The Psychological Effects of Migration on Persian Women Immigrants in Australia

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Declaration

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by any other person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give my consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the university library, being available for loan and photocopying.

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seriousness.

Dedication

To my personal angels

To my husband, Kazem – The greatest person I know. My treasure, my partner, my best friend, my beloved and my "hamrah". For making so many of my dreams come true. For his wisdom and his immeasurable love and support. For his high spirit and his unwavering faith in me. He makes me feel blessed.

To my late dear mother, Khadijeh Ghamari, who is my constant source of strength, for her years of selfless sacrifice. For instilling in me a philosophy of concern for others. For giving up so much that I could have a better life. For teaching me about strength, patience, and forgiveness. For her love and devotion. She empowered me in a unique way and helped to make possible my vision a reality. To her that I am most indebted.

To my daughter, Sabahat – My heart and my reason to live. For helping me fulfill my most important role. For her friendship, her constant caring, and all of her encouragement and for making me a better and more complete person. She is by far my greatest and most prized accomplishment; my inspiration.

This thesis is dedicated with boundless love and gratitude to these angels without whom I could never have survived the darkest time of my life.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to investigate the position of Persian women immigrants within the family and their well being after migration. The study also examined how Persian women are affected emotionally by the conflict between the values of their own and the values of the host culture. The present study also examined various aspects of acculturation including measures of assimilation through attitudes to Australia, the desire to live in Australia and the desire to return to Iran.

The sample of the present study comprised 209 Persian women selected from different religious faiths and age groups. Three states were targeted: South Australia, Victoria, and New South Wales. Eight focus groups were run for a sample of 58 Persian women in three target states.

A Questionnaire survey and focus group interviews were employed to obtain the required data. This combined qualitative and quantitative approach allowed a thorough and complementary examination of the adjustment of Persian women in Australia. The study was conducted in two stages. Quantitative data was collected in stage one through the questionnaire survey. The questionnaire was available to the participants either in English or in Persian translation. Qualitative data was collected through focus group interviews in stage two. The second stage focused on a sub-sample of participants in stage one. Focus group interviews pertain to participants' attitudes and experience of living in Australian society, and the tensions and pressures generated for them in the new environment.

This study represents the development of a composite study model, based on interactions of concerned measures and includes potential predictors of psychological outcome measures. Various statistical analyses of the questionnaire survey were performed to test the study's hypotheses.

The data analysis led to the conclusion that, personal characteristics such as age, education, marital status, length of stay, and employment play significant roles in Persian women's adjustment in Australia. Those who are younger and are more integrated to the Australian society have less adjustment problems with better mental health. Life in Australia is stressful for professional women who are not working or working in an area inconsistent with their

qualifications. Persian women challenge male authority after migration and this challenge has brought tension and family conflicts for some. However, in some Persian families male authority increased due to the lack of husband's employment. Lack of extended family support and language proficiency were two important factors in the adjustment process.

The study group reported adjustment problems in several areas. Problems of separation from family members, English language, problems in raising children, lack of close friends, not having enough money, and conflict between Persian groups received major emphasis.

Overall, problems of adaptation (problems encountered upon arrival), and the problem index (adjustment problems) showed fairly consistent associations with mental health measures. Self-esteem was significantly predicted by the problem index variable. Thus the more adjustment problems, the poorer the self-esteem and the greater the psychological distress. Tension symptoms significantly correlated with problems of adaptation. Thus the more problems encountered upon arrival increased the chance of having tension symptoms that consequently led to poorer emotional well-being. A small negative yet significant correlation was found between life satisfaction in Australia with family role performance and problems of adaptation, and a medium positive correlation was found between life satisfaction and identification with Australia.

This is the first study that looks at the psychological well-being of a sample of Persian women in Australia and illustrates the impact of migration and the adjustment process of this newly established immigrant group. The study's findings can assist mental health professionals and service providers to offer appropriate care that fits with the traditional beliefs and expectations of this minority group.

In order to consider implications of this work for health professionals and social service providers who work with Persian immigrants this thesis provides recommendations for intervention and prevention work with immigrants. Implications of this study's findings for further research are also discussed.

CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 The migration problem

The interaction between ethnicity, immigration and mental illness has been of special interest, importance and sensitivity during twentieth century. The seminal studies of early sociological research into the 'process of migration' or social change within immigrant groups in Australia coincided with the post World War II immigrant rush. Studies by Borrie (1954), Richardson (1957, 1961), Taft (1962, 1966) and Price (1963) represent major contributions to the understanding of immigrant groups in Australia.

It appears from studies in Australia and overseas that migration itself does not necessarily threaten mental health. The mental health status of immigrants becomes a concern when pre and post-migration factors combine with the stresses of migration. International migration, even under ideal circumstances, is a stressful experience requiring accommodation, adaptation, or coping (Berry & Annis, 1974; Coelho & Ahmed, 1980; Dyal & Dyal, 1981). As Rogler et al. (1987) formulated it, migration generates strains that come from the difficulties encountered entering a new economic system and culture, and changing one's personal ties. These strains are reflected in immigrants' mental health - psychological distress or depression. Between the strains migration induces and the distress immigrants feel are life-event changes (eg., coping styles, social support networks) that shape immigrants' adaptation (Pedraza, 1991).

Differences in social and economic settings affect the life patterns of people, and various factors influence the degree of their satisfaction, assertiveness and competence in both social and public spheres. Immigrants respond both behaviourally and psychologically to the culture to which they have moved (Ghaffarian, 1998). Stress of migration refers to psychological distress or discomfort experienced in everyday life events related to the adjustment to the new culture and society, in particular, the differences in interpersonal relationships and roles, language, values and attitudes. Coping with such stressors can have either positive or negative effects (Lipson, 1992). Immigrants may adapt to the new culture and eventually become assimilated into the host society.

Generally the health of the Persian population in Australia has received little attention. There is a small but nonetheless substantial Persian presence in Australia (16,270 persons; ABS, 1996b). The mental and physical health of this group of migrants is not known in the

Australian health care system. The paucity of research on Persian immigrants in Australia and other western countries makes it difficult to study this minority group. However, recent studies on Iranian immigrants to the United States have indicated that on the whole, Persian migrants have experienced many social and psychological problems while adjusting themselves to a new country.

Recent studies on the demographics of Iranians in the Los Angeles area have indicated that Iranian immigrants tend to have middle to high socioeconomic backgrounds, high educational attainment, and professional-level occupational status (Hoffman, 1990; Sabagh & Bozorgmehr, 1987). A similar finding was reported by Moghaddam et al. (1987) about Iranian immigrants in the Montreal area in Canada (91.4% of respondents reported their family status in Iran to be middle, upper middle, or upper class with 59.2% having received university training).

Major contributing factors which caused massive international migration of Persians to other countries including Australia since 1980 was the Iranian revolution and its consequences such as the Iran-Iraq war, political instability, economical turmoil, and socio-cultural insecurity. Many Persian immigrants have made Australia their home over the last 18 years. Because of the unstable political situation in Iran, it is uncertain whether these immigrants can return to their home country in the future. It is therefore, important to study how they adapt to Australian culture, so that problem areas may be identified.

A migrant may have many adaptive problems when coping with the demands of the host country. This may generate internal conflict which can be seen as the stress of acculturation (Scott & Scott,1989) producing attendant strains, such as a lowering of the threshold for physical disease and mental disorder.

1.2   Research problem and aims of the study

The investigator who is a Persian-Australian immigrant herself has observed that the exposure of Persian women living in Australia to contrasting Australian and Persian cultural standards has generated many tensions and pressures. Persian women immigrants are exposed to social values that are perceived to be different from the values practiced at home. Consequently women experience conflicts within themselves as well as within the family.

There has been little research on the mental health of Persians who live abroad. Most of the post-revolution research refers to Persians who live in Iran. There have been some studies on Persian women and their role in the new social order in Iran (Hegland, 1982, Higgins, 1985), but not many on Persian women in the equally new social order they face when they move to a Western country.

This study explores the extent to which Persian-Australian women have maintained a happy and healthy life in Australia. It will also explore the extent to which Persian women have retained their culture in Australian society, and what psychological factors are involved in living in a society different from the one in which they were born and raised.

This is an exploratory study, concerned with the relationship between adaptation and the psychological effects of migration on Persian women who live in Australia. Interest in studying the adjustment of migrants has been the subject matter of many investigations during the past few decades. The direction of their attention varies considerably from one study to another. Overall, there is a rich body of literature focussing mainly on the causes and consequences of migration but not many studies investigating how migrants struggle to minimize obstacles resulting from living in another social context.

The present study is concerned with a few aspects of Persian women's life in a foreign country. The objective of this study is to examine Persian women's adjustment to Australian society. More specifically, to study the psychological impact of migration on a group of women who live in an environment, which has been foreign, strange, and alien to them.

The rationale for the selection of Persian women as the target group for investigation is that this group reflects my own life situation -- as an example among many other Persian women who have experienced many problematic situations during their course of living in a foreign country. My familiarity with social and cultural aspects of Persian women's life in Australia has inspired my interest in searching for an understanding of the aforementioned problem. In particular, because there have not been any studies on Persian women immigrants in Australia, and also, as Omeri (1997a) pointed out, Australians tend to have little knowledge of Persian immigrants' cultural beliefs and worldviews.

The intent of this study of Persian women immigrants and the psychological impact of the adjustment process of this minority group is to provide a body of knowledge and understanding about this group. This knowledge can assist mental health professionals and service providers to offer appropriate care that fits with the traditional beliefs and expectations of this minority group. The study aims at examining factors and relations between these factors that are considered to be the determinants of Persian women migrants' adjustment to Australian society. The selected factors are classified as sociological, psychological, cultural and social structural variables. The observed effectiveness of mentioned variables makes it an area that is worth investigating, not only for their importance to immigration policy development, but for the health and well-being of the specific group involved. In many ways the experiences of these immigrants can be considered emblematic of the struggle to succeed in a new land and set the scene for new immigrants of Persian background who want to migrate to Australia in the future.

The investigator was interested in studying various aspects of Persian women's lives in Australia. The researcher particularly was interested in identifying social and demographic factors that were associated with higher prevalence rates of emotional disturbance amongst respondents. While cultural differences, the learning of English and the establishment of new personal relationships were seen as potential sources of stress, the most likely areas of difficulty were expected to be those where respondents had to accept a lower social status than they had enjoyed in Iran.

Quantitative and qualitative methods are used in this study to obtain the required data. This approach combines a self-administered questionnaire survey and the collection of verbal statements from the focus group interviews. It is considered that data gathered through one method, would tend to complement the gathered information by the other.

A questionnaire survey includes closed and some open-ended questions measuring the respondents' present situation as well as when they first came to Australia. Most questions have been used in previous surveys with known validity and reliability. The present research also provides a socio-psychological analysis of interview material obtained from Persian women living in Australia. This material focuses on the nature of their migration experience and the extent to which respondents transcended cultural boundaries, and re-organized their

personal lives as a result of cultural influences. The overarching experience that all participants shared was living in a multicultural society in Australia.

1.3   Overview of the thesis

The thesis is presented in eight chapters. The introductory chapter includes an overview of the research problems, the objectives of the study and an outline of the thesis. This is followed by chapter two that contains a detailed overview of a history of Persian immigration to Australia, the characteristics of the Persian population in Australia, an overview of Persian culture and a brief description of Iran today. The specific aspects of Persian culture which have been explored in this chapter are those which can be regarded as fundamental to an understanding of Persian life, identity and values.

Chapter three contains a detailed review of the existing research literature relating to the adjustment process as it relates to the health and well-being of immigrants in the host culture. This chapter also contains an examination of previous studies of Persian immigrant groups with a focus on immigration to the United States and Australia. This chapter also provides a description of the present study with its aims and objectives.

Chapter four discusses measurement and research design issues, the research methods and specifically the processes used, the nature of the study sample, and the measurement instruments. Chapter five is based on the results of the questionnaire survey and provides the findings of the first phase of the study. Included in this chapter are the characteristics of the participants and the representativeness of the sample compared with the overall Persian-Australian population. This chapter also represents the development of the composite study model, based on interactions of concerned measures. This chapter also includes potential predictors of psychological outcome measures and summarizes the findings from the statistical analysis of the questionnaire survey performed to test the study's hypotheses. Chapter six reports the results of the focus group interviews as they pertain to the participants' attitudes and experience of living in Australian society, and the tensions and pressures generated for them in the new environment. Chapters five and six attempts to highlight the group of Persian women who might be at the high risk of developing psychopathology.

By contrast, the focus of chapter seven is more specific. In this chapter, the quantitative and qualitative results of the study are brought together for comparison and integration. This chapter provides theoretical interpretations of the results and attempts to evaluate overall, the psychological impact of migration on Persian women immigrants.

Chapter eight, the final chapter in this thesis, brings the study to a summary in order to consider implications of this work for health professionals and social service providers who work with Persian immigrants. It provides recommendations for intervention and prevention work with immigrants. Project limitations and suggestions for future immigration research in Australia are also presented. Figure 1, outlines the structure of the thesis.

Chapter 1 → Introduction

Chapter 2 → History of Persian migration & Persian culture in Australia

Chapter 3 → Review of the related literature

Aims and scope of the study

Chapter 4 → Method

Chapter 5 → Survey Results

Chapter 6 → Focus group Results

Discussion ← Chapter 7

Conclusions and future research ← Chapter 8
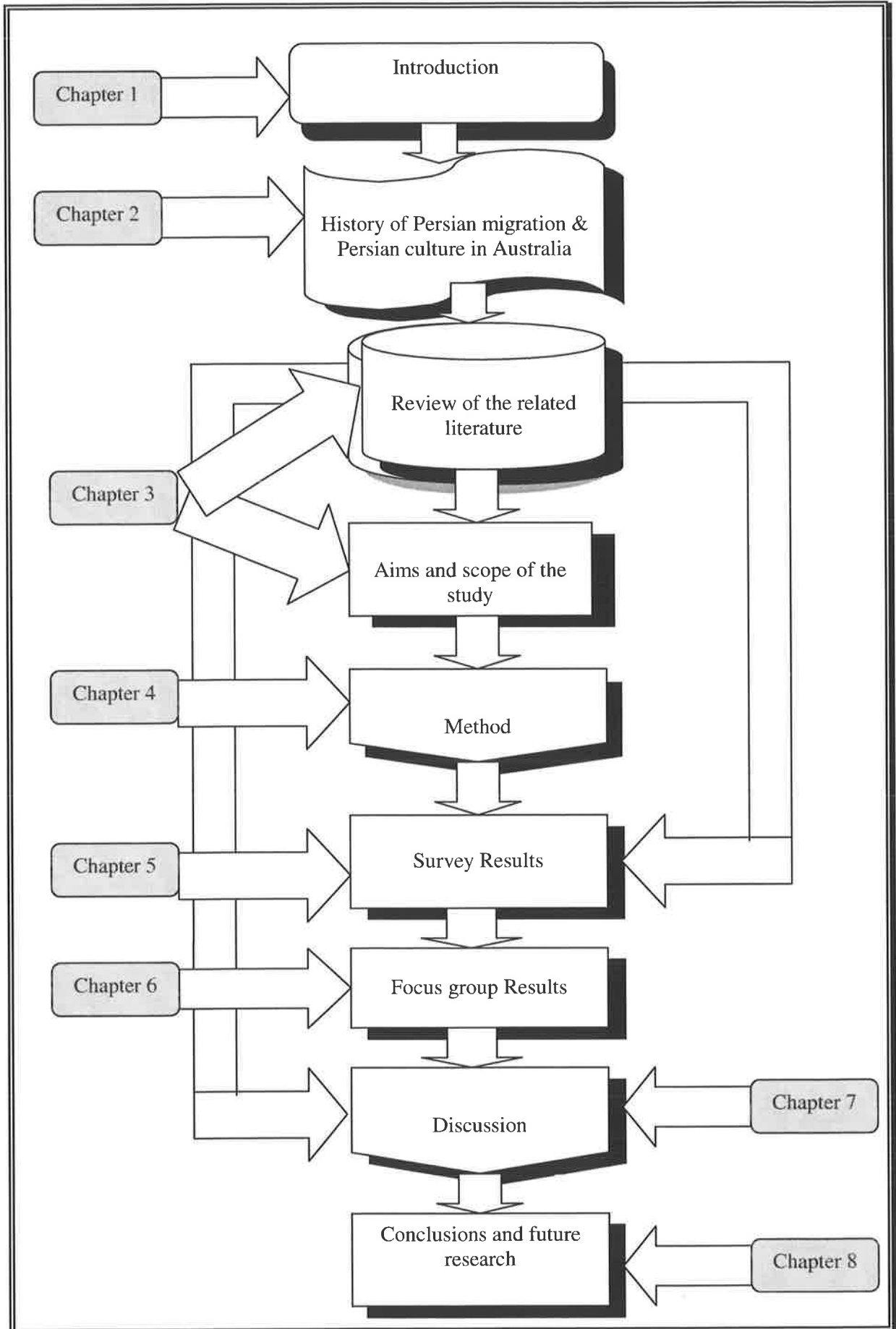
Figure 1 – The structure of the Thesis

