



Framing People Smugglers in Australian News Media

Research Questions

What topics do articles containing the phrase “people smuggler” discuss, and how do they frame the issues they discuss?

What themes emerge?

How are people smugglers & asylum seekers characterized?

Are asylum seekers’ voices included, and the relationships of the smuggled to the smugglers discussed?

Content analysis

Interviews &
detention visit



“people smuggler”

Sept 2010 – Aug 2011



Findings: “Evil” People Smugglers to Blame



Findings: Asylum Seekers are Victims & Problems

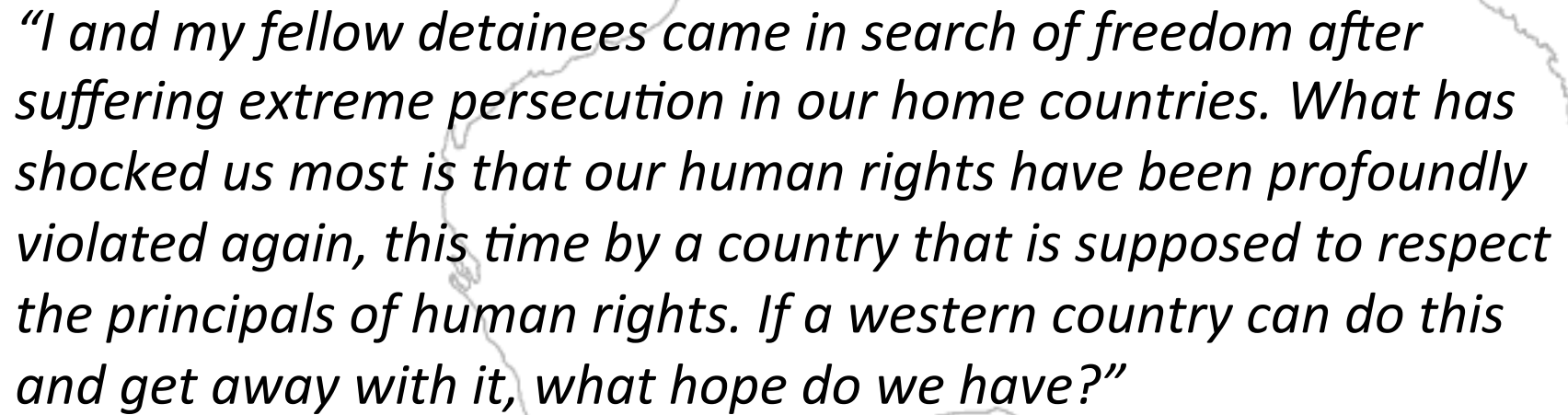


Findings: Politicized Debate



Perpetuating narrow discourse

- Framing: Australian national interest
- Reliance on official sources
- Failure to include the voices of asylum seekers (**9.1%**)
- Prevalence of episodic coverage (**94.4%**)
- Failure to challenge the notion that *asylum seekers are a problem for Australia* (**19.6%**)

A faint, light gray outline map of Australia is visible in the background, centered behind the text. The map shows the continent's irregular shape, including the southern and eastern coastlines and the island of Tasmania to the south.

“I and my fellow detainees came in search of freedom after suffering extreme persecution in our home countries. What has shocked us most is that our human rights have been profoundly violated again, this time by a country that is supposed to respect the principals of human rights. If a western country can do this and get away with it, what hope do we have?”

*-Aamer Sultan, Villawood Detention Center
(Silove, Steel and Mollica 1436)*

Thank you



- Be media skeptical – compound, subtle framing effects
- Focus on people smugglers
 - ignores fundamental questions
 - underscores framing of problem as one of asylum seekers arriving to Australia
- International awareness and advocacy: easier to recognize injustice from a distance

Theories (→ ?) Action

- Boswell's weapons in the struggle for justice
- Failure of scholarship to enact change
- **Boomerang effect...**

Reserve Slides

“That’s the key thing... the misinformation... the facts just don’t support the arguments...”

-Sarah Hanson-Young,
Greens Senator for South Australia

Background: Boat Arrivals to Oz

4,565

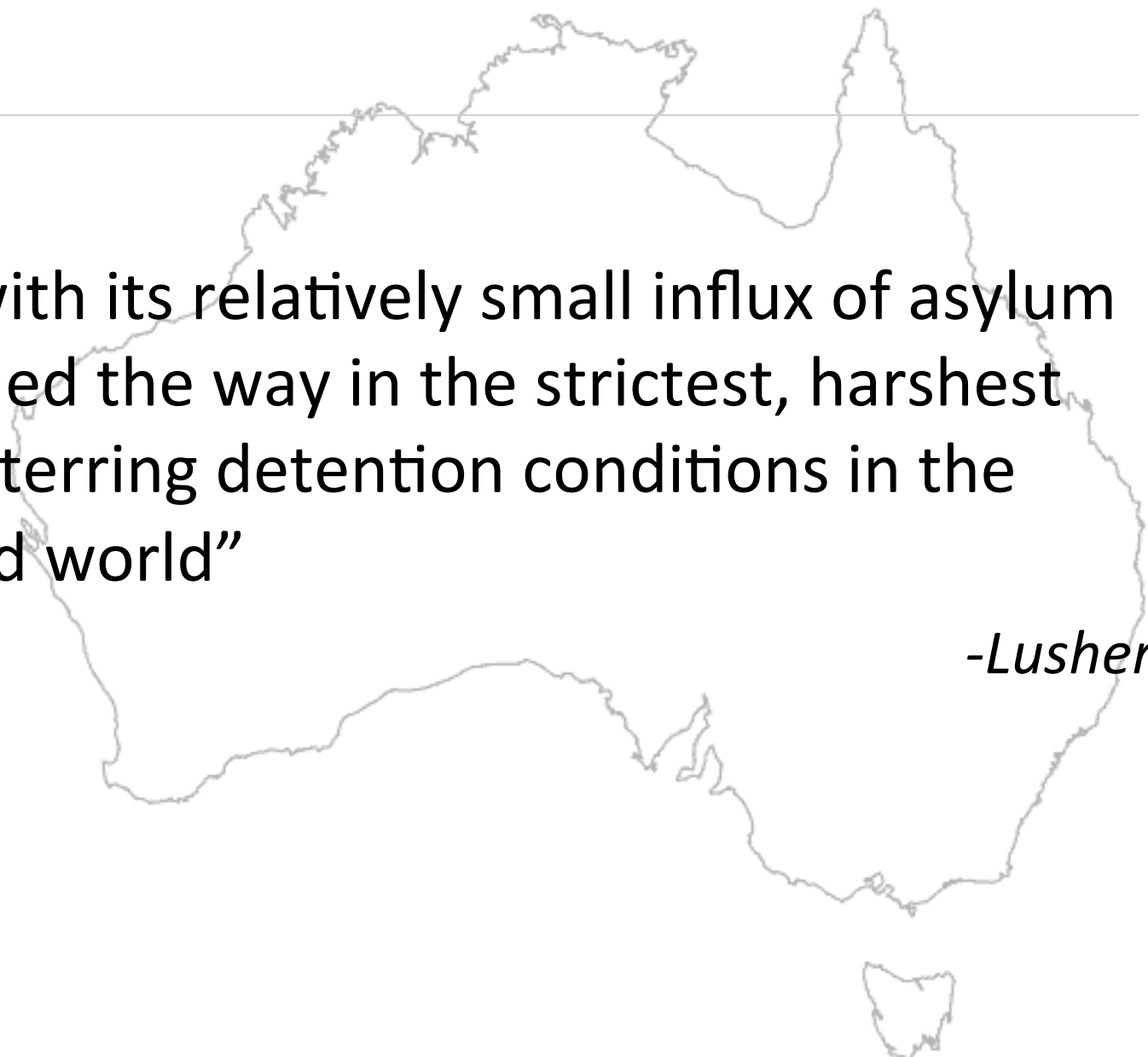
people arrived by boat to Australia in 2011

