"You Keep Yourself Strong": A Discourse Analysis of African Women Asylum Seekers’ Talk about Emotions

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Abstract
The current study investigates how asylum-seeking African women use talk about emotion to construct empowered roles for themselves. A discourse analysis was conducted on interviews with African asylum-seeking women. Participants used two interacting repertoires, ‘rejecting pity’ and ‘being strong’, to resist inferior positions. By constructing themselves as strong and not needing pity, participants positioned themselves as in control of their lives, and thus presented as responsible and capable mothers, a role they are accountable for. Clinical implications and findings for future research are discussed.

Note on the Author
Maria Clare is a graduate clinical psychologist from Coventry University and the University of Warwick. As well as the issues faced by refugees and asylum seekers, including human rights, trauma and health and wellbeing, her interests include children and families, attachment through the lifespan and resilience. Maria was the Principal Investigator and led the research included in the article.

Simon Goodman is a senior lecturer in psychology at Coventry University. His research explores the discursive construction of asylum seekers and refugees, and his interests include discourse analysis, the social construction of categories, boundaries and prejudice, particularly in relation to asylum seeking, social inequality, the far right and rioting behaviour.

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Or a lot wrong, depending on your ability to estimate spatial entities. Helpfully, I have compiled a little list of the most common arguments against asylum seekers which I am calling 'The Big List of Reasons You're Wrong About Asylum Seekers'. 1. They're illegal! Aha, our criminal justice system will protect our prejudice! Discursive psychology has been applied to a number of other areas related to asylum seeking (Goodman 2010; Goodman and Burke 2010) and political statements and speeches (Charteris-Black 2006; Goodman and Johnson 2013, Capdevila and Callaghan 2008). Indeed, it has been found that many of the metaphors of water used by the media were also to be found in political statements from right-wing politicians in the UK (Charteris-Black 2006), suggesting that their use is a common discursive strategy by anti-immigration groups who seek to legitimize their views. Analysis The analysis focuses on extracts from several of the newspapers that were subjected to a discursive psychological analysis (Potter and Wetherell 1987).