CHAPTER 2
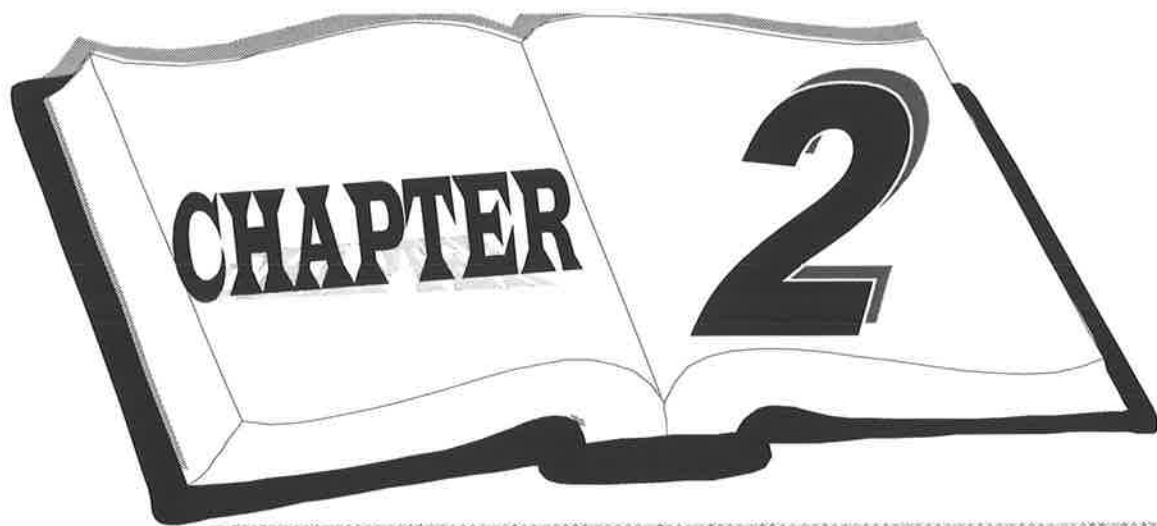
HISTORY OF PERSIAN MIGRATION AND PERSIAN CULTURE IN AUSTRALIA

To comprehend the adjustment problems of Persian women requires a basic knowledge of the type of society, culture and values that compromised the previous world of this group of migrants. This chapter provides a brief description of: a history of Persian migration to Australia, the Persian population in Australia and the Persian society with specific consideration of its culture, values, structure and heritage. The specific aspects of social organization and culture which have been explored in this chapter are those which can be regarded as fundamental to an understanding of Persian life, identity and values. It is the change and persistence in these aspects of culture and its impact on Persian women that have occurred as a result of migration to Australia, that are considered later in this research.

Specifically the first section of the chapter examines the historical movement of Persians to Australia and the Persian population in Australia. Section two describes the Persian culture and its traditional social structure of the Persian society, the position of women and the Persian language within the cultural context. Section three introduces a very brief description of the key elements of Persian history and the geographical location of Iran today.

2.1 Persian (Iranian)[*] Immigrants in Australia

Today Persians constitute one of Australia's small non-English speaking origin groups. Persian immigrants to the United States of America and the UK has a much longer history than to Australia, due probably to the geographical and historical ties with these countries. According to Scott & Scott (1989, p. 7-8) Iranian permanent settlers in the USA in 1985 numbered 121,600 and in the UK in 1986 were 16,090. In 1986, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics there were 7,496 Persian people living in Australia.

The Persian presence in Australia, can be traced back to the mid-1950s. Persian born immigrants in Australia were shaped as a group at a time when Australia had formally abandoned the White Australia policy, an assimilation policy had taken its place and the policy of multiculturalism was in the introduction process. The first official figure of Persian immigrants in Australia dates back to 1981. The first figure showed that about 3,669 persons of Persian background were living in Australia (ABS, 1986). In 1986 the number of Persian immigrants living in Australia increased to 7,496 persons (ABS, 1986). According to the

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[*] The terms Persian and Iranian (Persia/Iran) have been used interchangeably throughout the thesis as they convey the same meaning.

1996b ABS Census, about 16,270 people of the Iranian population reside in Australia. Population census figures (1996b) indicate that Persian women constitute 44 percent of the Persian population in Australia. In spite of the rapid growth of the Iranian population in Australia, published material on this immigrant group is meager.

Persians constitute only 0.09 percent of the Australian population and 0.36 percent of the migrant population (1996b Census), which is a relatively small recognized cultural minority group in Australia. However, they are one of the most rapidly growing groups in the nation, doubling in number between the 1981 and 1986 Censuses (Table 2.1). The large influx of Iranians into Australia since the late 1970's has been a direct consequence of the Iranian revolution (1978-79) which has added a distinctive minority to the Australian population. The profile of Persians has dramatically changed from those coming abroad to study, to visit, or to work, to include a larger proportion of religious, political and economic exiles, refugees and asylum seekers fleeing Iran for fear of persecution by the current regime. It is estimated that over one and a half million Persians from among the intelligentsia and the professions left the country during the early months of the revolutionary regime (Pahlavi, 1980; cited in Adibi, 1994). This group consisted of volunteer migrants (mainly professionals) who found living conditions after the Iranian revolution (1979) and the beginning of the Iran-Iraq war (1980) unbearable, and of refugees who were young, unskilled, had no command of English and were suddenly separated from a close knit family. There is no doubt that this ever-growing stream of immigrants have their own special needs, particularly psychological. Since stressful life events may lead to psychiatric illness (Chochrane, 1980), several studies (Odegaard, 1932 and Malsberg, 1956; cited in Bagheri, 1992; Verdonk, 1979) have indicated a higher incidence of psychotic breakdown among immigrants than in the general population.

Trends in Iranian migration to Australia can be classified in three waves. The first wave was of Iranian immigrants that included students from the middle class who came to Australia for higher education (1950-70). According to Adibi (1994) the growth of higher education and economic development in Iran needed a great number of highly trained professionals in different fields which resulted in the international migration of Persians to western countries including Australia. The second wave of Iranian immigrants were those who came to Australia mainly for professional, educational, economic and family reunion purposes (1970-78). According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (1991) this wave included semi-skilled blue-collar workers who were economically motivated migrants. A number of Persian tertiary

and post-graduate students came to Australia on scholarships in the early 1970s. Many of these students settled in Australia after they completed their degrees. The third wave, which continues to the present day, began with the Islamic revolution when a large number of Iranians left the country mainly for political, religious and economic security because the Islamic Revolution in 1979 substantially altered social and political structures in Iran. In the view of the radical Islamic nature of the Iranian revolution, political refugees and exiles were not only non-Muslim religious minorities who feared persecution, but were also Muslim Iranians who opposed the new regime. Political developments and religious persecution in Iran resulted in many qualifying to come to Australia under the refugee-humanitarian parts of the Australian immigration program. This group represents diversity in social class, age, education and religion.

One of the distinctive features of Iranian migration to Australia is that it occurred mainly after the Islamic Revolution in 1979 that substantially altered social and political structures in Iran. Furthermore, more Iranians arrived following the Iran-Iraq war, which was fought, between 1980 and 1988. According to the 1996 census, 50.5 percent of Iranian immigrants arrived between 1981 - 1990, and only 17.4 percent (2803 persons) of the population arrived before 1981. The mid-1980s were the peak years of Iran-born Baha'i arrivals as refugees in South Australia (Adelaide Migration Museum, 1993). Iranians who immigrated to Australia had very different motives for leaving Iran. A substantial number of them are political refugees and exiles and some are from the middle or upper-middle classes and have come as skilled migrants. Iranian immigrants have thereafter generated substantial chain migration via the family migration program. A small proportion of Persian immigrants in Australia arrived in Australia as visitors and overseas students in recent years and subsequently changed to immigrant status. This change to immigrant status signifies a desire to settle in Australia among people who first arrived as visitors or students.

According to the 1996b ABS Census, about 9,279 persons of the nation's Iranian population (16,270 persons) resided in NSW, making it the largest concentration of Iranians in Australia (57 percent). Sydney has 32.1 percent of the overseas born population (1996b Census), reflecting Sydney's focal role in Persian immigrants' settlement in Australia. In spite of the rapid growth of the Iranian population in Australia, published material on this immigrant group is very minimal. Table 2.1 indicates the distribution of Persian-born population migrants in Australia in 1996.

Table 2.1 – Australia, distribution of the Iranian-born population by statistical division and selected characteristics, 1996b.

Population				Average annual growth rate %		
1981	1986	1991	1996	1981-86	1986-91	1991-96
3669	7491	12914	16270	+15.3	+11.3	+5.2

Distribution between states (%)				Percentage distribution		
NSW	**Vic.**	**Qld**	**SA**	Major urban	Other urban	Rural
57.03	16.64	6.73	8.38	94.2	4.2	1.6
WA	**Tas.**	**NT**	**ACT**			
8.77	0.55	0.25	1.63			

Length of residence — %

	%
▪ Arrived in previous 5 years	30.3
▪ Arrived in previous 5-10 years	30.9
▪ Arrived more than 10 years ago	38.8

Age/sex structure

	Male	Female	Persons	%
0-14	1042	948	1990	12.2
15-24	1130	991	2121	13.0
25-49	4869	4059	8928	54.9
50-64	1197	934	2131	13.1
65+	520	578	1098	6.7
Total	8758	7510	16268	100

Sex ratio = 116.3

Occupation — %

	%
▪ Manager/administrative	6.4
▪ Professional/paraprofessional	37.1
▪ Trades/clerks/sales	24.9
▪ Labourers and related works	5.8
▪ Transport workers	10.3

Highest qualification (a) — %

	%
▪ Degree /Higher degree/postgraduate diploma	24.5
▪ Undergraduate/associate diploma	8.0
▪ Skilled/basic vocational	8.3

Percentage unemployed	22.0

Ability to speak English — %

	%
▪ Uses English only	7.5

Nature of occupancy — %

	%
▪ Owned/being purchased	46.6
▪ Rents-housing authority/government	6.6
▪ Rents-private	31.2
▪ Other	15.6

	%
▪ Speaks English very well/well	78.3
• Speaks English not well/not at all	19.8

Income ($A)	<16000	36000+
%	66.03	11.0

Source: Figures are taken from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Population and Housing Census of 1996b (ABS), Ethnicity Thematic Profile, Birthplace Iran, which was purchased by the Psychology Department, Adelaide University, for this study, Catalogue No. 2020.0

(a) Excludes persons with a qualification that is outside the scope of the ABS Classification Qualification(ABSCQ).

As is shown in Table 2.1, the average annual growth rate has dropped sharply from 11.3 percent between 1986-91 to 5.2 percent between 1991-96. This may be due to the reduction in political and religious persecution in Iran in the last few years. Persian-Australian immigrants have a strong spatial concentration not only in major urban areas (94.2), but in the largest city, Sydney as 57 per cent of them are residing in NSW. In comparison, according to the 1996a Census, 81 percent of the overseas-born lived in capital cities compared to 63 per cent of the Australian total population.

Table 2.1 indicates that over half of the Persian migrants are in the prime working age bracket (25-49) which reflects the young age structure of this newly established group of migrants. It is especially in this age group that males outnumber females among Persian-Australian immigrants, although among the overall Persian migrant population males outnumber females with a sex ratio of 116.3.

An important and distinctive characteristic of this group is that a substantial proportion of Persian born immigrants in Australia use a language other than English (92.5 %), and a great majority of them are able to speak English very effectively (78.3 %). However, almost one fifth of the Persian-Australian population (19.8 %) are not able to communicate effectively in English. This group may have more social and economic difficulties due to the significant language barrier. This problem becomes more evident considering the small size of the Persian community in Australia, which may consequently lack access to information available on various aspects of the social welfare system of Australia in the Persian language.

A significantly greater proportion of Persian born adults (24.5 %) have a degree or higher than is the case with the Australian born population (10.4 %). Accordingly, Persian born immigrants are substantially over represented compared with Australian born in the professional, paraprofessional and clerical occupational categories. This may reflect the educational selectivity of Persian immigrants to Australia. However, Zehtabchi (1996) made a comparison of Iranians' educational levels with the educational level of others in the United States and found that Iranians have higher educational levels in doctorate, professional, masters and Bachelors qualification (Zehtabchi 1996, Table 1)[1]. Considering the noticeable decline in educational level of Persian immigrants to the United States after the Iranian

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[1] The information in the table is from International Iran Times (1994).

revolution (Sabagh 1987), the education level of Persian immigrants to Australia and United States is relatively high.

In spite of the high proficiency in English and high proportion of Persians having higher degrees, a graduate degree or diploma, and having a relatively young age structure, the unemployment rate among Persian born immigrants is still high (22.0 %) compared with the Australian born population (9.18 %). However, the unemployment rate has dropped for Persian born immigrants by 10.8 percent since 1991 (32.8 % in 1991 ABS data). This may be due to the length of residency in Australia, as there is a lower percentage of Persian born immigrants living in Australia for less than five years compared with 1991 data (30.3 %, 50.5 % respectively). Conversely, there is a higher percentage who have lived in Australia more than ten years compared with the 1991 Census data (38.8 %, 23.8 % respectively).

At the 1996b Census, 62.1 percent of the Persian born population were married and 36.3 percent were single. Only 1.3 percent were in a de-facto relationship. The rate of divorce among the Persian born in Australia is 4.92 % in addition to 3.34 % who are separated, making a total of 8.26 % who have had unsuccessful marriages. However the divorce rate is less than that among the total population of Australia (6.4 %). However, the divorce rate of Persian immigrants in Australia is much higher than the divorce rate in Iran (0.6 %, cited in Adibi, 1994). This might be due to Persian women's awareness of their legal rights in Australia and the social and financial support of divorced women in the Australian society. Another explanation may be that adjustment problems caused by migration impacted on the family relationship. This issue will be explained in detail in the qualitative research reported in this thesis.

As Table 2.1 indicates, the distribution of employed Persian immigrants was such that 6.4 % were employed in the managerial area whereas 37.1 % were employed in the professional and para-professional areas. The remaining 24.9 % of Persian born were employed in the areas of trades, sales, clerical and personal services.

It should be considered, however, as Hanassab and Tidwell (1993) point out, that the migration of Iranians to western countries involve, in the main, upper and middle class groups who were well established in Iran. As a relatively educated group, participants of this study probably have more modern and liberal attitudes compared with those who remained in Iran.

Persian women immigrants to Australia might be categorised in the following major groups:

- Women who are not working - due to the lack of language proficiency and non recognition of their qualifications, these women have become housewives. Many of these women have tertiary qualifications and were working before migration.

- Women who are working in Australia - this group, are predicted to have different rates of integration compared with the above mentioned group due to the daily interaction with the Australian people and their culture.

- Young female adults - who have been caught between two cultures of their parents and their peers at school or university. The home and the school/university are two conflicting social environments in which young Persian women simultaneously interact. Although they live in the traditional culture of their parents at home, they are exposed to a strongly contrasting one in their own social environment (Hanassab & Tidwell, 1989). They are bombarded with messages from their peers, and Western values from the mass media (Sue, 1981). Therefore, young Persian immigrants living in Australia, are confronted with many new tensions stemming from conflicts between the two cultures. Dating and sexual relationships before marriage is a source of major conflict between Persian parents and their daughters. "Iran,…compared with the Western countries, may be described as a sexually restrictive culture in which marriage is still almost exclusively the major route to sexual success" (Shapurian & Hojat, 1985).

- Elderly women - who have lived in Australia for several years but are much less assimilated than the rest of their families. They exist as an isolated minority within the Persian community, depending heavily on younger relatives for social, financial and psychological support.