~85-90%

of boat arrivals are eventually recognized as refugees

~54,000

visa-overstayers are in Australia illegally

A simple black outline map of Australia, showing the continent's irregular shape and the island of Tasmania to the south. A thin horizontal line is drawn across the top of the map, roughly at the latitude of the Tropic of Capricorn.

“Australia, with its relatively small influx of asylum seekers has led the way in the strictest, harshest and most deterring detention conditions in the industrialized world”

-Lusher

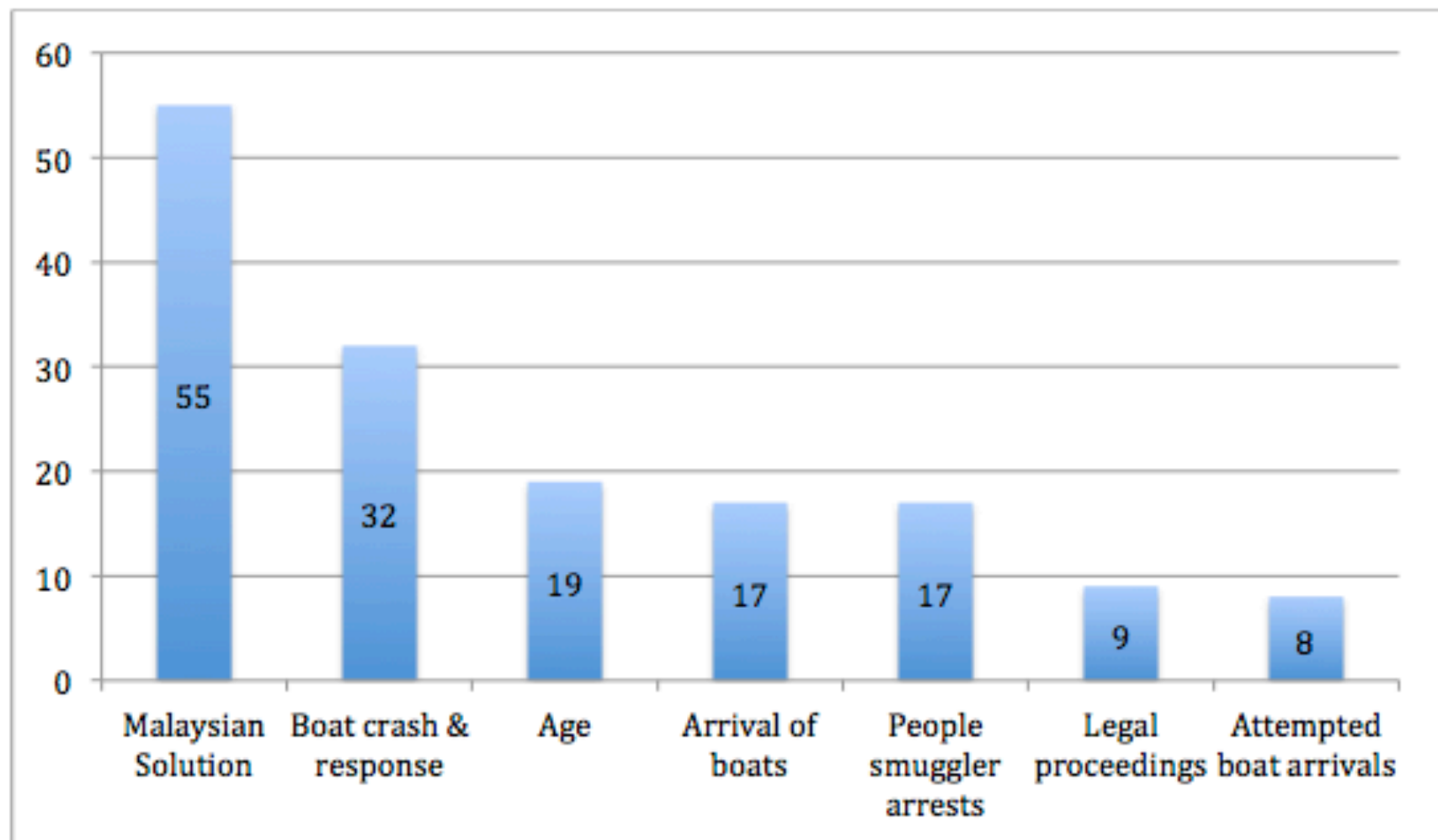


Figure 2.1: Article Topics by Popularity

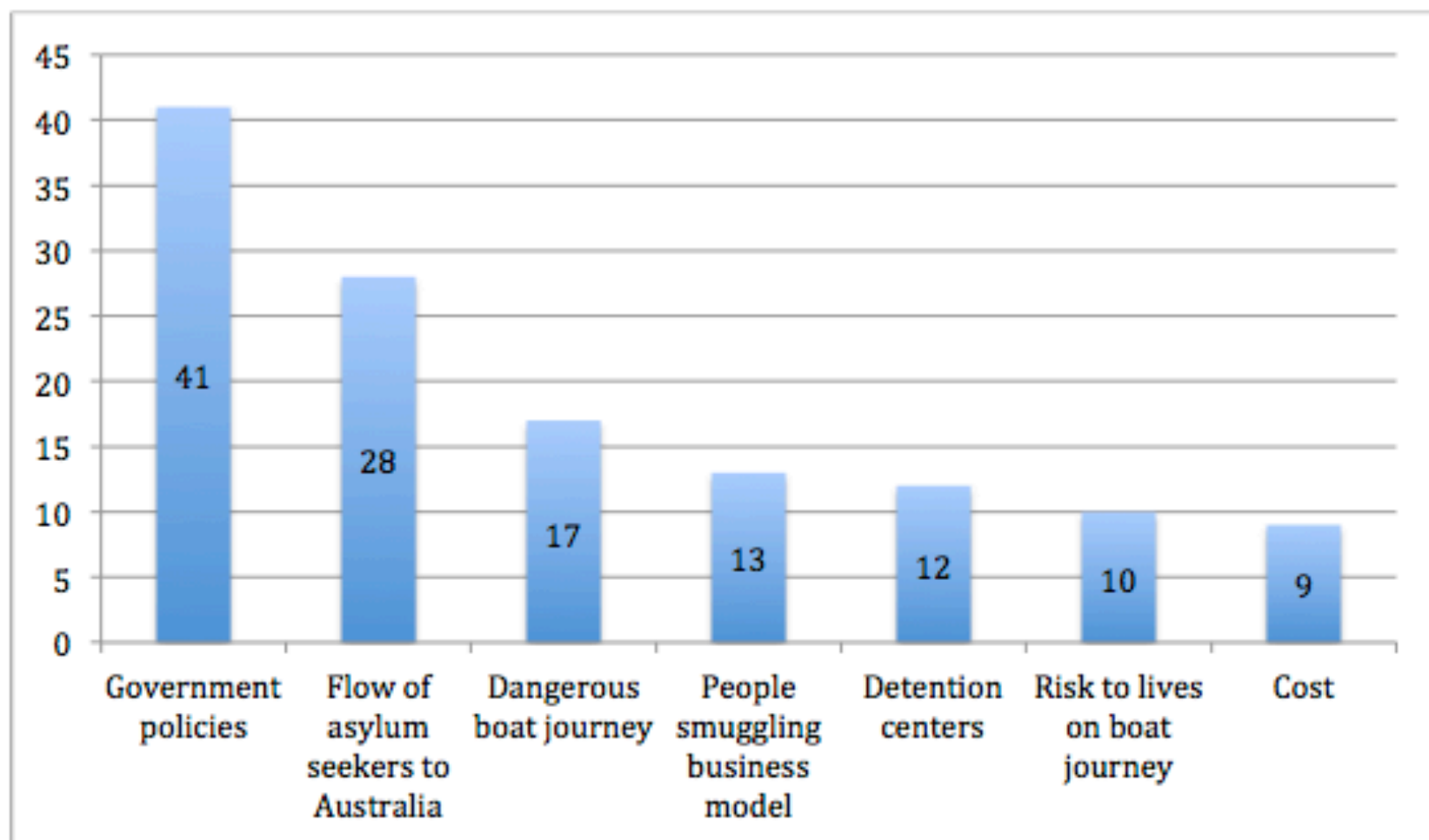


