seekers whose last country of long-term residence was Sri Lanka; Average monthly rainfall is based on rainfall between 2000 and 2012. The two rainfall sites were: Batticaloa in Sri Lanka (as the most significant departure location in Sri Lanka, see Hugo et al 2014, p. 21) and Cocos-Keeling Airport.

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