The Iranian migrant population in Australia is a community bound by tradition, traumatized by the stresses of revolution and tragedies of war to which are added the pain and stress of migration. Many Iranians hope for an improvement in the political situation of Iran so that they may be able to return home. They may resist assimilation because they perceive life in Australia as temporary. This was mainly the case for post-revolution Persian immigrants to

United States in Lipson's study (1992). Nevertheless, the current occupation and income of Persian immigrants in Australia have been affected by the migration experience. Generally, immigrants who had high status occupations in their country of origin may initially experience downward mobility as a consequence of incompatibility of their skills to the country of destination. This was evident in Suhrke's (1983, cited in Sabagh 1987) study who found that Iranians who migrated to the U.S. and who were not officially admitted as refugees, were affected just as adversely as official refugees from Cuba or Vietnam.

Persian immigrants' sense of being cut off from their cultural roots, their "uprootedness" (*see* Coehlo and Ahmad 1980), and their loss of family and friends, homeland, and lifestyle is compounded by extra pressures from the new environment. Most Persian migrants not only struggle with grief over their lost home and culture but are faced with adjusting and adapting to new cultural expectations and behavioral norms of the new society. As Good, et al. (1985) pointed out, for many Persian migrants, the grief of loss is not resolvable, at least for a period, and results in depression. The themes of loneliness, sensitivity of being different in the new society, fears of the fracturing of traditional family patterns of communication, and heightened mistrust and anger are particularly prominent for Persian migrants to western countries (Good et al., 1985).

Dislocation from the primary culture might cause the values and social conventions of the group in question to 'fossilise'. This phenomenon is particularly obvious in Persian families, which, either for economic, political, or geographic reasons, have had little contact with Iran. The passage of time, accompanied by a process of linguistic and cultural adaptation to the Australian culture, results in the Persian culture becoming inflexible. In this way sub-cultural worlds are created which defend and reinforce the individual and group identity and resist the disruptive forces of assimilation with Australian culture. Because their contact with Iran is infrequent, these sub-cultural worlds are not influenced by the progressive changes occurring in Iran. It is, therefore, simplistic to think that the customs, social conventions and lifestyles of all Persian immigrants are identical to those in Iran.

Persians in Australia come from a number of religious backgrounds. According to the ABS (1996b), Persian born immigrants consist of Muslims (32.9 %), Christians (25.4 %), other religions including Baha'I, and Zoroastrian (25.2 %), with 9.1 % claiming no religion. Persian Christians in Australia are predominantly of Armenian cultural background. Some Persian

families in Australia belong to the Zoroastrian faith which was founded by the prophet Zoroaster in Persia in the late seventh century B.C. Compared to their population size in Iran, non-Muslim religious minorities appear to be over represented among Iranians living in Australia. According to Wilber (1981), 98% of the inhabitants of Iran are Muslims.

Because they are not a homogeneous group, cultural practices as a major means of identity formation work differently for Persian born immigrants in Australia. Within the Persian community there are some minorities who were born and lived in Iran for generations but may feel as part of another large community in neighbouring countries such as Armenians and Assyrians who constitute the majority of Christians in Iran. This is the case with Kurds who belong to a larger Kurdish community, and Jews who belong to a larger Jewish community. In Australia, Persian Christians belong mainly to the Armenian and Assyrian communities. Nonetheless, Persian immigrants in Australia belong to their own cultural heritage group referred to as the 'Persian community' which is tied up with Persian history, culture, traditions and the Persian language as key elements of the community's unity. The celebration of Persian New Year, Now-Ruz and Sizdeh-Bedar, the Day of Persian National Picnic as part of the celebration, for all age groups, provide solidarity and togetherness for the community and the development of cultural competencies.

Australians have little knowledge of Persian immigrants and their cultural beliefs and values. Persians usually are confused with Iraqis or are referred to as Arabs. The core of such misunderstanding and confusion is the lack of knowledge about this ethnic group.

The Persian community in Australia has undoubtedly provided its members with some cultural continuity and solid anchorage in tradition which has enabled them to adjust to change. The teaching of Persian language at primary (state schools) and secondary (Persian ethnic schools) levels occurs in all Australian states, and the Persian language has acquired new significance as a marker of cultural group identity. Community events such as popular music concerts, art exhibitions, and collective celebrations of Persian cultural events have helped to promote a sense of shared cultural awareness. Iranian media (SBS radio programs, community publications such as Iranian 'yellow pages') and cultural organizations have also contributed to this growing sense of cultural group identification. However, as Adibi (1994) has noted, Persian born migrants' involvement in their cultural practices is partly due to the formation of their identity and partly is a reaction to the exclusionary practices of the

dominant 'Anglo-Australian culture' and institutions. The dominant culture, which is regarded by Persian born immigrants as a 'young culture' in comparison with Persian culture, which has its roots in antiquity, has created a feeling of difference.

Persian migration to Australia has undoubtedly increased trade activities between both countries, creating demands for Iranian goods. In terms of higher education, the Australian international students program has benefited in recent years from an increasing number of Iranian post-graduate students who are sponsored and supported by the Iranian government. After completion of their studies in Australian universities, they are expected to return home.

2.2   Background: Persian Culture

It is not possible to present an in-depth overview of the situation of Persians in Australia, nor to give a thorough description of Persian culture within this thesis. Given the heterogeneity of the Persian population and the extreme social and cultural discontinuity occasioned by the Iranian 1979 revolution, it is difficult to speak of "Persian culture" in a way that adequately accounts for the evolutionary process it seems to be undergoing. However, in order to provide some context for the analysis, some general background comments are in order.

Judging from reactions in the West to events in Iran from 1978 onward, one might suppose that Iran's is an internally confused culture. Judging from representations by Iranians themselves, one might conclude that almost as many Irans exist as there are Iranians describing their country. According to Hillmann (1990), in humanistic terms Iran's is a rich, coherent culture embodying as well the manifold, internal conflicts and contradictions one might expect in a traditional society as it deals with the contemporary world.

The word "Iran" and "Persia" identify the same country. However, according to Yarshater (1992) and Abhary (1994) the word "Persia" is much more appropriate as it reflects the ethnohistorical and the cultural background of the people and the country. The name, Persia, is derived from Parsa and refers to the region of Fars in the southern part of the country. Fars was the birth place of the Achaemenid dynasty, and the inhabitants were called Parsis, a term used by the Greeks to refer to these people. The word Persia used in European languages, is derived from the Greek version of the name (Yarsgater, 1992).

The population of Iran includes mostly descendants of the ancient Medes, Parthians, the Persians, the Indo-Iranian of the Indo-European family of peoples with the minority descendants of Turkic races, Christian Nestorians, Armenians, Jews and other Aryans (Europa World Year Book, 1994). 'Iran has been at a crossroads of cultures and civilisations, subject to foreign invasion and influences, including Greek, Arab, Mongol and Tatar' (National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition NOOSR, 1992, p.1).

The phrase "Persian Culture" seems straightforward enough at first glance. According to Segall et.al. (1990) culture comprises the man-made part of the environment. In their view culture entails not only material man-made objects, such as houses, but also social institutions, such as marriage, employment and education, each of them regulated by a host of laws, norms and rules. Smith and Bond (1993) define culture as an organized system of meanings which members of that culture attribute to the persons and objects which make up the culture. This definition implies that the objective of culture needs to be restricted to *what things mean* to a group of people. The word "Persian" means "belonging to Persia (Iran)", the Middle Eastern country. The phrase "Persian culture", then, should denote simply the aggregate of attitudes and customs of the people of Iran. However, the physical country of Iran is not paralleled by a single, homogeneous society. Iran, like Australia, is a multicultural and multilingual society. Different Iranian areas have developed different social, cultural, and linguistic patterns. Iran has more than twenty ethnic groups. Not everyone is Muslim and not everyone is Persian. Racial physical characteristics is not a consideration in Persian social interaction. In this respect like Australia, Iran today is a multicultural society.

The uniqueness of Persians is that they comprise diverse ethnic and cultural minorities and are not an internally homogeneous group. They are multicultural and multilingual in nature. Shiite and Sunni Muslims, Bahai's, Armenians, Christian Assyrians, Zoroastrians, and Jews all consider themselves 'Persians'. Given this unique ethnoreligious diversity within the Persian community, they share a Persian identity which is based on the Persian cultural heritage and the medium of communication among them is the Persian language.

The most traditional Persian holiday is Noruz, the first day of spring in the Iranian calendar. Noruz is the biggest cultural event and celebration for Persian families.

2.2.1 Iran Today

Iran, located in the South west of Asia, covers an area of 1,648,195 square kilometers and has a population of 56 million [Iranian Bureau of Statistics, (1991). By Australian standards, Iran is not large, however, by European standards it is a very large country. It is five times the size of Italy and equals the combined areas of England, France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Holland and Denmark. Iran has common borders with the former Soviet Union, Turkey, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan (Figure 2.1). Iran is divided into 14 provinces (Europa World Year Book, 1994). Iran is an arid country, although the climate varies from the severe winters of the highlands to the tropical health of the Persian Gulf (National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition NOOSR, 1992)

Figure 2.1 – The map of Iran and its surrounding countries

Iran has a long and rich history. The history of Iranian culture exhibits a remarkable persistence and continuity. Despite various invasions, Iranian civilisation neither disappeared nor declined. On the contrary, it significantly influenced the civilisations of its invaders. The

nation held together on each occasion, however, instead of going their own way, the ethnic groups of Iran kept their motherland as a whole entity.

Iran is the world's oldest monarchy, stretching back for twenty-five centuries (Forbis, 1980). "With the Iranian revolution in 1979, the 446th and the last of the Iranian Shahs' Mohammed Reza Pahlavi was defeated. With this momentous event, Iran was cast into chaos- chaos that potentially contained seeds of economic depression in the West from loss of Middle Eastern oil, and even the seeds of war in the region. Just before the revolution, Iran throbbed and churned with transformation, with changes coming so fast due to the sudden increase in Iran's annual oil income from $4 billion to $20 billion in 1973" (Forbis 1980, p.289).

Forbis argues that the changes strained society back and forth between the seductive goal of wealth, materialism modernization and the powerful inspiration to preserve the sweet Persian traditions of mysticism, poetry, and devotion to a pure and moralistic Islam. "Potent forces lashed the Iranians and industrialization worked its wry wonders, providing combination boons and afflictions as mass car ownership, petrochemical, and universal television. Villages crowded into the cities, and mechanized agribusiness greened former deserts" (Forbis, 1980, p.viii). However, all these developments were affected by the revolution in 1979. Iran today is still in slow progress since the victory of Islamic fundamentalists, but the change of the regime from monarchy to the Islamic Republic and the eight years war with Iraq slowed down the modernization and industrialization of the country.

2.2.2 Language

In linguistic terms, Azarbayjan, Arab, Caspian, Turkish, Kurdish, Armenian, Assyrian and Persian exist. The "standard" and official language of Persia (Iran) is Persian and it is taught at schools, used in media and known by all Persians. Persian language is a descendant from the Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European language family which dates back to 3000 years ago. It is based on the Sanskrit language from which Greek and Latin also originate (Levy, 1951).

In its classical form, Persian language became the language of excellence of poetry and mystical expression and especially after the Mongol invasion of the thirteenth century, became the medium of culture and literature through the non-Arab Islamic world. Persian

language is Islam's second most important language, and it is spoken now in parts of Russia, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan and Iraq (Abhary, 1994).

The Persian language, the product of a natural evolution of pre-Islamic languages in Iran, is an essential element in Iranian thinking and Iranian unity and in the creation of a literature that is extremely rich. The historical records and literacy in the Persian language are essential features of the Iranian culture.

"It is a central assumption in anthropological studies of learning that language and culture, as symbolically construed meaning systems, are interdependent: the acquisition of language is tied to social and cultural context, and the acquisition of culture occurs at least in part through language" (Hoffman, 1989, p. 118). Persian culture is a language centered culture. Persian language over the past centuries has had a vital role in the survival of the Persian people as a distinct group. Omeri (1997) found that the knowledge of Iranian history and language are the essential component of the Iranian culture that Iranians wish to pass on to their children and the future generation.

2.2.3 Social structure and social values

The culture of Iran has been greatly influenced by her geographical location in the middle east area of South Western Asia, effectively serving as a corridor or land-bridge between East and West (Europa World Year Book, 1994).

Persians are similar in their value system and behaviour to other traditional societies. Iran has traditionally been a male-dominated society with minor exceptions, men have tried to downgrade women's economic, social, and political roles. In the traditional Persian culture, females are expected to be passive, submissive and obedient. The inequality between the sexes and the rigidness of sex roles may be attributed to the Islamic background of the Persian culture. As indicated by Wilber (1981), 98% of the inhabitants of Iran are Muslims. However, the modernization efforts of the 1960s and 1970s resulted in major legal reforms designed to protect women's rights (Tamadonfar, 1993). The Family Protection Law of 1967 and its amendments of 1975 were a sharp departure from past practices. The law was designed to remove men's dominance in such matters as divorce, polygamy, and child custody (Mirani, 1983). The government also became a signatory to major international conventions on the

rights of women and in principle accepted women's equality in education, employment, and equal pay for equal work (Sivard, 1985; cited in Tamadonfar, 1993).

The traditional Persian family is patrilineal and patriarchal (Behnam, 1985). Traditionally, Persian girls are taught to be innocent and obedient, and to be good wives and mothers. On the other hand, males are trained to command and protect and to be independent, to work hard and to achieve status (Tohidi, 1984). Laws in any society can contribute to enhancing the male domination of that society or otherwise. In the Persian culture, which has been very much influenced by Islamic culture (Hegland, 1982), men have special roles in making the final decisions and ruling the household. If the woman opposes a decision, it is the man's right to reject that opposition and make the final decision. Men are encouraged to consult with their wives but the onus is on them for the final decisions. Women do not have equal share of the marriage assets unless it is mentioned in the husband's will or in their marriage certificate. In the second part of the 20th century women in Iran have challenged this male domination. Women who were young and /or wanted to marry struggled for equality with men. This period was a revolutionary change in marital relationships in Persian culture. As a result, women equally could work outside and contribute to the family income and men also helped women around the house. Families who were able to migrate to Western countries were mainly from this generation.

Throughout the centuries, Persian society has been strongly family-oriented (Shahmirzadi, 1983). In Persian culture, the family rather than the individual, is the major unit of society. Child-rearing practices in Persian families are intended to preserve the traditional values of the society (Amir, 1975). The family is Iran's strongest social institution, the locus to which individuals give their loyalty. The upbringing of children emphasizes loyalty to one's parents and discourages individualism. Children are required to stay at home until they marry; even after marriage, they value their parents advise and will receive help from them if they need.

In Persian culture some values such as kindness, sincerity, hospitality and courtesy stand higher in many contexts than other values such as frankness. Although honesty is valued highly and lies are very much condemned, sometimes when circumstances are not conducive to informing the bereaved tactfully and supportively, they may conceal the truth such as giving the news of a death in the family to relatives who live away from home.

Observers of Persian culture often recorded a fundamental theme in the culture that is the contrast between two realms of experience, called as the internal *"baten"* and the external *"zaher"* (Beeman, 1976; Good et al., 1985; Hoffman, 1990). According to Good et al., the internal or inner self (*"baten"*) "houses a person's true feelings and constitutes an individual's true personality" (Good et al., 1985, p. 385) , whereas, the external or social self (*"zaher"*), bound as it is to interact with a world considered corrupt must necessarily costume those inner proclivities in ways that are socially desirable. Hoffman (1990) pointed out that there is no presumed correspondence between the social self and inner self; the social self might act in ways that does not match the inner truths and desires. Hoffman argues that self in Persian culture is conceptualized as a duality.

Sometimes certain approaches which are quite normal and legitimate within a particular culture can be offensive and harmful in a different cultural context. Food is symbolic of caring and hospitality for Iranians. For example, for a Persian family, hospitality is a core element of inviting guests to their homes, and if a guest brings a dish to share, it will be offensive to the host family. On the contrary, in Australian culture, it will be welcomed as a common and acceptable practice.

Persian society was exposed to many modern ideas during the Pahlavi regime about fifty years prior to the 1979 revolution. Consequently, the society underwent profound political, socioeconomic, and cultural change as a result of this modernization. In spite of the pronounced transformation of many Iranian institutions, the family structure was not significantly affected by modernization. According to Behnam (1985) traditional values, beliefs, and customs persisted within the Persian family and only a small number of middle and upper class families adopted Western values and attitudes to some extent.