Figure 2.2: Problems Identified

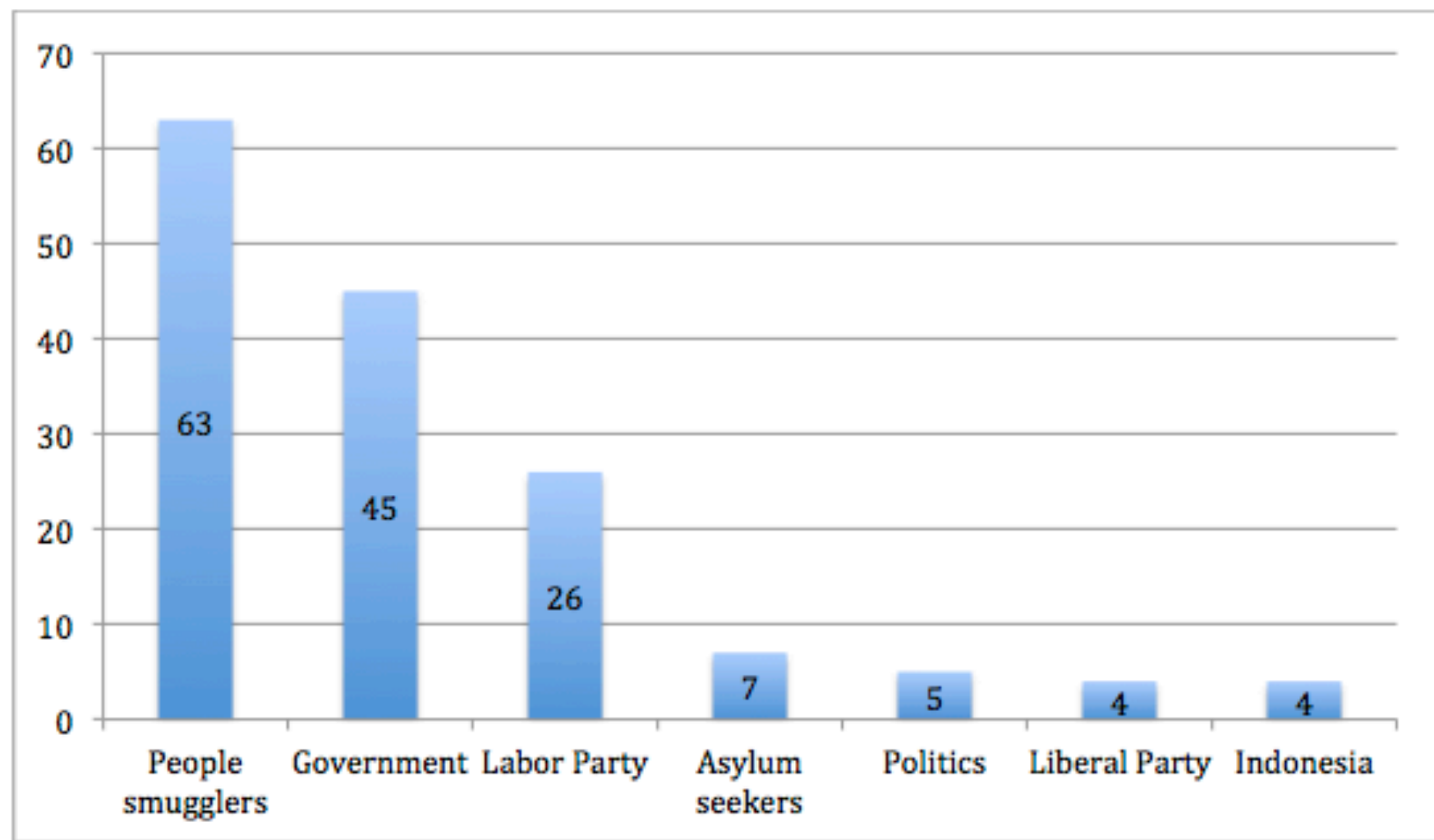


Figure 2.3: Attribution of Blame

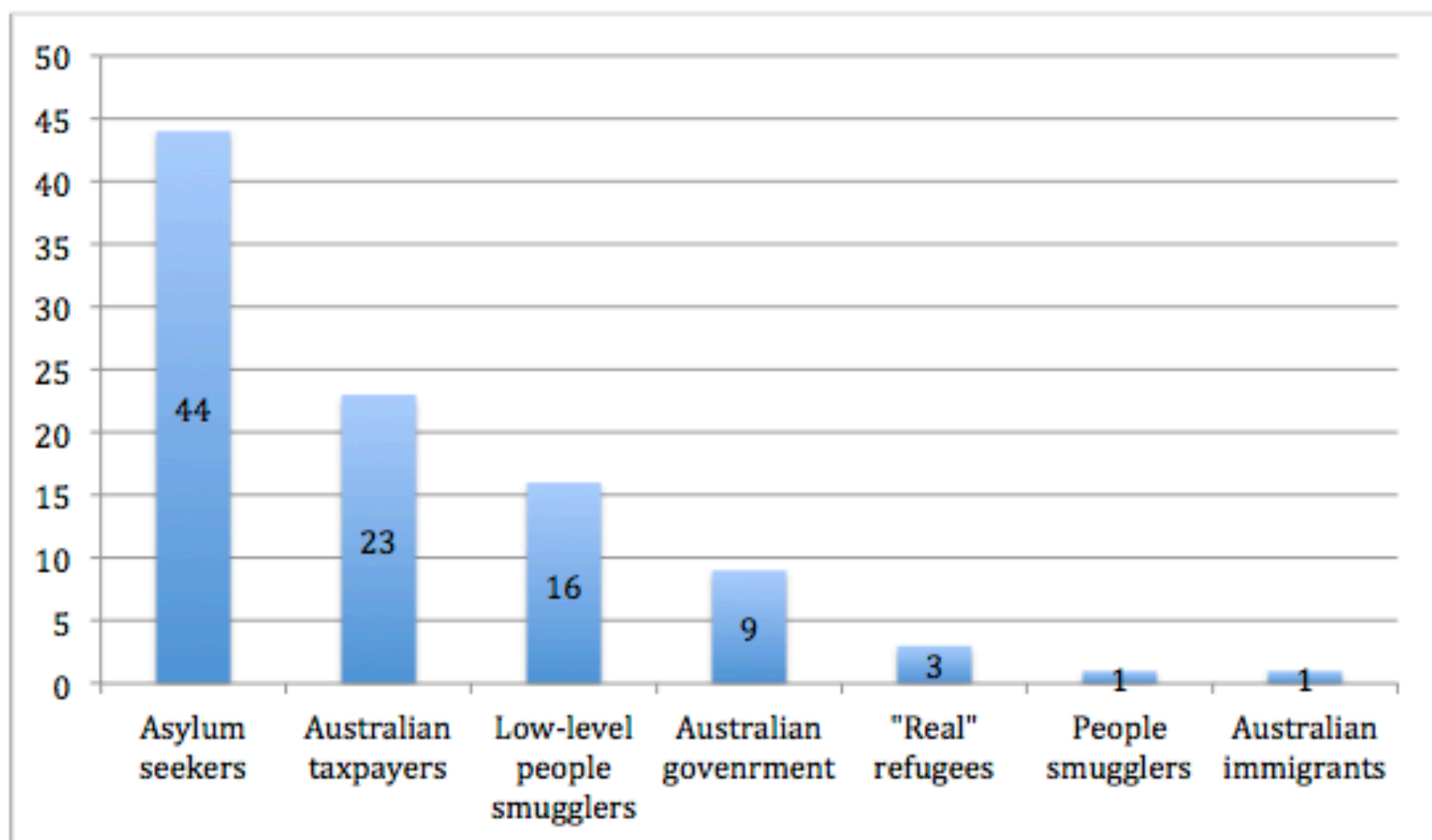


Figure 2.4: Victim Attribution

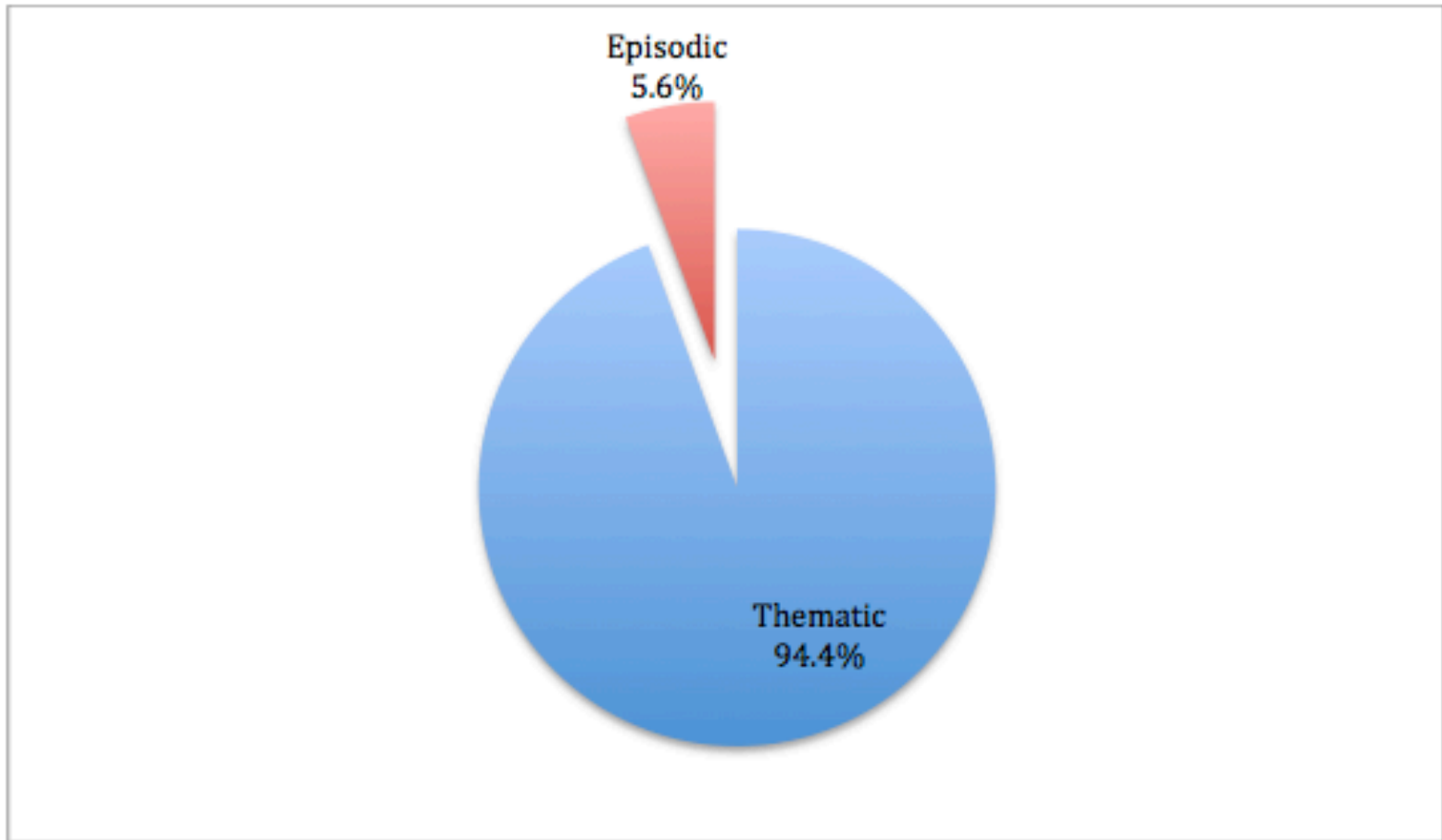