The institution of marriage has been regulated by highly specific religious codes both in the pre-Islamic and Islamic culture of Iran (Mehryar & Tahskkori, 1978). In Persian culture, marriage is the biggest social occasion in the life of a family. As Hanassab and Tidwell (1993) pointed out, marriage has been highly valued in Persian society and has always played a significant role in the maintenance of the social system. In Persian culture marriage is a very important religious function and should be registered by a registrar who plays a religious representative role. Iran was classified as an "early marriage" nation by Bogue's classification (Momeni, 1972). According to the Civil law passed in 1935 (Shygan, 1950 in Adibi, 1994)

the lowest marriageable age for women was fixed at fifteen and for men at eighteen. Although in the past few decades marriage is not arranged, girls and boys are expected to ask their parents' blessing before their marriage. Courtship is limited and the choice of spouse is still supervised by parents. As Nassehi-Behnam (1985) indicates, parents in Iran still play an important role in the choice of spouse for their children. Marriage in Iran today is very much influenced by the social and cultural value system of the society. Virginity is traditionally given a high value by the vast majority of Iranian men who are looking for a partner. It is a very traditional custom that the bride's family has to purchase furniture for the married couple and the cost of a wedding ceremony should be paid by the groom's family.

In Persian culture de facto relationships are not accepted by society norms as well as by law, and both sexes are prosecuted with heavy penalties if it is officially confirmed. In Persian culture, divorce is not encouraged and is seen as the last resort in a family conflict situation. Couples are encouraged to make the best effort for reconciliation. "According to the Iranian Family Law, a man can not divorce his wife without having a proper reason. Any dispute and discrepancy among the member of a family must be solved in the Family Court" (Adibi, 1994, p. 117). While the divorce law has been modified in accordance with human rights, divorce is nevertheless socially and religiously disfavoured in Persian society. A divorced woman does not have an easy life in Persian society after separation as there is no social support system neither financially nor emotionally for divorced and separated women. Although the kinship network disapproves of divorce, it often accepts to protect the divorcee and offer assistance to prevent more dishonor to the family. But the divorcee, especially if she has children will have to live as an appendix to the parental home. She has lost her marital status and has little hope for a new marriage, especially if she has children. She therefore tries to maintain her mother status which is highly valued in Persian culture. In cases when divorcees co-habit with their parents, another authoritarian character, usually the father or brother, takes the husband's place supervising her. But working women experience freedom especially if they are well paid (Nassehy, 1991).

Omeri's findings (1997) revealed that the stresses of migration can be diminished by family care expressed as being with other Iranian immigrant families and by participating in community activities. In her study, caring was expressed as togetherness, belonging, sharing happiness and suffering, and companionship among members of Iranian immigrant families. This helped them deal with separation and grieving for family members remaining in Iran.

Omeri (1997) found that Persian immigrants to Australia value family care as togetherness but they see this togetherness as deeply rooted in their cultural traditions rather than in their religious beliefs. Consultation with the family on matters relating to diagnosis of terminal illness or mental illness is of major importance. In Persian culture the process of disclosure of information to terminally ill patients and informed consent is crucial. It is often a family decision to determine what information may be disclosed to a sick family member if the person is diagnosed with a terminal illness.

Social graces are very important and children are schooled in how to behave properly in public, and in doing so, frequently cite from cultural stories as examples to follow. Iranian parents treat their young children affectionately, even at times indulgently. Many formal forms of address are used to show respect for one's elders and those of higher status. The mother or father figure is seldom absent from the child's life (Davidian, 1973).

In Persian culture parents hold high aspirations for their children and are prepared to support them till they marry. The Persian value system is centered around family and societal goals. Family is the primary source of help and support for its members. Parents have the prime authority around family decisions. Nonetheless, individuals are governed by social control being achieved through social obligations towards their families as well as to society as a whole.

In Persian culture, integrity, self-respect and personal dignity are important for people. A Persian person is expected to always maintain a good appearance and observe the proper social graces.

Persians are a sentimental and poetic people with an appreciation of the arts and the beauty of nature (Omeri, 1997). So many great poets also emerged from Iran and taught mankind to look for meaning and essence behind appearance. Among them whose works have been translated to many existing languages are Ferdowsi, Hafez, Omar Khayyam, Saadi, Nezami and Jalaloddin Molavi. Iran is called *The Country of Roses, Nightingales and Poetry* by its people. In fact poetry is something very close to Iranians. Reading poetry for them often means like reaching for the unknown, for something that lies at the heart of experience.

2.2.4 Women in Persian culture

In Persian culture, although it is generally agreed that men and women are equal with complementary roles, men are the breadwinners and the head of the family and women are seen as primarily responsible for the home and children. Although women are encouraged to work for outside employers, they do almost all the domestic duties as well. This is mainly due to the traditional cultural expectations about sex roles in the Persian culture; a woman is expected to be a wife and mother, emotionally devoted and to look after the family, while a man must work and provide for the family. In traditional Persian culture, the father heads the family, makes the decisions and his responsibility is correspondingly great. While strong-willed women may predominate, when the occasion is called for, they defer to their husbands. In other words, "father knows best" is the more typical pattern of behavior in traditional Persian families.

Throughout the history of modern Iran, women's status in the social arena has been influenced by the writings and attitudes of the Islamic clergy. Nonetheless, male domination has been confronted and undermined to a large extent in the last few decades by women who have fought for their equal rights in the society. So far, women have substantially gained in certain areas and have so far failed in others. However, this struggle has become more evident after the revolution. Again, social constraints on the behaviour of women are tightened and they are to be more strictly secluded and relegated to the domestic sphere. For example: as Afshar (1992) reported, there has been an absolute and relative decline in women's employment after the Iranian revolution. There are fewer women participating in the workforce than were a decade and half ago. After the revolution, expectations concerning the role of women again changed. Gradually it became apparent that, although women had participated in the public arena of political struggle during the revolution, they are no longer expected to take part in public life (Hegland, 1982). However, according to Seife's findings (1985), married working women compared with non-working women have significantly higher levels of marital power. As Adibi (1994, p. 128) pointed out, in the Persian community today, "there is no sex segregation"; yet there is a tendency at public functions or private parties, for women and men to have their own informal gathering separately but at the same time there may be a lot of interaction between the two groups.

Thus despite changes brought to the culture and society of Iran in the past few decades, the position of the new generation of women is still highly dependent on their socioeconomic status. The new ideas and approaches towards women's role in society seems to have affected primarily upper class women in urban areas, but very rarely have they affected the lower classes in urban and rural areas (Farmer, 1982). As Hegland (1982) reported, after the revolution freedom of action of traditional women was contained within the boundaries set by men and other traditional authorities. Men and their cooperating units of social control have decided on and enforced the limitations on Persian women. Controlled by their economic dependence on men, Persian women attempt to hold on to some degree of security by maneuvering within the limits imposed upon them by men and social pressure rather than overtly struggling against such limits. After the revolution, force and fear of government and strangers have been added to economic dependence and social pressure of husbands and social control networks as tools in controlling the behaviour of women.

However, Higgins (1985) believes that, not all the changes experienced by women since the revolution have been negative. As she pointed out: "while it (revolution) has restricted the rights and opportunities of women in some spheres, it has offered some Iranian women a more positive self-concept, as Iranians and as women. Women, like men, have shared in the sense of power, dignity, and newly awakened pride in their culture, and the very controversy over women's roles has highlighted the importance of women. Iranian women who do not seek access to the same rights, opportunities, and responsibilities as men may still strive for the actual achievement of equality in power and status within a society based on overlapping but distinct male and female spheres" (Higgins, 1985, p. 498-9).

Since pre-industrialization at the end of World War I, the modernization process in Iran has been a big factor in changing the Persian family system (Behnam, 1985). The essence of these changes is a better recognition of and respect for individual freedom of choice in family formation. Another manifestation of this growing interest in protecting women's rights in marriage is the emphasis on equality of relationships within marriage (Mehryar & Tashakkori, 1978). The majority of men and women in recent years have gone through a basically modern and highly standardized education system. However, urban and educated families have been more likely to be affected by these changes.

This modernization process has resulted in an increase in the number of women in the labor force which subsequently has changed sex-role relationships and women's submissive role (Zehtabchi, 1996). These changes prepared Persian couples to move toward a joint-role relationship and increased the level of power sharing. Social and economic change in recent years, have had considerable effects on women. The economic factor urges women to work outside the home if possible. A woman's economic role affects her status in the family. She is no longer dependent on her husband financially but she still depends on him emotionally. Woman's work is valued negatively by her husband if she becomes independent and does not tolerate any longer an unhappy marriage. Working Persian women gain freedom, but may remain unhappy as they are alienated and lonely (Nassehy, 1991). However, despite the social changes and improvements in women's status within the society and the family, the dependency of women on men is still evident and is part of the Persian culture. It appears from some literature, however, that male dominance cames back into existence in Persian families after migration, as Abyaneh (1989) found in her study of Persian women immigrants to the United States.

CHAPTER 3
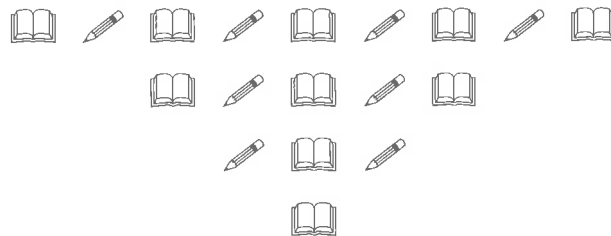
Review of the related literature

3.1   Migration, ethnicity and the process

Migration is a natural phenomenon in the history of humanity. "Even mythical men such as Adam, prometheus, and Daedalus were obliged to migrate because of disagreements with the ruling power of the time. Thus, Jehovah, Zeus, and Minos can be considered the first who fostered the migration of those in search of knowledge and independence" (Majia, 1979, cited in Farjad, 1981, P. 32).

It has been widely asserted that movement from one culture to another is a big challenge. It is said that migration is a little like dying. Leaving one's own native land, family and friends is a painful experience that in some ways may be similar to the experience of mourning.

Immigration is considered a life stress, since it entails enormous changes in employment status, living, sociocultural environment and financial status (Bagheri, 1992). Arrival in the host society imposes several basic requirements, which if not met expeditiously, can become serious stressors (Vega, et al., 1987). Emigrating is a major event in the life of an individual and it remains constantly in one's thoughts after the event. Even for those who appear to be well integrated into the host society, the experience of emigrating is often a memory, which is loaded with agonizing and distressing emotional elements. According to Liu (1979, cited in Nicassio and Pate, 1984), for many migrants the emigration process has not only led to substantial material and psychological loss, it has also caused widespread disruption in families and other support systems.

It is frequently assumed that the majority of migrants are motivated by the need to find employment and to improve their material standards of living. Education generates an expectation of improved material and social status. When these aspirations cannot easily be achieved in the country of origin opportunities in other countries may be explored. However, with some migrants economic factors may have been a secondary influence.

Eisenstadt (1954) considered that every migratory movement is motivated by the migrant's feeling of some kind of insecurity and inadequacy in his/her original social setting. Migration will happen if the difference between the native and the host country is great enough to overcome difficulties to movement. According to Lee (1966; cited in Scott & Scott, 1989)

migration is a decision to move as a result of attractive features of the new and old locations, balanced against their disadvantages.

An immigrant is confronted with a variety of problems concerning maintenance or change of his or her own identity; he or she is dealing with systems of values, beliefs, and behaviour different from those of the mainstream society, those of his or her own ethnic or cultural group, and those of his or her own personal system, even in resolving everyday routine problems such as finding a job. Each immigrant applies different coping strategies or reactions to these challenges. These specific reactions are called "acculturation strategies" (Schmitz, 1992, p. 361).

Although it is assumed that the environment to which an immigrant has to adjust is a fixed one, it is recognized that, in the long run, large-scale immigration is having its effects on the Australian way of life. As immigrants become integrated into the social, economic and political structure of Australia, their influence will be increasingly felt. It is clear that the presence of a large number of immigrants is likely to affect the sex, age, and socio-economic structure of the host nation.

Mental pressure on a migrant is usually associated with the need to change in the new environment (Kosa, 1957; Eisebstadt, 1954; Menges, 1959; cited in Taft, 1973). Studies have indicated that the best adjustment is achieved when the adaptation occurs within a solid primary group; for preference, when the family adapts as a unit to the new country. These findings should be considered for countries receiving migrants. Receiving countries should not try to expedite the acculturation process by disturbing family coherence, or by discouraging ethnic associations. The results of these efforts will affect the adjustment of migrants and makes the assimilation process more difficult.

The tendency of migrants to leave their home country falls into two categories: socio-economic factors such as the need for higher education, better job opportunities and a better access to resources, and socio-political factors such as racial discrimination and religious persecution, which are mainly dictated by the ruling class of the home country.

Migrants who decide to leave their home country and choose a destination are usually attracted to a country which they feel can fulfill their desires and wishes which were not

achieved in their home country. The image of the destination may have been acquired through the media or from visits by the person or a friend. This information usually is very limited and very selective, ignoring the negative features of the target country. For example, Australia is well known in Iran for its pleasant climate and as a land of opportunities for children especially in education. Unattractive features such as unemployment, hidden racism, and the devaluation of overseas qualifications are often ignored, even if information about them is available. Hence, most problems become apparent for a Persian immigrant after the move has been accomplished.

The stresses of adapting to new surroundings are more devastating for immigrants than for internal migrants, but they are similar in content. Establishing new residences and jobs, separation from former sources of support, and learning new patterns of interaction with community members and service providers, are common to both groups but more easily seen among immigrants.

3.1.1 Varieties Of Migration

Migration occurs when people move within one community, from one community to another in the same country or from one community in one country to another community in another country (Friessem, 1974; cited in Verdonk, 1979). According to McKinley (1975), geographical distance and the amount and quality of change in the environment of the mover are two important elements of migration. As Verdonk (1979) pointed out, the more alike the native and host communities are in culture and social structure, the less profound will the effects be for the migrant.

It is acknowledged by many researchers that the amount and quality of change depends on the circumstances in which the residential change occurs. There is a big difference between people who migrate voluntarily or by force, and between temporary workers from other countries who have other interests than those who migrate, voluntarily or involuntarily, for a permanent stay in a new country. However, one consequence for all such groups is that they are subsequently faced with the daunting task of meeting the endless challenges of adapting to the demands of a new culture.

In this context definition of some commonly used terms in the migration literature seems necessary.

Temporary migration - Countries with a high economic growth rate but less space to absorb settlers have a high intake of temporary migration. For example, Singapore and Saudi Arabia that have attracted thousands of temporary employees from Southern Asia (Scott & Scott, 1989). The transient migrants relocate temporarily to seek work in these countries. Iran attracted many temporary labor migrants from Pakistan and the Philippines before the revolution in 1979. Seasonal workers and overseas students or Philippino women throughout Asia and Europe fit well into this category (Nesdale, 1997). However, Some of the foreign students such as overseas students in Australia, do not wish to return home, but instead seek permanent residency to stay in Australia. A significant number of these students who fail to get permanent residency are nevertheless able either to stay longer or to leave their grown-up children behind for higher education. According to Watson (1977; cited in Scott & Scott 1989) temporary migrants can be defined as those who are mentally oriented towards the home country, though spend most of their life abroad. According to this definition, a good number of Persian immigrants to Australia fit into this category.

Permanent migration - Countries like Australia, New Zealand and Canada have intakes for a permanent migration program. Permanent settlers in a new country are welcomed as citizens (Scott & Scott 1989).

Voluntary migration - voluntary migration is usually initiated by the migrant with free choice.

Forced migration - forced migration usually constrained by a 'government, slave trader, revolution, invading army, drought, or hostile pressures from the surrounding society' (Scott & Scott 1989, p.4). Refugees and those with no country to go back to are major types of forced migrants. (Mezey, 1960; Ziegler, 1977; cited in Scott & Scott 1989).

International migration - international migration requires change of residence by shifting from one culture to another. This type of migration usually results in permanent separation from family and friends.

Domestic migration - domestic migration or internal migration entails change of residence within national boundaries.

3.1.2 Definition of terms

Several related terms have been used in the literature to describe changes that occur in individuals after they have immigrated to the host society but there has been inconsistency in the way these terms have been used. In this section an attempt has been made to specify a common usage in the Australian and American studies.

3.1.2.1   Adjustment

Adjustment is the feeling of being in line with one's environment (Taft, 1979, 1985; Scott & Scott, 1989). The concept of adjustment has received special attention by psychologists. They have commonly defined the term as a supplement relationship between the individual and the surrounding environment. This does not necessarily mean that the outlook of the person is identical with her/his social environment. For instance, a migrant can well be adjusted to the new country without changing her/his social norms and values. In other words, adjustment in its psychological sense, implies that it is a continuous phenomenon that individuals undergo in order to achieve a harmonious relationship with the environment.

3.1.2.2   Adaptation

Living in a foreign culture may inevitably lead the migrant to accept and learn new values peculiar to the host culture and, therefore, changing to the dominant way of life which may be very different from values practiced in the home country. Adaptation refers to the changes made by the immigrant to fit in better with the new environment. Adaptation includes changes in behavior as well as in attitudes. According to Punekar (1974), when a migrant aims to combine traits in order to produce a smoother functioning cultural whole, it is called adaptation. Richardson (1974) has formulated the immigrant's adaptive processes into a sequence of reactions, each following from the proceeding. The process of adaptation is defined by Berry et al. (1986b, cited in Schmitz, 1992, p. 360) "as the process by which the individual changes his psychological characteristics, changes the surrounding context, or

changes the amount of contact in order to achieve a better outcome with other features of the system in which he carries out his life".

3.1.2.3   Integration

Integration occurs when a migrant becomes absorbed to some extent into the new community by being accepted into certain social organizations and friendship groups with associated feelings of belonging to that group. Integration suggests participation by the newcomer in the life of the new group or society without necessarily becoming fully absorbed. However, integration is often used as a euphemism when assimilation is the real connotation (Taft 1985). Integration is defined by Berry et al., (1986b, cited in Schmitz, 1992, p. 360) as "maintenance of the cultural integrity of a group, as well as the movement by the group to become an integral part of a larger societal framework".

3.1.2.4   Acculturation

Acculturation first was identified as a cultural level phenomenon by anthropologists (eg, Redfield, et al., 1936, cited in Georgas et al., 1996) who defined it as culture change resulting from contact between two autonomous cultural groups. The process of adjusting to a new culture has been termed *acculturation* by Ghaffarian (1998). Acculturation is also an individual-level phenomenon, requiring individual members of both the larger society and the various acculturating groups to work out new forms of relationships in their daily lives (Georgas et al., 1996). The process of acculturation refers to the borrowing of certain traits from one society by people of the other society (Richardson, 1961). Acculturation might also refer to economic absorption. In other words, the migrant has been integrated to the economic system by finding a place in the economy of the new society. Acculturation may lead one to assume that it tends to express a behavioral pattern that other sociologists have defined as assimilation.

In cross-cultural psychology, acculturation has been defined in two different ways: as the process of acquiring the customs of the host culture (Fong, 1973; Ogletree, 1969) or acculturation as the process of incorporating the customs from the host and the native societies (Ghaffarian, 1998; Mendoza, 1989 and 1984; Ramirez, 1977). Mendoza (1984), has called the first approach *'monocultural'* and the second *'multicultural'*.

One of the findings of subsequent research in this area is that there are vast individual differences in how people attempt to deal with acculturative change (Georgas et al., 1996). This phenomenon is called "acculturatition strategies" by Berry (1990). These strategies have different aspects including: individuals' preference for these strategies (called "acculturation attitudes" by Berry et al., 1989); how much change individuals actually undergo (called "behavioral shifts" by Berry, 1980); and how much of a problem these changes are for them (called "acculturative stress" by Berry et al., 1987).

3.1.2.5 Assimilation

Assimilation is the process whereby a migrant and the host population become more alike by losing the migrant's distinctiveness in terms of an overt change in the behavior as a result of interaction with the new society. Assimilation appears to imply movement towards a complete loss of identity (Taft, 1985). That is, the migrant adopts the culture of the host country, gives up his/her own life style, and eventually, loses his/her identity as a member of the original culture. According to Park and Burgess's (1921) definition, Assimilation is a process of interpenetrating in which persons and groups acquire the memories, and attitudes of other persons or groups by sharing their experience and history. According to Shannon (1970) acculturation possibly occurs in a short period of time, whereas assimilation is gradual and unconscious. Berry et al; (1986b, cited in Schmitz, 1992, p. 360) define assimilation as "the abandonment of the previous cultural identity and the construction of positive relations with the other cultural group".

Both acculturation and assimilation have been used to construct a theoretical framework for different research on the issues facing migrants as a result of living in another society. It is commonly agreed by many researchers that both terms are points on a continuum from extreme cultural differences between immigrants and the host culture, to a point where these two groups look the same and are no longer distinguishable. According to Taft (1953, 1957, 1966), assimilation is defined as the process whereby the immigrants and the native population become more alike as a result of integration. He regards the process of assimilation as a multi-faceted rather than a uni-dimensional process.

5.1.2.6   Segregation / Separation

Segregation or separation signifies the maintenance of cultural identity with no interest in building up positive relations with other groups (Berry et al., 1986b; Schmitz, 1992).

5.1.2.7   Marginalization

Marginalization is defined by Berry et al. (1986b), as "giving up cultural identity, and being not interested in positive relations to another cultural group" (1986b, cited in Schmitz, 1992, p. 360).

3.2   Conceptual framework for studying immigrants

Australian studies have employed two complementary and interrelated perspectives for conceiving the behaviour and reactions of immigrants both before and after their migration: the socialization and resocialization perspective of Taft (1957, 1966, 1973, 1977a) and the sequential model of Richardson (1957, 1961, 1967, 1974). According to Taft (1973), learning to adapt to our original community in our childhood can be called *socialization*. The adjustment to the new community can be called *resocialization*. Taft perceives immigrant adaptation as a special case of socialization (1986). He portrays the process of migration from a socialisation – resocialisation perspective, describing the immigrant adjustment to a new sociocultural environment as a person shedding old social learning that was previously helpful, and adopting new and more appropriate responses. These are evident in changes in social skills, behaviour, attitudes and values. He argues that, the assimilation of immigrants can be seen as a case of socialization or, resocialization, involving some psychological factors such as changes in attitudes, values and identification, and emotional adjustment to a changed environment. Socialization is defined by Merton (Merton, 1957; cited in Taft, 1973, p. 224) as "the processes by which people selectively acquire the values and attitudes, the interests, skills and knowledge - in short, the culture - current in the groups of which they are, or seek to become, a member".

Taft (1973) suggests that, there are similar psychological problems and principles in these two adjustments. For example a child needs to learn to accept adult responsibilities and to behave differently with people according to their hierarchy status. In other words, a migrant needs to

become resocialized by accepting the new community's social norms. In the words of Eisenstadt (1954; cited in Taft, 1973,p. 226) a "migrant needs to be desocialized before he can be resocialized". Richardson (1974), describes the process of migration and adaptation as a function of motivation, opportunity, disposition to emigrate, energizing experiences and influences before emigrating, and corresponding factors after doing so. Richardson conceived migration, as a progress through a series of stages that will happen in sequence. Each stage enables the migrant to reach a level of progress in one stage before passing to the next one. Where for any reason this level of progress is not reached through lack of motivation, lack of opportunity or necessary ability, or perhaps just as a result of experience, some regression may set in (Richardson, 1961).

According to Richardson (1974) immigrants' adaptation begins with the high level of satisfaction resulting from the freedom from normative restrictions, novelty and justification of their decision to migrate. This stage will be followed by a stage of depression, due to the 'cultural shock' reaction to prejudice from natives and nostalgia. If the immigrant survives this stage and does not return to the old country, the next stage involves resuming high levels of satisfaction and will result in identification with the new society, which often leads to acculturation or adaptation to the ways of the society. Scott & Scott (1989) reject this model as they believe that "Richardson's model implies a single, monistic native culture, towards which immigrants move, rather than a variety of partially overlapping, partially coherent cultures that are differentially contacted by different newcomers, resulting in quite different patterns of acculturation" (Scott & Scott, 1989, p. 17). However, Bagheri's study (1992) on Iranian immigrants in Canada, supported the first and second stage of the Richardson (1974) model of adaptation process. Bagheri found that there are three stages of adjustment for Persian immigrants; the first stage was found to be the stage of excitement and euphoria that starts immediately after arriving to the new country. The excitement may be mainly related to the sense of freedom from the extreme restrictions and suppressions experienced at home. The second stage occurs between a few months, to two to three years after arrival and this is a stage of atypical depression and anxiety due to the difficulties experienced in adaptation. The third stage, involves the somatization of illness. He indicated that a great number of Iranians present with physical problems when suffering from depression, anxiety or other psychiatric symptoms.

According to Gudykunst & Kim (1984, page 255; cited in Hoffman, 1990, p. 276), "culture programs us to define what is real, what is true, what is right, what is beautiful, what is good…We are programmed…We all have a tendency towards ethnocentrism as a result of our very inseparable relationship to our culture".

Of course, not all migrants have the same courage and motivation to change. Some have strong motivation to adapt themselves; especially those who have migrated voluntarily and have willingly selected the new society. Those who are refugees and have been forced to leave their country of origin might be more reluctant to change. In some cases, a migrant might find the adjustment process very easy if the new society is more suited to his/her goals and temperament than the original society. Nevertheless, the amount of change is partly due to the differences between the society, in which the one was originally socialized and the new society to which one has moved.

According to Morrison (1973), in studying the relationship between migration and mental illness we need to take certain variables into account: geographical distance, the degree and quality of change in the new social environment, the circumstances in which migration took place; the cultural, social and economic characteristics of the native and the host communities, and the particular characteristics of the individuals.

In the case of migrant children, socialization and resocialization should be viewed differently, as children's adaptation to the new community depends on the influence of resocialization on their initial socialization and the way that they are raised being influenced by their original culture in a new society (Taft, 1966). Tajfel (1978), explains that the acquisition by a child of value differentials between his /her own group and other groups, is part of the general process of socialization.

One important aspect of the attitudinal environment of immigrants is the expectation of the native population concerning the assimilation behaviors of the newcomers. Taft (1966) acknowledges that a major factor in the movement of immigrants towards integration with their host country is the structure of the host community itself. This is in line with what Berry (1987) argues for acculturation research. Berry (1987) with his associates (Georgas et al., 1996) believe that acculturation research should be comparative to understand factors that influence individual and group variation in the acculturation process, and argue that one

important factor affecting the process of acculturation is the nature of the host society. In particular, immigration and multicultural policies of the host country. Thus it is important in acculturation studies to specify not only the cultural characteristics of the host society toward which acculturation may take place but also the "acculturative messages" (i.e., national policies and attitudes in the national population) that acculturating individuals are exposed to in their daily lives (Georgas, et al., 1996, p. 337).

According to Taft (1966), there are three types of attitudes; monistic, interactionistic and pluralistic. Monism implies that immigrants should attempt to become absorbed culturally and socially as quickly as possible. Interactionistism implies mutual tolerance of differences with a gradual convergence through social interactions, and pluralism implies that the differences should be preserved (Taft, 1966, p. 21). Taft studied assimilation orientations by Australians in 1960 in Western Australia. He found that one third of Australians were monistic in orientation and two-thirds were interactionistic. Interestingly, pluralism was preferred by virtually none of the subjects. (Taft, 1966, p. 22).

In the past two decades there has been a considerable shift towards multiculturalism. The early intolerant attitudes of Australians led to policies of active assimilation and integration of other cultures into the dominant anglo-celtic cultural mode. Unfortunately, this policy led to many bitter consequences such as, highly skilled migrants being forced to work on menial tasks for several years before they were accepted into their appropriate positions and some never were able to work at the level of the training they had received in their home country. In investigating the psychological effects of migration on migrants one must take these social experiences into account and the relationships between migrants and their family, their cultural history and the wider present society. Investigators need to affirm the cultural values of others living in a pluralistic society as many people from minority backgrounds have a weak political base in their adopted country and are often overlooked or forgotten.

3.3   Theoretical considerations: Adjustment and related concepts

3.3.1 The adjustment of migrants

Adaptation to a culture should not be viewed as complete conformity to the norms, nor lack of it solely as deviance from them. The adaptation of an immigrant to a new society demands both social and emotional adjustment, and acceptance of, and conformity to, social norms. Adjustment is referred by Taft (1973) as:

> "feelings of being in harmony with one's environment – although it does not necessarily imply that the outlook of the person and his social environment are identical. For example, an immigrant can be adjusted to his new country without necessarily changing his social norms and values" (p. 227).

The adaptation process has been investigated from different perspectives by many researchers in Australia in the second half of the century. What were probably the first systematic studies conducted anywhere by psychologists on the adaptation of immigrants were commenced at the University of Western Australia in the early 1950s (Taft, 1986). The findings of these early studies are reported in Taft (1966) and Richardson (1974). The findings indicate that the process is not unidimensional. It is possible to be acculturated with respect to one aspect of life (eg. language) and not with respect to another (eg. commitment to the host country).

The psychological studies of immigrants' adaptation carried out in Western Australia in the 1950s (Taft 1957) hoped that it would be possible to analyse the process into stages which could follow a sequence. The model of migration process presented by Taft (1966, 1977a, 1985, 1986), examined the adjustment process and the psychological adjustment of immigrants to a new culture. Taft (1966, pp.11-12) viewed the first stage as the acquisition of 'knowledge of the host culture' to the last stage as the 'congruences between own and host group norms'. All of the stages were analysed from two perspectives: *Internal* (attitudes to the host group) and *External* (actual attempts to establish social relationships with the host culture).

In any society, common usage of adjustment refers to emotional stability and freedom from internal conflicts and tensions, which means freedom from psychoneuroses, and the person's harmony or conflict with his/her external environment (Taft, 1966). Nevertheless, the degree

of external adjustment will often be reflected in the person's emotional and personality adjustment. Internal adjustment might reflect the external and vice versa (Taft, 1979). According to Taft (1986), the effect of the exposure of an immigrant to a new country is mediated by the norms, attitudes and role requirements of the individual, his/her family and community, and the society at large. Taft considered the changes that occur in each immigrants in terms of their motivation, resources and competence; their behaviour is conceptualized as a compromise between what they want to be and do, what they are capable of doing and being, and how much opportunity is provided for them by the host society to achieve their goals and aspirations (Taft 1977). This conceptualization of behaviour was the basis of Taft's psychological theoretical studies on migration. However, he had a clear strategy in his studies and that was "While it always is possible to explain human behaviour ex post facto in terms of a social psychological theory, it is much more difficult to demonstrate the differential validity of one particular theory over competing ones. Any satisfactory explanation of social behaviour in natural conditions must be very complex and must involve a variety of sociological and cultural variables as well as psychological" (Taft, 1986, p. 340).

Taft initially posited that immigrants would move towards integration in successive stages, each characterised by different behaviours and attitudes. Taft developed a conceptual scheme in which the various aspects of the adaptation process were separately delineated: a series of successive stages through which an immigrant moves on a path from complete marginality to complete cultural assimilation – given sufficient time. However, his research later led him to disregard the notion of stages of assimilation, in favour of an analysis into *aspects* of adaptation (Taft, 1986). Further research in Western Australia on various immigrant groups and their adaptation process were conducted using a multifaceted framework. There was a core of agreement in these studies on the findings on four main factors, namely: primary integration, attitudes to own ethnic group, cultural adaptability, and secondary integration. These core findings led Taft to modify his model and to develop a simplified and more easily applicable schema.

Taft's multifaceted simplified model divided the adaptation of immigrants into several components or aspects: Adjustment, National and Ethnic Identity, Cultural Competence, and Role Acculturation. Each is represented as Internal (subjective) and External (objective) perspectives, where the internal viewpoints represent the behavioural field of the individual

and the external represents the publicly observable behaviour of the individual. Taft (1985) reports that the two most important aspects of the adaptation process are the internal side of national and ethnic identity and the external side of role acculturation, which together constitute the core of assimilation. A certain amount of social and economic adjustment seems to be needed before the assimilationist sequence of identification and acculturation operate (Taft 1985). Table 3.1, illustrates Taft's multifaceted simplified model presenting the adaptation of migrants. (adapted from Taft, 1977, p.148; Taft, 1985, p. 368).

Figure 3.1- Analysis of adaptation of immigrants into aspects (Adapted from Taft, 1985, p. 368).