Figure 3.1: Nature of Coverage

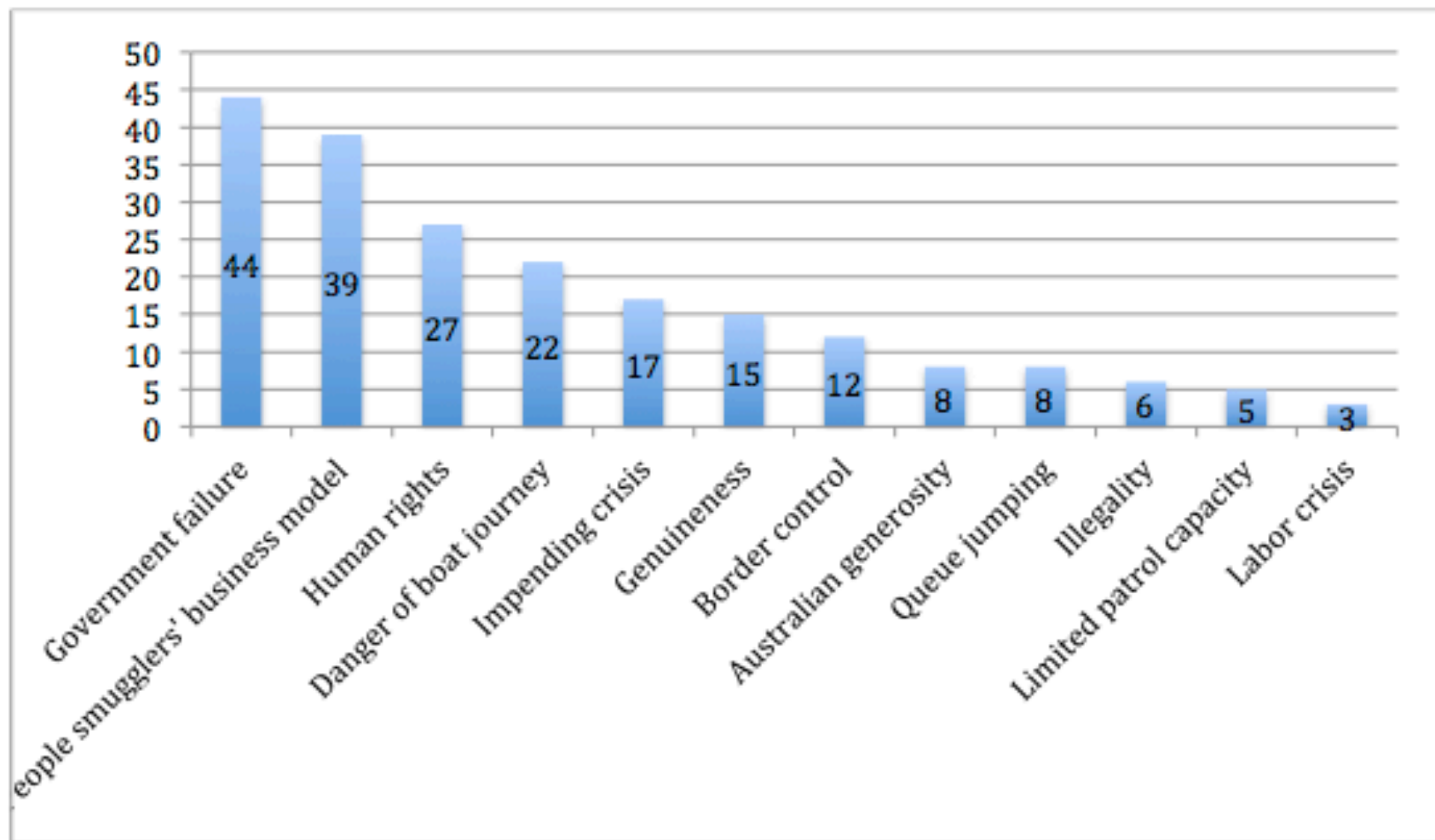


Figure 3.2: Theme Frequency

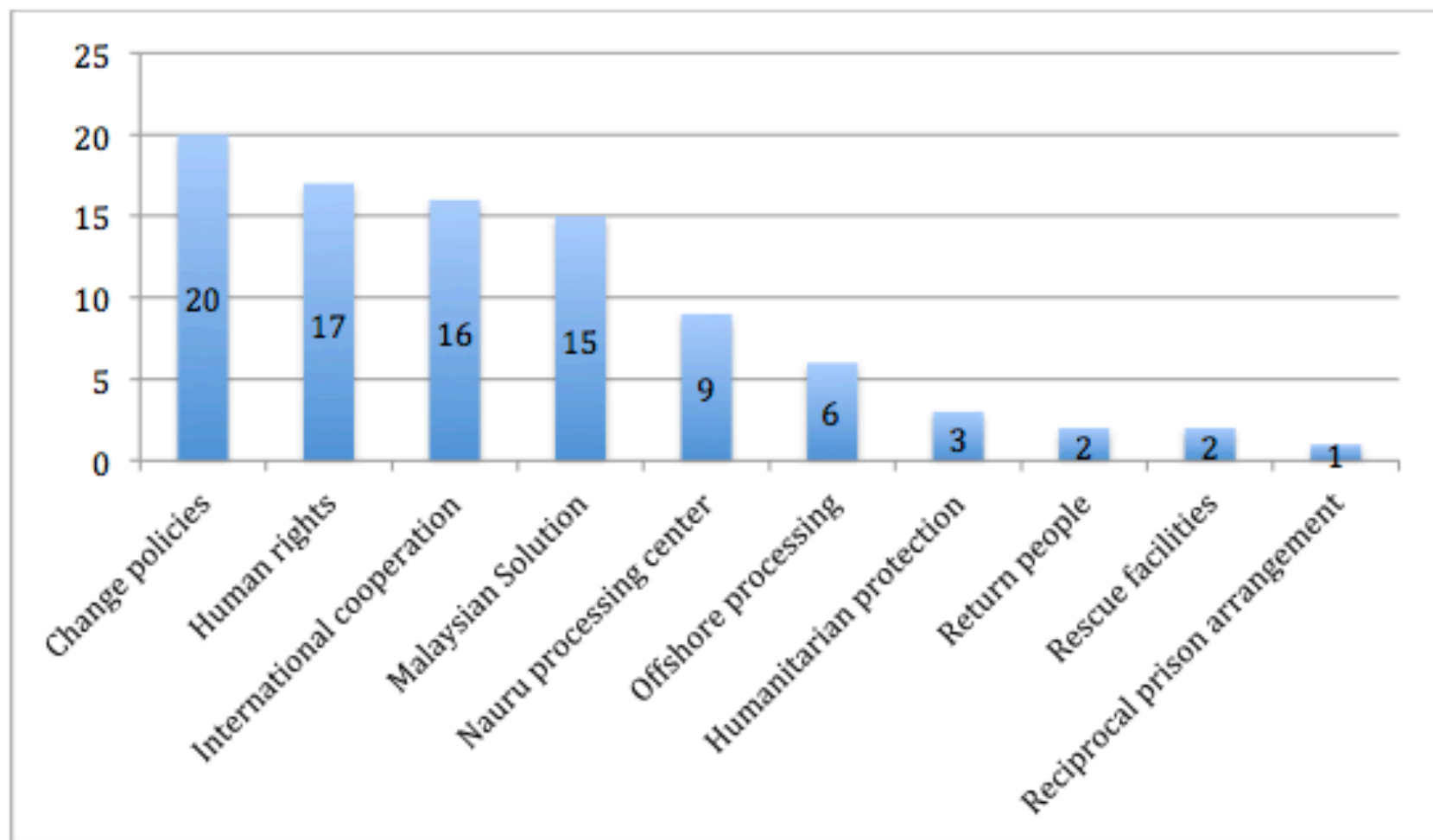


Figure 3.3: Prescriptions

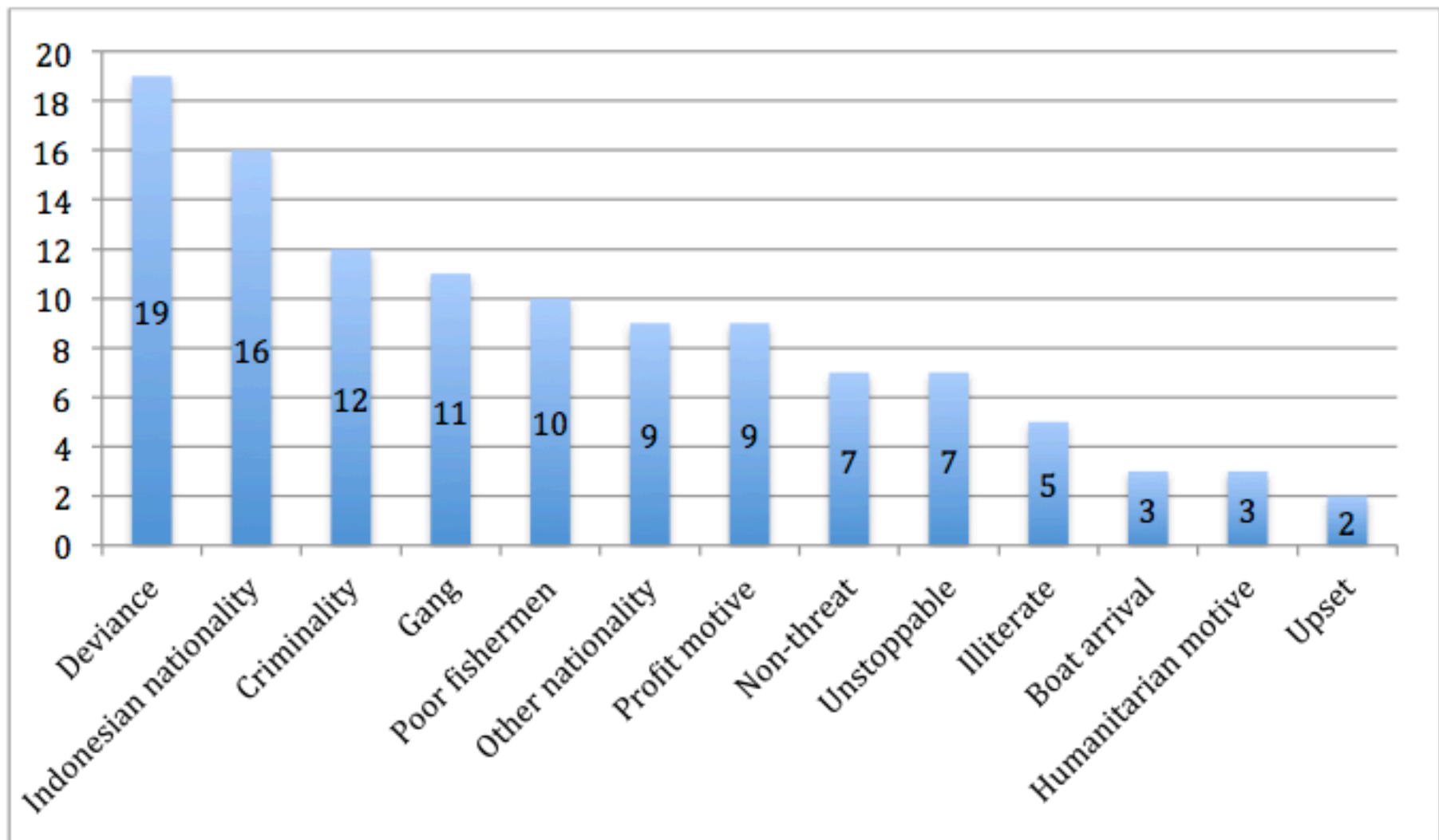


Figure 3.4: People Smuggler Characteristics

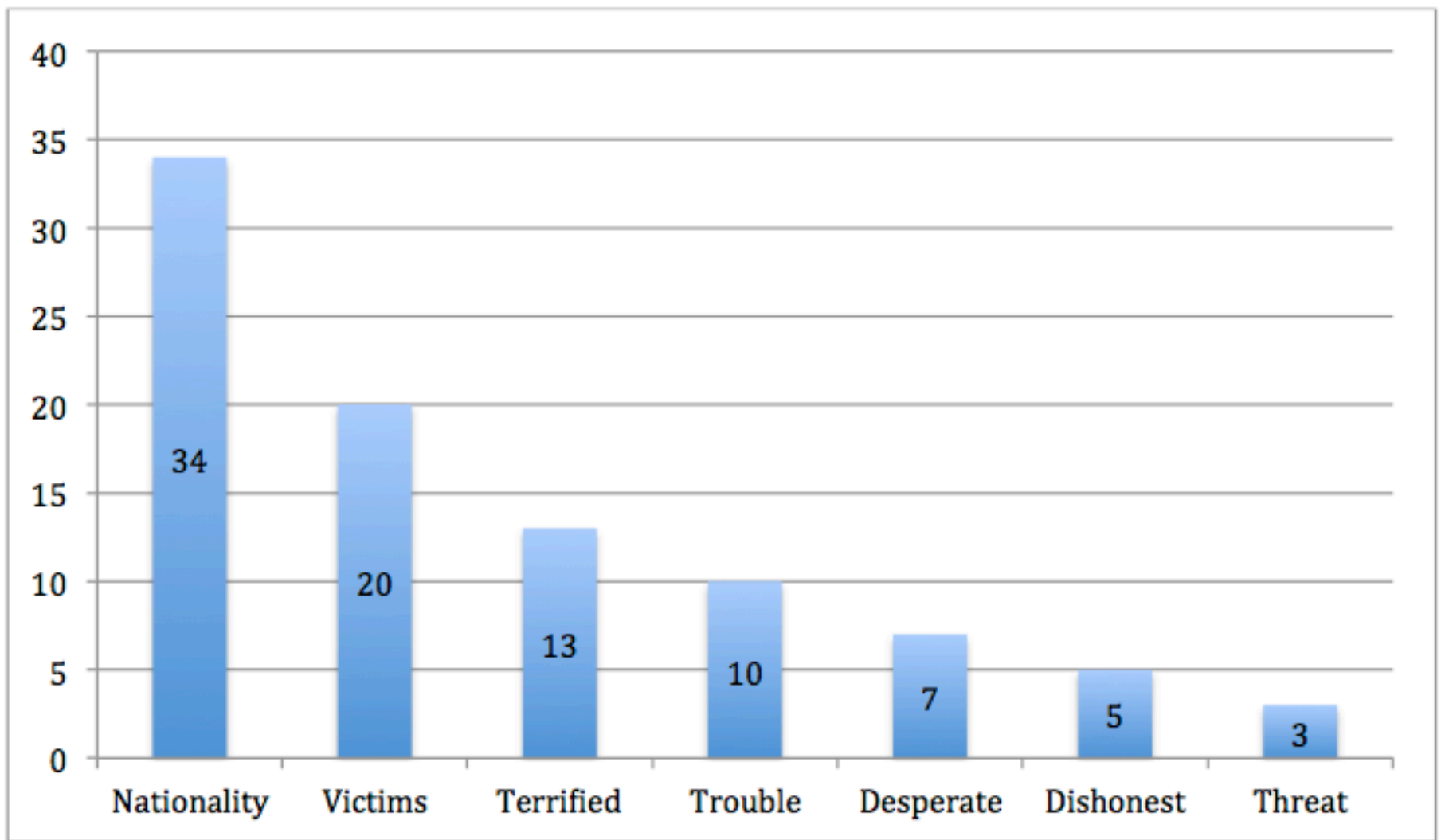


Figure 3.5: Asylum Seeker Characteristics

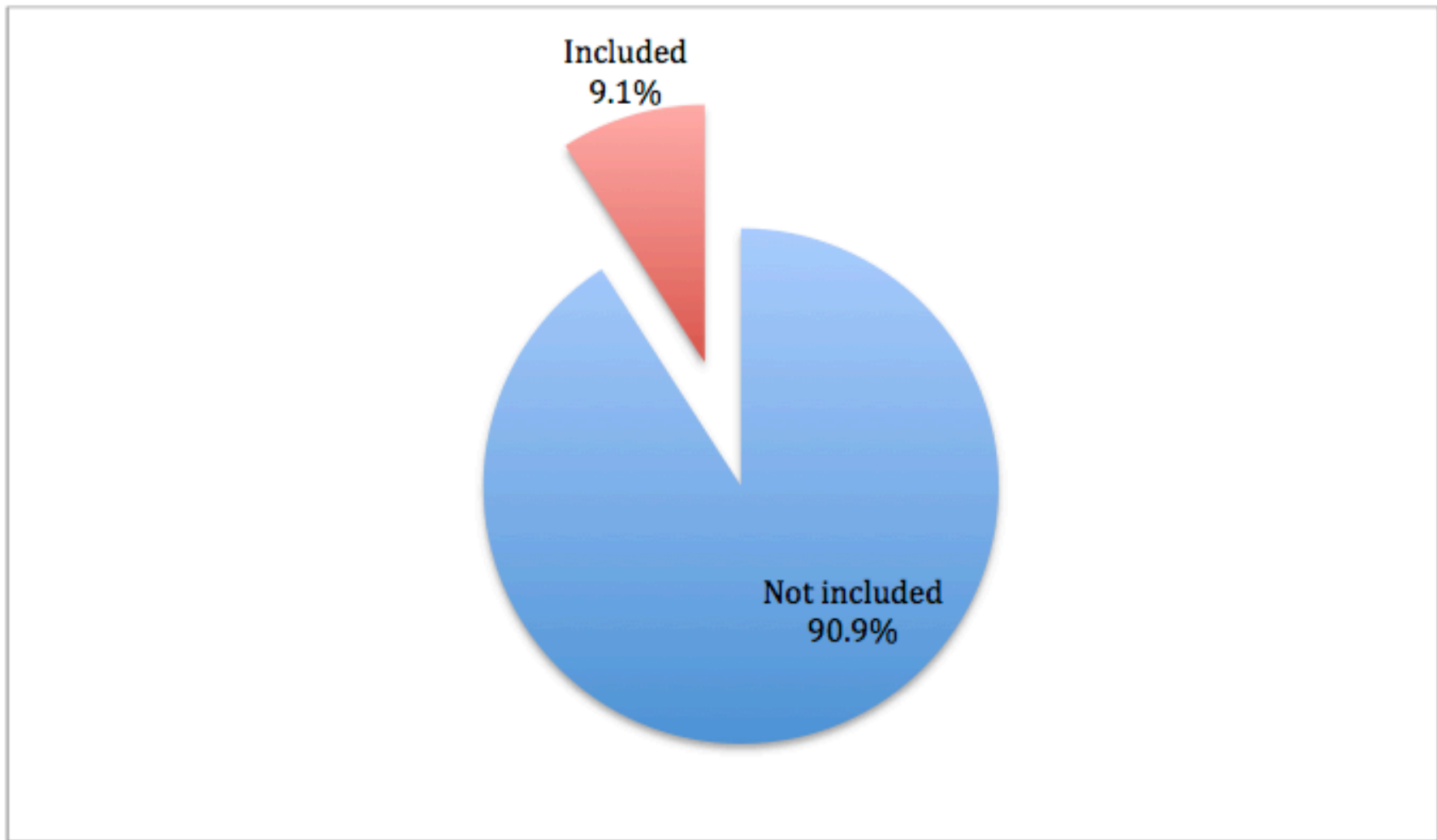
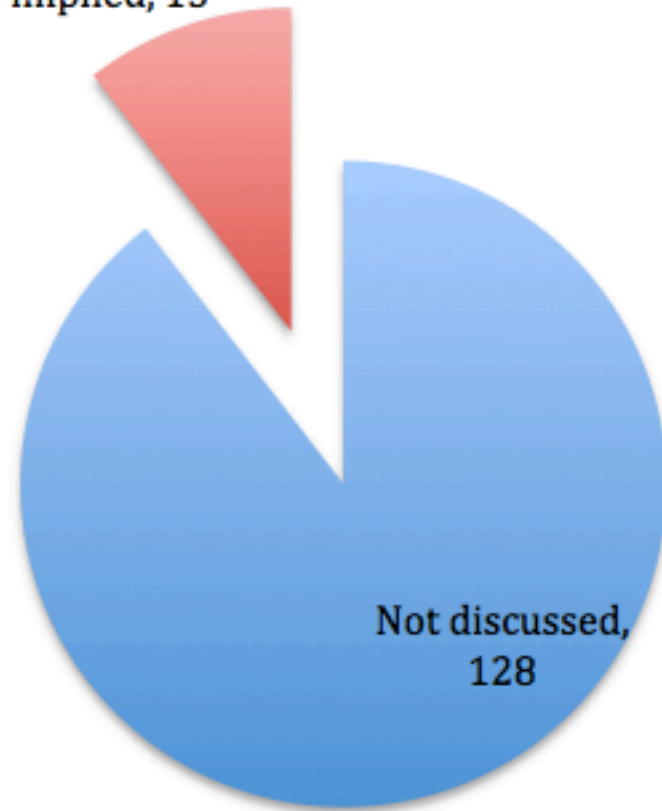