Aspect	**Internal**	**External**
Adjustment	Feelings of satisfaction (eg. work, school, housing, friends, leisure, prospects, etc). Sense of well-being Self-fulfillment Emotional comfort and security (versus stress and anxiety)	Quality of life Mental health Social and economic participation in informal social relations, formal organizations, economic system, entertainment, etc.
National and ethnic identity	Self-perceived identity National and ethnic identification Feeling of belonging, sharing 'fate' commitment to group Reference group orientation	Citizenship Overt social identity
Cultural competence	Self-perceived competence Feelings of mastery	Cultural adaptability Language competence Cultural knowledge Socio-cultural skills Quality of role-performance
Role acculturation	Monistic attitudes to acculturation (versus pluralistic) Language preference Self-perceived conformity	Accommodation and conformity (eg, dress, eating habits, home decoration, use of colloquialisms) social absorption Language use Convergence to modal or prescribed norms

Taft's simplified model was modified again in 1986 as a result of the accretion of findings and changes in public attitudes. The latest version of his schema is set out in Figure 3.2 which describes five aspects of the adaptation process, one covering psychological and socio-economic adjustment and four covering social psychological integration: National and Ethnic Identity, Cultural Competence, Social Absorption, and Role Acculturation. The model lists representative variables for each aspect which are classified further according to whether they reflect a subjective, internal perspective based on the immigrant's self-descriptions or an external one which is subject to validation by observer consensus. The model provides a framework for analysing the relationship between one variable and another; the information obtained from two perspectives complement each other (Taft, 1986).

Figure 3.2- Analysis of adaptation of immigrants into aspects (Adapted from Taft, 1986, p. 342).

	Perspective	
Aspect	**Internal**	**external**
A → Socio-emotional Adjustment	Feelings of satisfaction Sense of well-being Self-fulfillment Emotional comfort	Quality of life Mental health
B → Social and Psychological Integration		
National and ethnic identity	Self-perceived identity Feeling of belonging Ethnic reference group	Citizenship Overt social identity
Cultural competence	Self-perceived competence Feelings of mastery	Language competence Potential for role-performance
Social Absorption	Favorable attitudes to social relations with host group Perceived acceptance	Interpersonal contact with host group Membership of organizations Social acceptance
Role acculturation	Monistic attitudes to acculturation (versus pluralistic) Language preference Self-perceived conformity	Language use Behavioral conformity

Taft (1973) used the measure of satisfaction with various aspects of a migrant's life as the most common measure to study adjustment in immigrants. He believed that "while an immigrant's satisfaction is not a direct observation of the degree to which harmony exists with his(her) environment, it can be assumed that it usually bears a close relationship to it" (Taft, 1973, p. 228) . In his study of Hungarian 'intellectuals' in Australia (Taft, 1962), the criteria he used to measure migrants' adjustment were whether they held a job which was objectively of the same status as their pre-immigration occupation, and also whether they had any friends (these constituted a measure of 'occupational and social adjustment' which was different from the measure of satisfaction). He found that there was no relationship between the degree to which the respondents claimed to be satisfied with their jobs and the degree to which their occupational status had dropped since they had left Hungary.

Taft's research on the adaptation process focuses on the relationship between the different aspects of the adaptation process and the measurement of elements of this process. Taft (1985) argues that most immigrants do move towards integration with the host culture in their country of resettlement, as they modify behaviours and attitudes developed in their country of origin, adapt new behaviours and reshape their environment. He believes that, the adaptation of immigrants is "a steady growth of their cultural competence, their acculturation, their social and occupational absorption and their identification with their new society and its culture" (Taft, 1985, p.381).

 Taft (1973) acknowledges that in considering migrants' adjustment we need to consider what migrants want from life and look at the types of migrants' needs in the new society. There are common needs to all human beings and there are some others that are particular to each individual. These needs can be listed as:[2] 1) *Biological* needs: These needs are basic such as eating, physical activity, sex, etc. These are basic biological needs and failure to meet these needs will be very frustrating; 2) *Social and psychological* needs: The need to have human contact, to socialize, to get help and to be helpful, to be loved and to love others; 3) *Instrumental* needs: The need to acquire goals that are instrumental to achieve more basic goals, such as the need to earn money to get shelter or food; 4) *Ego* needs: The need to have social status and the need to be motivated for high achievements in life; 5) *Self-satisfaction*

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[2] A more comprehensive list of needs has been made by Taft (Taft, 1973). The listing given here is similar, but not identical with that of Taft.

needs: The need to apply one's abilities and to develop them, artistic expression, the need to express one's attitudes and own style of behavior, and to enjoy emotional experiences.

Depending on life experiences and the expectation of a migrant for his/her own life, the importance of these needs will modify. Because of these variations, the satisfaction of a business man of his economic instrumental needs are different from the satisfactions sought by an intellectual migrant, and there are no rules as to what satisfactions are needed for migrants to be able to adjust themselves to the new environment. Therefore, there might be a vast difference between the level of satisfaction of highly educated migrants with migrants who might be in the labor force. Taft (1966) found that Polish and Hungarian refugees who had undertaken some form of higher education before emigration were much less satisfied with their life in Australia than a comparable group of less well-educated Polish refugees. A similar finding was reported by Krupinski (1986), who studied the influence of the receiving community on the well-being of young Indochinese refugees in Australia and found that the higher the level of education, and the higher the level of unemployment in the receiving community, the less satisfactory the adjustment reported by refugee residents. The main source of dissatisfaction for intellectuals might be in regards to the level of cultural life in Australia or to the lack of professional opportunities that lead them not to meet their self-satisfaction needs. Taft (1966) also found that intellectual immigrants tended to be less satisfied with Australia than others, and were much less desirous of spending the rest of their lives in Australia, presumably because of shortcomings which they perceive in their job prospects and in the Australian way of life.

Taft (1985) views adjustment as a state of harmony between person and environment, and points out that adjustment does not necessarily imply a move towards absorption into the host society, since the environment can be protective of a migrant supplied entirely by her/his own ethnic community. He supports Richardson's view (1961) on adjustment as a facilitator of movement towards the larger society, although not necessarily also away from the ethnic community (Richardson, 1961). Taft distinguishes between *internal* and *external* adjustment. He believes internal adjustment is reflected in immigrants' rating of their life in Australia and of their life in general. This important factor reflects the extent to which immigrants are satisfied that their needs are being met, and measures their sense of well-being, self fulfillment and emotional security. In Taft's view (1985), external adjustment is reflected in the immigrants' social and economic participation, how they relate and with whom – whether

they participate in organisations (such as social, professional and social service associations) or whether they have a job, or are otherwise part of the economic system. In another study of Taft with Doczy (1962), it was found that the measures of satisfaction (internal adjustment) formed a different factor from the external measures such as occupational status and social relations (Taft & Doczy, 1962). Taft concludes that, when immigrants participate socially this does not necessarily mean that they have assimilated to the Australian way of life (Taft, 1985).

Taft's view on internal and external adjustment and their independence was supported by Scott and Scott (1982) who point out that 'the several foci of adaptation – socio-economic, subjective, interpersonal and medical – are relatively independent' (Scott and Scott, 1982, p. 178). They also believe that high levels of external adjustment does not necessarily lead to satisfaction with life in Australia and these two aspects need to be studied independently. However, Scott & Scott used the term *primary* integration and *secondary* integration which is equivalent to the terms *external* and *internal* adjustment used by Taft (1985).

A migrant's satisfaction in the new country is mainly determined by the reasons for his/her decision to migrate, and by the experiences gained in the new country. For example, if a migrant woman migrates to a new country because of her husband and his success, she will be satisfied if her husband is pleased with his job in the new country. For refugees who have been forced to flee for political or personal reasons, their motivation for emigration is self-preservation, and on arrival they are very satisfied because their satisfaction is not dependent on their behavior, as the atmosphere of the new country is not as oppressive. It seems that if migration is forced by the conditions in the native country, and the cost of migration is also low, a low level of satisfaction in the new country will be sufficient for being satisfied in the new country. However, this satisfaction might change over time depending on the interplay between experience and feelings. This was evident in Taft and Doczy's (1962) findings. "….On arrival in Australia, the refugees mostly felt that they had been granted a breathing spell to reconsider their future aims and aspirations…..Whether they considered that Australia would or would not provide such satisfaction was determined by their experience in the first few years after immigration in what could be called a testing period….After the initial period, which had been dominated by a 'sanctuary' mentality, the usual middle-class aspirations for status started to take over (1962, p. 32). Richardson (1974) reports similar findings in a longitudinal study of British immigrants in Australia.

On the whole, studies of satisfaction with particular areas of life among immigrants tend to produce sufficient highly inter-correlated measures to speak of a general satisfaction dimension. For example, Steinkalk (1983) who studied Soviet Jewish immigrants in Victoria found that, satisfaction with the standard of living was highly correlated with overall satisfaction in life. Scott and Scott (1989) also reported that the satisfaction levels of newly arrived migrants were almost the same as those of established immigrants in some areas of life, but lower in the areas of jobs and friendships and higher with respect to family relations. Taft (1966) also found that the degree of satisfaction with aspects of life in Australia is lower among refugees than among voluntary immigrants.

The most common reason for migration is that the person assumes that more life satisfaction can be obtained in a new country than the original one. The person will be prepared to migrate if he/she feels that the cost of migration is less than the gain in satisfaction. The cost of migration however, is difficult to estimate, because it includes many costs that are not covered by financial considerations. A migrant needs to consider many problems associated with the move including: the difficulties of learning new ways and the discomfort of learning a new language; the loss of enjoyment associated with familiar social and environmental contacts; guilt feelings of leaving aged parents behind and the loss of company of relatives and friends. Usually these problems are not considered before a migrant commits him/herself, and these large costs will be taken into account soon after the emigration.

The relationship between acculturation, adjustment and mental health has been explored in a number of studies, leading to different and sometimes contradictory hypotheses. One viewpoint is that immigrants face more adjustment problems if they retain their native culture. This view supports The *Melting Pot* hypothesis which was developed by Szapocznik et al. (1980) and predicts that the more an immigrant retains his or her native culture, the more he or she will experience problems in adjustment (Ghaffarian 1998; Griffith, 1983; Szapocznik et al.,1980; Zehtabchi, 1996). These studies have supported positive relationships between cultural maintenance and adjustment problems. (Ghaffarian 1998; Griffith, 1983; Zehtabchi, 1996). A second theory states the opposite – that separation from the native culture and adoption of the customs of the mainstream culture lead to greater stress and adjustment difficulties (Ramirez, 1969). A third viewpoint is that immigrants who are bicultural or identify with and adopt both the native and the mainstream culture are the healthier and better

adjusted people. Buriel et al. (1980) and Szapocznik et al. (1980) described the third viewpoint as *The Bicultural* hypothesis, which predicts that identification with, and adaptation of, both the mainstream and the native cultures, results in healthier adjustment in immigrants compared with complete assimilation (Buriel et al. 1980; Lang, et al. 1982; Szapocznik et al., 1980). Ghaffarian (1998) and Zehtabchi (1993, cited in Zehtabchi, 1996) found support for the bicultural hypothesis in their study of the adjustment of Iranian immigrants to the United States. Researchers have suggested that the inconsistent findings among the different studies may be partly attributed to the way the variables, especially mental health, have been measured and partly attributed to the differences in the samples studied. As Moghaddam (1987) pointed out, while assimilation strategies are supported politically by a 'melting pot' policy in the United States, 'the bicultural hypothesis' receives support from a 'multiculturalism' policy in Canada and Australia.

According to Hoffman (1990), there are different levels of learning in the adaptation process. The first level could be called "survival" learning. This type of learning focuses on the acquisition of detailed knowledge about the host culture and society, including behavioral norms, to better facilitate integration with the host society. He found this type of learning was most in evidence in the various ways for learning or education that were established in the Persian community in the United States. "Instrumental" learning which is focused on facilitating adaptation through learning about culture and learning the appropriate "skills" necessary for survival. This learning may lead to a deeper sort of learning best conceptualized as "self-impacting", in that its aim is the expansion of the self to include alternative modes of cultural definition and transformation of identity as a result of cross-cultural experience. The latter form of learning goes beyond instrumental learning; it can involve the learner in a much deeper way in the process of acquiring the deep meaning and value system of another culture or cultures (Hoffman, 1990). In Hoffman's study, instrumental learning was found to be common among Iranian immigrants in the United States as it was reflected in the very conscious eclectic adaptation of behaviors thought to be advantageous to success in the United States society, in particular, in the domain of career or academic success.

There is a growing attention to 'self' concerning the nature of relationship between self and culture, particularly in the context of understanding aspects of culture acquisition in the cross-cultural context. Hoffman (1989a, 1990) suggests that the relationship between the self and culture be considered a significant factor in the ways individuals learn other cultures in the

adjustment process. Hoffman views the self from an intercultural learning perspective and believes the self has "important implications for an understanding of culture acquisition and learning" (Hoffman, 1990, p. 277). In examining how immigrants and exiles have adapted to a host culture, he argues that, one must look at the very relationship between self and culture as the key to understanding the kinds of cultural learning that occur during the intercultural experience. In his view, self is a primary factor in intercultural learning not so much because it acts as an arena for the experience of cultural conflict, but because of the way it mediates the cross-cultural learning process. According to Kimball (1976) "self" and "culture" are the two primary aspects of the "individual/environment" relation, in which the culture acquisition process must be understood, not through a focus on one or the other, but through the interaction of the two.

According to Hoffman the self has two parts: *social self* and *inner self,* and that, there can exist at some level an inner self that remains independent/separate from external behavioral adaptations which raises questions as to the effects that such a self might have on cross-cultural learning. The findings of Hoffman's study (1990) on Iranian immigrants in the United States indicated that social self functions on a level that is somewhat independent from the inner self. He found a high degree of awareness or consciousness of the social self and a recognized responsibility to shape that self in ways consonant with the demands of social circumstance. Since the social self-functions independently of the inner self, external level transformations such as the acquisition of new behaviours do not penetrate to that inner self. Because of this relative independence of the two levels of self, he found many Iranians experienced little identity conflict or disorientation when adapting to the American society. Good, et al. (1985), define the inner self '*the core self*' as that which "houses a person's true feelings and constitutes an individual's true personality" (p. 385). Social self and inner self has been defined by other researchers such as Doi (1973), who posits a clear distinction between omot and ura ("front" and "back") in the Japanese self and Lebra's (1987, cited in Hoffman, 1990) distinction between outer part and inner part for the definition of self in Japanese culture. Observers of Persian culture also have noted and reported the internal ("baten") and external ("zaher") in the Persian self (Bateson, et al., 1977; Beeman, 1976, Good, et al., 1985).

Indeed, the distinction between values and behavior or performance is important. As suggested in the work of Kimball (1972), adaptation on a behavioral level may only be a

superficial index of cultural learning. Thus, in the adaptation process one needs to consider the entire complex of an individual's responses to the new environment, not just those easily classified as "behavioral" (Hoffman, 1990).

The effect of the exposure of an immigrant to a new society is mediated by the attitudes, norms and role requirements of the individual the family and the community, and the society at large. The changes that occur in individual immigrants in terms of their motivation, resources and competence is conceptualized as a compromise between what they want to be and do, what they are capable of doing and how much opportunity is offered them by their social environment to attain their aspirations. Taft expresses it in an equation thus: B=f(P.E.) "Behavior is a function of Personality and Environment" (Taft, 1986, p. 340).

Taft describes immigrant adaptation as "coping with unfamiliar cultures" and he argues that, "adaptation to an unfamiliar culture is a special case of responding to a new environmental event, where that event is complex, enduring and social in nature and where it has a cultural context that is unfamiliar to the actor" (Taft 1977, p.121).

Studies of the process of cultural adjustment for first generation immigrants inevitably need to address the issues of assimilation and acculturation. These two perspectives are discussed in the following sections.

3.3.2 Assimilation of immigrants

There are many aspects to consider when talking about migrants' assimilation to Australia (Taft 1966). The following aspects should be considered in the assimilation process[3].

Cultural knowledge and skills
- Ability to use colloquial language and the possession of other skills required for communication. The slang words that are known to almost all Australians and to very few newly arrived immigrants.
- Knowledge of the history and culture of the new group, its ideology, values, norms and social structure. A migrant can not be fully assimilated until her/his knowledge of the new

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[3] The more comprehensive listing of the assimilation process is given by Taft (1966)

culture becomes equal at least to that of a citizen who holds the same social position. Very often the acquisition of cultural knowledge and skills can represent assimilation itself. According to Taft (1966) this is only one aspect of the assimilation process, constituting an important part of what is usually called acculturation - that is, changes in cultural patterns brought about as a result of the interaction between the groups. Taft (1966) defines acculturation as the adoption of values and norms from the host group as well as just knowledge of them. Taft (1973) further defines social norms as the approved guidelines for the behavior of all members of the society. Social norms are only some aspects of the socialization process. Other aspects include social knowledge, social skills, and beliefs held by the society (Taft, 1973). According to Scott & Scott (Scott, & Scott, 1989) individual 'assimilation' is a metaphor suggesting that the person becomes more like an average member of the dominant group.