Figure 3.3: Inclusion of Asylum Seekers' Voices

Discussed/
implied, 15



Not discussed,
128

Figure 3.7: Asylum Seeker-People Smuggler Relationships

Images

- http://www.google.com/imgres?q=australian+asylum+seekers&num=10&um=1&hl=en&client=safari&rls=en&tbnid=Ve9wdlQ-OLCgFM:&imgrefurl=http://dalje.com/en-world/suspected-asylum-seekers-intercepted-off-australia/253778&docid=Su9CAI74FreRoM&imgurl=http://dalje.com/slike/slike_3/r1/g2009/m04/y201551490319435.jpg&w=400&h=300&ei=xw6aT4LNF4rv0GqyoWwDw&zoom=1&iact=hc&vpx=98&vpy=147&dur=2665&hovh=194&hovw=259&tx=176&ty=92&sig=104603344786708542273&sqi=2&page=1&tbnh=129&tbnw=175&start=0&ndsp=18&ved=1t:429,r:0,s:0,i:67&biw=1249&bih=610
- http://www.google.com/imgres?q=outline+australia&um=1&hl=en&client=safari&sa=N&rls=en&biw=1249&bih=610&tbnid=d5PWpMwwJFIIIM:&imgrefurl=http://talesfromaustralia.blogspot.com/2010/11/australias-shape-what-do-you-see.html&docid=F_6RwTkr4HReYM&imgurl=http://3.bp.blogspot.com/_Meohqb1tJwM/TOtts5GXRFI/AAAAAAAAAFfo/lhQZ7v2V7gY/s1600/outline.gif&w=500&h=463&ei=ORCaT52cEYXk0QHt0Y2MDw&zoom=1&iact=hc&vpx=245&vpy=166&dur=5442&hovh=216&hovw=233&tx=124&ty=108&sig=104603344786708542273&page=1&tbnh=117&tbnw=126&start=0&ndsp=24&ved=1t:429,r:1,s:0,i:85
- <http://www.google.com/imgres?q=perth+immigration+detention&um=1&hl=en&client=safari&sa=N&rls=en&tbnid=iGiGas4RsMZx1M:&imgrefurl=http://www.thepunch.com.au/tags/detention-centres/&docid=8JJsM9HHkuXeKM&imgurl=http://www.thepunch.com.au/images/uploads/Villawoodmain.jpg&w=470&h=270&ei=1gGaT-yEYnf0QG-18TqDg&zoom=1&iact=hc&vpx=491&vpy=235&dur=2714&hovh=170&hovw=296&tx=172&ty=96&sig=104603344786708542273&page=2&tbnh=104&tbnw=181&start=19&ndsp=25&ved=1t:429,r:8,s:19,i:132&biw=1249&bih=610>
- <http://www.google.com/imgres?q=hadi+people+smuggler&um=1&hl=en&client=safari&sa=N&rls=en&biw=1249&bih=610&tbnid=jK5ZcKr4Y3cdUM:&imgrefurl=http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/hadi-ahmadi-loses-application-to-appeal-people-smuggling-conviction/story-e6frg6nf-1226182832802&docid=gidvCFImChq0EM&imgurl=http://resources1.news.com.au/images/2011/11/01/1226182/828429-111101-ahmadi.jpg&w=650&h=366&ei=4KCaT9KlBMjv0GhThpCZDw&zoom=1&iact=hc&vpx=88&vpy=302&dur=883&hovh=168&hovw=299&tx=140&ty=86&sig=104603344786708542273&page=1&tbnh=109&tbnw=194&start=0&ndsp=21&ved=1t:429,r:7,s:0,i:84>
- http://www.google.com/imgres?q=tony+abbott&um=1&hl=en&client=safari&sa=N&rls=en&biw=1249&bih=610&tbnid=XDij_ICNt7TJ_M:&imgrefurl=http://www.perthnow.com.au/news/end-spin-and-incompetence-says-tony-abbott/story-e6frg12c-1225893250122&docid=NP_UPnYpselmCM&imgurl=http://resources0.news.com.au/images/2010/07/17/1225893/255396-pn-news-tony-abbott.jpg&w=316&h=421&ei=_aiaT8SPCsj10GmXlGgDw&zoom=1&iact=hc&vpx=181&vpy=147&dur=1271&hovh=259&hovw=194&tx=105&ty=126&sig=104603344786708542273&page=1&tbnh=122&tbnw=92&start=0&ndsp=25&ved=1t:429,r:1,s:0,i:137
- http://www.google.com/imgres?q=sarah+hanson+young&um=1&hl=en&client=safari&sa=N&rls=en&biw=1249&bih=610&tbnid=vrtzkwWblAMd4M:&imgrefurl=http://econews.com.au/news-to-sustain-our-world/pm-says-a-murray-darling-plan-will-be-implemented/&docid=fb3zTf8BIXHlgM&imgurl=http://econews.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/SENATOR-Hanson-Young_Sarah.jpg&w=387&h=400&ei=VqmaT56_A4Xs0gHouuZZDw&zoom=1&iact=rc&dur=456&sig=104603344786708542273&page=1&tbnh=138&tbnw=134&start=0&ndsp=19&ved=1t:429,r:4,s:0,i:77&tx=68&ty=62