Social interaction

- Social acceptance - there is an accepting attitude by the host group to the members of the new group. This will happen if there is no prejudice in the society. The relationship between the host group and the new group is not that simple. Many migrants might not feel any prejudice against themselves if they do not have many social contacts with the host group. A migrant needs to have sufficient social contacts with the host population to experience prejudice personally. Interpersonal contacts and relationships with members of the host group vary in the level of intimacy and frequency. They may lead to close friendships and or even a marital relationship with the host group.

Social integration and membership identity

- A migrant formally becomes a member of the new society - this can happen by accepting the citizenship of the new society. This acceptance is at a secondary level.

- Integration into the new group - this is when a migrant can get a social position which is accepted by the host group as a legitimate position. This aspect also includes being accepted into marriage; that is, intermarriage with the host group and the migrant is accepted in her/his formal marital position.

Social and emotional identification

- When a migrant is identified by the host society as a member of the new group and he/she accepts the new group as his/her own reference group, then we may say that he/she has emotional identification with the new group.

Conformity to group norms

- The migrant adopts the values, attitudes and expectations about people's behavior that are held in the new society.

- The migrant behaves in accordance with the norms set down for him/her by the host society.

- The migrant conforms to the norms, not only in his/her behavior but also in appearance and expressive behavior. Sometimes change in appearance in order to look like a member of the host society is regarded, together with language and cultural skills, as sufficient for assimilation. In reality, these do not provide full assimilation; feelings of the migrant, the attitudes of the host society, and also the interaction between how the migrant behaves and how he/she is accepted by the society are necessary to be considered for full assimilation.

According to Taft (1966) for full assimilation of migrants to occur we should consider four aspects of their dynamics, namely; 1) whether the migrant is motivated to try to be assimilated with respect to that aspect; 2) whether the migrant makes any attempts to become assimilated to the aspect; 3) whether the migrant perceives that he/she has achieved assimilation with respect to that facet; and 4) the actual level of assimilation achieved.

Assimilation is very much dependent on the particular circumstances. In countries where ideology, language, or religion plays the core value to the culture, the whole course of assimilation is dependent on that particular aspect of the acculturation process. The idea that a migrant group will necessarily settle permanently in one place and eventually assume the cultural characteristics of the host society can not be regarded as universally true. Persian migrants in Australia can be seen as a good example. Some of them wish to return after having achieved the limited objectives that they set themselves (e.g., after their children enter university). Some wish to return to Iran if the political situation in Iran improves without having achieved the objectives that they originally set themselves. There are also some Persian immigrants who have certain educational and occupational qualifications that allow them to move easily to another country. They enter into new social relationships and withdraw from them with ease.

Richardson (Richardson, 1974) suggests a sequence of assimilation, starting with the immigrant's satisfaction with the new circumstances, followed by identification with the host country, which leads to acculturation. Once a certain level of satisfaction is reached the longer

the immigrant stays, the more assimilated he becomes (Richardson 1961). Some have used the concept of assimilation in a more individualistic frame of reference. They include subjective aspects of individual satisfaction, adjustment, and identification as well as objective measures of acculturation and economic or social integration (Richmond, 1973).

Taft (1966) reported two main assimilation factors that he found common nearly to all of his studies : 1) *'Primary integration'* - this relates to variables such as being satisfied with life in the host society, feeling identified with it, feeling at home in the new country and the desire to stay there for the rest of a person's life; 2) *'secondary integration '* - this refers to knowing and using the host language, adaptation of the host values and mixing with the host population and adaptation of voluntary and obligatory social behavior (Taft, 1966, p. 70-71).

3.3.3 Acculturation of migrants

In using the concept of acculturation it is difficult to avoid an underlying value-assumption that the eventual disappearance of a migrant group as a separate social entity is necessary and desirable. Acculturation also tends to imply a greater degree of unity and homogeneity in host societies than is generally the case and ignores the rapid social changes within those societies, to which immigration itself may contribute. According to Ghaffarian (1987, 1998) acculturation is the process through which an individual adapts to a culture different from the one in which he or she was born and raised. Anthropologist, Redfield (Berry, 1980, Georgas, et al., 1996), defined acculturation in the following way: acculturation encompasses those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture pattern of either or both groups. Accepting this definition, acculturation is different from cultural change, of which it is but one aspect, and assimilation, which is at times a phase of acculturation (Zehtabchi and Houck , 1996).

The main Australian studies which have assessed the potential for acculturation are Steinkalk (1983) and Taft (1967) who found that acculturation was easier for immigrants who had higher intelligence, greater trust in other people and less dogmatism. Taft (1981, 1985), pointed out that an immigrant whose general personality functioning in his/her own culture is competent seems to be more capable of adapting to another culture.

A variety of theoretical models have been proposed to study acculturation (eg. Kim and Gudykunst, 1988). However, recent studies on acculturation have been inspired by Berry's model (Berry, 1988; Berry et al., 1987). The growing literature on the acculturation process, led by Berry and his associates (Berry, 1980; Berry and Annis, 1974; Berry, 1984; Berry, 1986a; Berry et al., 1986b; Berry et al. 1987; Berry et al., 1989, Berry et al., 1992; Sam & Berry, 1993; Sands & Berry, 1993), has emphasized the central role of the immigrant's maintenance or rejection of his/her original culture in the acculturation strategy she or he adopts after migration. Berry's conceptualization simplifies this psychological process by postulating four acculturation strategies as a function of two issues. The first one considers whether it is of value to maintain the original cultural identity. And the second considers whether it is of value to maintain relationships with other groups. The responses of minority groups to these two questions range from positive/positive (integration), positive/negative (separation), negative/positive (assimilation) to negative/negative (marginalization). Depending on whether the immigrant chooses to (a) maintain or (b) reject his or her own culture, and (c) adopt or (d) reject the host culture, the individual effectively adopts an acculturation strategy of integration (a-c), assimilation (b-c), separation/segregation (a-d), or marginalisation (b-d) (Nesdale, et al., 1997). Although Berry and his colleagues developed a model of acculturative stress (Berry, 1988; Berry, et al., 1987), the nature of the relationship between migrant ethnic identification and psychological distress remains to be specified and examined (Liebkind, 1996).

Different scales have been developed to measure acculturation. Measurements of acculturation have ranged from a single component such as language (Ortiz & Arce, 1984), to multidimensional scales including behavioral, social and psychological components (Mendoza, 1989; Szapocznick et al., 1978). The acculturation measure of Mendoza (1989) consists of three components, 1) *Cultural shift*, defined as a substitution of native customs with alternative cultural norms; 2) *cultural resistance*, defined as an active or passive resistance to alternate cultural norms; and 3) *cultural incorporation*, defined as an adaptation of customs from both native and alternate cultures.

The two contrasting integration strategies of assimilation and heritage cultural maintenance have given rise to a growing debate on integration processes among immigrant groups (Abramson, 1980; Jupp 1984; Moghaddam, et al., 1987). However, as Berry (1984) has noted, there is some social psychological research on integration processes associated with

assimilation and multiculturalism (Kim and Berry, 1986; Moghaddam, et al., 1987; Taft, 1986,1985).

Successful adaptation to life in a new country must involve the creation of new channels of communication and the extension of social participation beyond the primary group. Depending upon the migrant's motive for migration and the image he/she has of the new country before migration, the migrant has certain expectations of the new life that may or may not be realistic and capable of fulfillment. Within the structure of the new society, certain expectations develop, certain demands are made upon migrants which may be very different from and even incompatible with the aspiration of the migrants themselves. The main variable which determines the actual process of absorption are, on the one hand, the migrants' basic motivations and role expectations and, on the other, the various demands made upon and facilities offered to the immigrants in the new country (Richmond, 1973). According to Georgas et al., (1996), one important factor affecting the process of acculturation is the nature of the host society. In some societies, pressures to assimilate to the norms of the dominant group are less strong than they are in others; instead, there is support for the maintenance of cultural phenomena well into the acculturation process. Taft (1985) reports that, a regression in one aspect of the acculturation may influence other aspects as well, for example, a lowering satisfaction, experience of social rejection, or loss of job, may lead to regression in identification and acculturation. This specially may happen to immigrants with high expectations which are not readily fulfilled, or who experience prejudice and discrimination.

Ex (1966; cited in Taft, 1966) in his study of Indonesian immigrants in Holland distinguishes three stages of 'adjustment': the first, *habituation,* concerns the immigrants' perception of the new culture; the second, *assimilation,* refers to their behavior changes; and the third, *acculturation,* reflects their emotional reaction to the culture.

Richardson (1974) reports three types of acculturation: obligatory, advantageous, and optional. *Obligatory* acculturation are any changes that are necessary for an immigrant to make in order to obtain satisfaction of prominent needs; for instance, in order to get a professional career an immigrant should learn certain rules of practice in Australia and adhere to them. *Advantageous* acculturation refers to any behaviour which is not essential for role performance but is advisable or appropriate for social acceptance. *Optional* acculturation refers to habit forms which may be adopted according to the immigrant's preference. Optional

acculturation is the form of external conformity which explains the internal side of acculturation and is most highly correlated to ethnic identification.

It has been argued by some researchers (Taft, 1966,1985; Richardson, 1974), a degree of satisfaction with the new country must be experienced before the migrant can become identified with it, and some degree of identification is needed before acculturation occurs. Taft (1985) suggests that there is a considerable interaction between the various aspects of integration, one facilitating the other. Thus some acculturation is required before identification with the host culture occurs (Richardson's *'obligatory'* acculturation) and then a certain level of identification leads to further acculturation (Richardson's *'optional'* acculturation).

Richmond (1967) refers to a type of migrant as a 'transient', someone who moves easily from one country to another for occupational or family reasons without establishing deep ties. This group's adaptation to the country of residence involves only limited assimilation, mainly in the area of cultural knowledge and skills.

Richmond (1973) found in his study of immigrant acculturation in Bristol that, linguistically and in other ways, European immigrants were no more acculturated than West Indian and Asian immigrants. Given the evidence that European immigrants are better housed and more fully integrated economically and socially than West Indians and Asians in his survey, this would suggest that the latter group experienced handicaps, which could not be explained by their lack of acculturation. Paoletti (1988) suggests that the early migrant groups, in order to have a sense of identification and belonging, may engage in an exaggerated consensual validation of initially relatively trivial social beliefs, thus distorting social customs and rendering them much more rigid than the original ones from which they are derived, which indeed may be undergoing evolutionary changes in the country of origin; changes which will not necessarily be reflected in the distorted and ossified customs in the host country.

According to Scott & Scott (1989), assimilation, integration, separation, and deculturation are metaphors implying outcomes that do not occur in pure form, though some of each acculturative outcome may be found for many individuals with respect to one or another focus. A particular individual may undergo assimilation in dress, integration in language and food preferences, separation in nuptial practices, and deculturation in superstitious belief. But

what happens to this individual is unlikely to be duplicated in the experience of another (Scott & Scott, 1989). Scott, & Scott reported that, migrants usually do not constitute anything like a representative sample of their respective donor countries. They considered the distinctive characteristics of migrants in three classes: those which distinguish immigrants within their countries of origin; characteristics which initially distinguish immigrants from native born in their countries of destination; and distinctive characteristics which develop out of the immigrants' relationship to their new circumstances. According to Lee (1996), the characteristics of migrants tend to be intermediate between the characteristics of the population of origin and the population of destination.

3.3.4 National and ethnic identity

National and cultural identity is a challenging issue of concern for first generation immigrants who are in a transitional stage. Immigrants' perception of their ethnic identity is perceived to be a dynamic and constantly changing social and psychological process (*see* Conzen et al., 1992). Although, the relationship between acculturation and identification is not as clear-cut as that between identification and satisfaction, identification is usually a pre-requisite for high acculturation (Taft,1966).

According to Taft (1985), social identity is a very complex entity involving multiple selves. For an immigrant it may be multiple national identities, which have reference both to their original country as well as the new country and for some immigrants to further ethnic identities, for example, Jews from the Soviet Union or Kurds from Middle East countries, where ethnicity and nationality are different.

Many studies now have demonstrated that a reasonably good level of emotional stability and social adjustment is needed before one can change one's identification (see Taft, 1966 for a review of these studies). According to Taft, (1966) identification variables play a part in both "primary" and "secondary" integration. He reported that the variables that appeared to cluster with other identification measures were: identification of self with Australian identity; perceived similarity between self and Australians; social participation with Australians with both formal and informal organisations; and a desire to become an Australian citizen.

According to Taft's modified model (*see* Figure, 3.2, adapted from Taft, 1986), on the *internal* side, ethnic identity is expressed by the degree of involvement of the immigrant's self concept in the ethnic or the host group and on the *external* side it is represented by how the immigrant is located by the society. The internal side of identification may be considered to be the psychological core of assimilation and ethnicity because it involves self concept on which all other aspects may be viewed as dependent (Taft, 1985). Richardson's (1974) study indicated some evidence that aspects of the self do change in some recent immigrants when the motivation and the situations are favorable. In his study of British immigrants he found that 20 percent of the married immigrants from the UK stated that they felt themselves 'to be more Australian than British now' and 13% stated that they would support an Australian sport team if it played against a British one. After five years the corresponding figures were 36% and an unchanged 13% (Richardson, 1974). A similar finding was also evident in Taft & Cahill's (1978) study of South American adult immigrants, as 20 percent of them felt 'strongly' Australian after only two years living in Australia. This may support the view of Petersen (1978) who believes that assimilation results not simply from interaction between two cultures, but often between the host society and immigrants who were spiritually partly assimilated before they migrated. He argues that it is only after arrival in the new country that some migrants, for social or political reasons, identify their ethnicity in terms of their former nationality.

One commonly used method of measuring the internal side of national identity is the question 'Apart from possible holidays abroad, would you like to spend the rest of your life in Australia?' Taft (1985) favors this method and believes that this question can provide a measure of commitment to the new country and argues the commitment to the new country partly reflects identification and partly satisfaction. Taft and Doczy (1962) describe this variable as "the best single measure of assimilation to Australia" (p. 49). However, there may be some other reasons why immigrants may wish to stay in Australia that have little relationship to their subjective feelings. For example, in the present study, this question was used as a measure of identification with Australia and it was found that family reasons, such as better education for children and the impossibility of returning home were seen as the main reasons for their positive response rather than their feelings.

Taft (1985) suggests 'taking up citizenship' can been considered as an indicator and a measure of external identity. However he acknowledges its limitations as an indicator since it

applies only to immigrants who are eligible for naturalization and is subject to public pressure and family opportunism.

In respect to how people may change psychologically as they go through the acculturation process, Georgas et al. (1996), pointed out that, some characteristics change rapidly and substantially (eg., the food eaten, clothes worn) whereas, others may remain unchanged after many generations (eg., religious beliefs). According to Liebkind (1996), the nature of the relationship between migrant ethnic identification and psychological distress remains to be assessed to date, only few studies have addressed this issue, and most of these studies have focused on the adolescent children of immigrant adults rather than the adult immigrants themselves (Nesdale et al.,1997).

Liebkind (1996) was one of the few studies that specifically addressed the issue of ethnic identity and psychological distress. He assessed the significance of a range of variables, including ethnic identity, in predicting symptoms of mental health including anxiety and depression, in male and female Vietnamese refugees and their children in Finland. His findings indicated different patterns for men and women with one of the three ethnic identity dimensions being identified as a significant predictor for men, whereas none of the three was a significant predictor of the women's psychological well being. Liebkind's study focused on the significance of ethnic identity, and other variables as direct predictors of immigrant psychological distress. Liebkind's (1996) findings have been supported by other studies such as Berry, (1990) and Berry et al. (1987) indicating that immigrant women feel more isolated and experience more distress than men. This may be due to the commonly held belief that immigrant men have wider experiences with members of the host culture arising from work and recreation, as well as their own cultural group due to their social activities. Liebkind's (1996) finding was also consistent with Nesdale et al.'s (1997) results revealing that ethnic identity was a significant, but indirect predictor of immigrant psychological distress. Nesdale and her associates found the link between ethnic identification and self-esteem and sense of belonging to Australia were negatively related to positive self-esteem for immigrant women. Conversely, for both men and women immigrants, pride in membership of 'My Ethnic Group' was positively correlated to positive self-esteem (Nesdale et al. 1997, p. 579). These findings suggest that the relation between social identity and self-esteem may be very complex among adult immigrants.

Under certain conditions, a migrant group may preserve its language and way of life for several generations, forming a relatively closed community or sub-society with only limited cultural and political exchanges with the host society. In other circumstances, individual migrants may be absorbed into the host society in less than one generation. Some circumstances may force fast acculturation and integration during the early stages of migrant adaptation, when economic needs are imposing, and permit a return to ethnic identification and loyalty at a later stage. Success in adaptation is relatively dependent on the migrant's own set of particular circumstances: namely high socio-economic status, cultural skills, previous experience in a multicultural society, and the migrant's emotional stability (Taft, 1966).

When the immigrant group is small, the pressure on the group to adapt to the situation in which its members find themselves and to comply with the expectations of the host society is very strong. Nevertheless, the ultimate outcome of any contact between a migrant group and the host group cannot be understood in terms of structural relations or power conflicts alone. The host group has certain cultural characteristics, which may differ from that of the migrant group. The host society is a system of personal, familial, religious, and political values that will differ in varying degrees from those shared by the migrants.

3.3.5 Patterns of interaction in a Plural Society

Social interaction between two groups makes one examine the cultural values of the 'adoption group' with respect to the individual being adopted and the individual's own view of himself/herself in relation to this event. A rejection by the majority may cause reciprocation by the minority and vice-versa. New migrants in their everyday life may feel the pressure from the kinship system through shared values and ideologies that were reinforced by frequent social interaction. According to Smolicz (1999), each national or ethnic group has its own more or less unique set of cultural and social systems, which individual members construct for themselves to meet their special situation in life. Therefore, the personal cultural system can be regarded as a mediator between the culture of the *group* and the private world of the *individual* (Smolicz, 1999, p. 125).

In a plural society segmented by class, ethnic or religious divisions, it is important to know the meaning given to an individual by different groups. This shows whether he/she is regarded as acceptable for membership of a particular social system and shows how much social

interaction is permitted. The bicultural/pluralist approach had tackled the "cultural adjustment" question on the basis of the existence of a dialectical relationship between the host and the native cultures. Advocates of biculturalism believe that identification with and adoption of both host and the native cultures result in healthier adjustment in immigrants compared with complete assimilation (Buriel, et al, 1980; Conzen et al., 1992; Smolicz, 1999, 1984, 1979b; Szapocznik, et al, 1980).

Tajfel's (1978) interest in relations between minority and majority groups has been to assess the importance of 'subjective definitions' in terms of the general pattern of the relationship between the two groups. He argues that, human social behaviour can only be deeply understood if we are able to get to know something about the subjective 'representation of social reality' which intervenes between conditions in which social groups live and the effects of these conditions on individual and collective behaviour. According to Tajfel (1978), "the history and the contemporary features of social, economic and other differences between social groups are reflected in the attitudes, beliefs and views of the world held by members of these groups. The 'subjective' effects of social conditions are reflected in turn in what people do, in how they behave towards their own group." (Tajfel, 1978, p. 3).

According to Smolicz (1979b), the origin and maintenance of an individual's ethnic personal cultural system in a plural society are related to not only the individual's experience and personality, but also to the interaction of the minority ethnic group's ideological system with the ideological system of the dominant group. A group's resilience in maintaining its culture is dependent on the degree to which its heritage successfully interacts with new cultural inputs from within (a multicultural setting) and from without (through diffusion from other sources) (Smolicz, 1992). Smolicz believes the outcome of such interaction reflects the degree of overlap and mutual compatibility among the different cultural systems involved in the intercultural situation.

The type of personal system constructed by ethnic individuals in a plural society depends on the ideological value system of more than one cultural group and also depends on the ethnic tenacity of the group in a particular cultural environment. For example, in ethnic groups which have a high ethnic tenacity, the nature of their personal systems would be exclusively monistic (Persians or Greeks), but in ethnic groups which have a low ethnic tenacity, the nature of their personal systems would be predominantly monistic (the Dutch).

Smolicz and Secombe (1981) report that the two components of a dual system interaction would be unlikely to be used in the same situations in life; most often they would be applicable in different behavioural domains. This has been illustrated very well in Mendoza's (1984) words:

> "I may visit a restaurant on three different days, with three different groups of people, and display three different cultural adjustment patterns. If I am accompanied by a group that consists of members from my own culture, I may resort to cultural resistance across an entire range of behaviours....If, on the other hand, I am in the presence of a group that is entirely represented by members of the mainstream culture, I will probably acquiesce and exhibit a great deal of cultural shift" (Mendoza,1984, p. 67).

Furthermore, internal cultural pluralism does not carry any implication of cultural fusion. Rather, this approach emphasises the cultural interchange which accompanies social relations between members of different cultural groups. Indeed, according to Smolicz (1979b), the dual system type of interaction involves the recognition of various ethnic groups' cultural and social systems as relatively stable and self-perpetuating entities in society.

In a plural society such as Australia, two or more corresponding sets of group values for each aspect of culture are available to individuals of minority groups as well as to those of the dominant cultural group who enter into the same form of social relationship with members of other ethnic groups. The type of personal systems constructed by ethnic individuals in a plural society depends on the ideological value systems of more than one cultural group (Smolicz and Secombe, 1981).

According to Smolicz (1999) and Smolicz and Secombe (1981), the personal social system of an individual can take different forms. It can be culturally *homogeneous* (deriving from one ethnic source) or culturally *heterogeneous*, when some degrees of interaction between different cultures take place. Cultural systems derived from a single ethnic source (homogeneous types) can occur in two ways:

a) Anglo-*Assimilation (Conformism).* In this type the individual of the minority group adopts only the culture of the dominant group (for example, an ethnic minority group adopts only Anglo-Australian cultural values). The personal system of this individual is dominant monistic. According to Smolicz (1984) in this type even

'ethnic food' is suspect, while literacy in ethnic tongues is actively devalued and presented as intellectually confusing, socially disadvantaging and politically divisive. For Smolicz (1999), in the case of dominant monism, the culture of the dominant group would prevail in the society and all individuals, regardless of their ethnic group's cultural stock, would assimilate to the ways of the majority group.

Certain specific markers of minority ethnicity (such as skin colour, surname or hair texture) can hardly ever be completely removed. These ethnic labels may be used to keep minorities socially apart; having had their culture destroyed, minority members may suffer the indignity of rejection from those they have been persuaded to imitate. This underlines the danger of alienation among culturally dispossessed and socially rejected ethnic groups (Smolicz 1983).

In a society that has achieved cultural monism, all social values would ideally be given the same social meaning. In the case of dominant monism, ethnic cultural systems are wiped away and substituted by those derived from the majority culture (type 4). There is complete mixing at primary and secondary level.

b)   *Separatism.* The opposite of assimilation is separatism. In this type of adaptation an individual has adopted only one culture (either Anglo-Saxon values or ethnic values), and his/her personal cultural system is exclusively monistic. In this type the new ethnic culture will have great opportunity to preserve it's culture for itself with little or no chance of interaction with the host culture except in the political and economic spheres of life. This approach gives no consideration as to how to effect cultural interaction.

Cultural systems derived from the interaction between a number of cultures (heterogeneous types) can occur in two ways:

a)   *Synthesis system interaction or hybrid solution.* In this case the individual has amalgamated the two sets of cultural values and has made his/her own new personal cultural system, which is called hybrid monistic. This will mean that the cultural and social life of the country will be enriched, as individuals can choose from a number of cultural options. With synthesis solutions leading to hybrid monism (type 3), all

members of society who adopted the emergent hybrid culture would be culturally defined as members of the same group. Primary structural monism would emerge, where no barriers based on cultural ancestry or biological content prevented any marriage. According to Smolicz (1999), in this type of interaction, minority ethnic cultures intermingle with the dominant culture in such a way that a new cultural synthesis develops which contains elements of each in various proportions and combinations.

b)   *Dual system interaction or co-existence solution.* In this case the values of two cultures coexist within the individual and are activated by the individual in different cultural and social contents. In the sphere of language, this will lead to bilingualism. For example, in an Anglo-Saxon influenced society, English is used in conjunction with some other community ethnic language. A person who knows two languages uses them in two different situations. Here the individual is intra-personal with people of other cultures. In the area of social relations, an even more complex situation occurs under the conditions of internal cultural pluralism (type 2). This involves the recognition of various group cultural and social systems in society as relatively stable entities. All individuals are given an ethnic meaning by themselves, their ethnic group or by the majority. Individuals with dual cultural systems would readily interact socially with members of the host society. This would occur mainly at a secondary level but occasionally at a primary level as well. In this type, individuals would be given the same meaning in occupational and civic relations. Thus, we observe secondary social assimilation, paralleled by pluralism in other areas of social life.

In the case of this form of interaction, some synthesis or blend or in-between position may be achieved in personal life-styles as individuals draw, for example, upon the Italian or Greek collectivist family traditions of inter-dependence and extended network of primary relations, on the one hand, and the Anglo-Saxon ideal of individualism, independence and personal autonomy, on the other (Smolicz, 1984). In this type, the members of both cultures will engage with each other to the extent that they will come to know and understand each other and so internalize a dual system of cultural values. In this type the members of the communities have the opportunity to construct their own personal, social and cultural systems

from more than one source. For example, a balanced bi-lingual could use the language appropriate to situations arising in home and work.

The four ideological orientations and their implications at group and personal levels are summarised in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 – Patterns of interaction between two cultures in a plural society.

Corresponding social orientation	Nature of Personal Systems		Methods of individuals' adaptation to cultures
	Individuals from Anglo-Celtic group	Individuals from minority ethnic group	
External Cultural Pluralism	Exclusive monistic (a)	(e)	**Separatism (no interactions):** Either (a) or (e) values adopted on their own, by different individuals
Internal Cultural Pluralism (Co-Existence)	Dual System (a)(e)	(a)(e)	**Dual System Interaction:** Both (a) and (e) values adopted by the same individuals, but activated by them in different situations
Hybrid Monism ("Melting Pot")	Hybrid Monistic (ae)	(ea)	**Synthesis Type Interaction:** Neither (a) nor (e) values on their own, but new amalgam, derived from both, adopted by individuals
Dominant (Anglo) Monism	Dominant Monistic (a)	(a)	**Anglo-Assimilation** Only (a) values of dominant group adopted by individuals

Source: Smolicz (1999)
* The symbols (a) and (e) stand for personal systems based upon Anglo-Saxon and ethnic values respectively.

Of the four possible approaches proposed in Smolicz's model (1999, p.130), two are advocating the establishment of cultural pluralism, one of an external and one of an internal variety. They both accept the co-existence of different ethnic cultures within the realms of a single state. Smolicz (1979) argues that in a society that accepts External Cultural pluralism, it would be very likely that ethnic individual's personal cultural system be of *High Ethnic* type. In that case, the personal cultural systems constructed by an individual would be derived almost exclusively from minority group sources except in areas of life where interaction with other groups was unavoidable such as in secondary social relations associated with the economic or political spheres of life. The ideological orientation of *External Cultural pluralism* describes a separatist form of pluralism. According to Smolicz and Secombe (1981), society as a whole would be structurally pluralistic, but the personal cultural system of individuals remain monistic. Smolicz (1999), supports the view that, *External Pluralism* presupposes the opportunity for ethnic groups to continue their own communal life and preserve their own cultural heritage and language, without any form of cultural interaction taking place between groups. *Internal Pluralism* gives emphasis on cultural interaction since all people have the opportunity to internalise the cultures of two or more groups by constructing a dual system of cultural values. Thus, a personal cultural system derived from majority group values would have a counterpart derived from ethnic group values (Smolicz, 1979b, 1999). Thus, the two components of a dual system would be applicable in different behavioural domains. According to Smolicz (1999), this approach does not carry any implications of cultural fusion, but singles out cultural interchange that accompanies social relations between member of different ethnic groups.

Following the possible approaches proposed in the Smolicz model (Table 3.1), in the sphere of ideology, two monistic orientations in relation to the ultimate development of a plural society exists. *Hybrid monism* is founded on the principle of a two-way interaction between Anglo-and minority ethnic individuals at both the personal and group level. Therefore, the assumption of two ways of life, languages or traditions gradually approaching each other and getting more alike as each acquires some elements of the other as a result of more or less intensive sharing and interchange. The other solution at group level is that of *Dominant (Anglo) Monism*, where it represents the prevailing social value orientation, it would prove more difficult to maintain minority ethnic personal cultural systems and the Anglo-Assimilate type would be the most likely outcome (Smolicz, 1999).

Smolicz (1999) argues that in a society that accepts external cultural pluralism, the High Ethnic type would be the favoured one. However, where Anglo-monism is the general expectation, the personal systems of most individuals would be based almost exclusively on Anglo-Australian values. Therefore, the Anglo-Assimilate is more likely to be the dominant type. According to Smolicz (1999, 1979b), the construction of a *Bicultural* personal value system *(internal pluralism)* will be the most favoured outcome where the prevailing social value orientation is Internal Cultural Pluralism which allows for dual system interaction in primary and secondary social relations. He favours this type because he believes that this type is most closely associated with the solution of internal cultural pluralism and the dual system type of interaction. In the Australian context, Smolicz (1999, p.136) also notes that the two components of the dual personal cultural system may be modified as a result of the process of interaction with other cultures. Therefore, although outright hybridisation into a new single system appears unlikely, and the two components appear to retain their autonomy, their constitution may betray signs of a greater or lesser synthesis with values from other groups. He argues that, this type of interaction is most clearly reflective of a multicultural society, from an intellectual and a societal viewpoint.

Each ethnic group has an ideological system, which includes certain beliefs in the values of its culture as a distinctive entity, and the nature of cultural and social interaction between itself and other groups. The ability of individuals to construct an ethnic personal system is dependent on core values of the ethnic culture, which are related to the value system of the host society.

Core values are the most fundamental component of a group's ideological system. Core values act as identifying values, which are symbolic of the group and its membership. Core values provide the indispensable link between the group's cultural and social systems. It is through core values that social groups can be identified as distinctive ethnic, religious, scientific or other cultural communities. Core values are the most crucial and distinguishing element of the culture. Core values are essential for a certain level of cultural survival.

Rejection of core values carries with it the threat of exclusion from the group. More than one core value may be involved in a particular culture. In this case it is possible to establish a hierarchy among them. For example, in Persian culture, family could be regarded as a basic ideological value but language is also a core value that patterns social life.

According to Smolicz (1981a) every culture has certain core elements which present its heartland, and act as identifying values for its members. Core values which are considered as of key significance by group members, may vary from group to group. Core values may involve an ethno-specific language, religion, family structure, as well as an attachment to the native land or religion. For most cultures, this core value is represented by the native language, however there are some cultures where, the core element is primarily located in religion (Malay groups), family network (Persian or Italian), or clan and race (Chinese).

3.4   The psychological impact of migration

Since migrants are often blocked by lack of necessary resources or face barriers from attaining goals, they may be more likely than host members to have unfulfilled aspirations resulting in stressful outcomes such as mental illness.

3.4.1 Mental health of migrants:

Generally, little research has been conducted into the mental health status of immigrants in Australia, even among larger ethnic communities (McDonald, et, al., 1996). However, there have, of course, been many psychological studies conducted on the adaptation of immigrants in other countries – in particular, Canada, United States, Israel, U.K., and the Netherlands – but the concepualization and methods are so variant that it is almost impossible to integrate them (Vega, et al., 1987) whether intuitively or by some objective procedures such as formal meta-analysis (Taft, 1986). Somewhat surprisingly, however, scant attention has been given to examining the possible relationship between a migrant's ethnic identification and the level of psychological distress experienced in the host country (Nesdale, et al., 1997).

The methodology of studying mental health of immigrants although appearing to have taken a different direction over the last two decades has not changed significantly. The measures, which are used, have been developed for a western culture and the performance of the immigrant population is still indirectly compared to the norms of the western population. As pointed out by Davidian (1973), for effective application of many psychological treatments in a given society, a thorough knowledge of the pertinent social and cultural conditions is necessary. It follows that the psychological treatments developed in Western societies, and the

theories on which they are based, may be in need of modification to suit the psychology of individuals in other cultures.

A number of researchers have sought to identify the variables predictive of migrant psychological distress. The potential influence of a range of socio-demographic variables has been assessed, including both pre-migratory factors such as, prior travel, language proficiency or socio-economic status, and post-migratory factors such as employment, education, accommodation and intercultural difficulties (Berry, et al., 1987; Liebkind, 1993; Liebkind, 1996; Morrison, 1972; Verdonk, 1979). Some researchers have also investigated the effect on migrant psychological distress of both structural social support such as type of intragroup interactions and type of family structure, and functional social support such as self-esteem and emotional support provided by the immigrant's ethnic group (Abyaneh, 1989; Ardehali, 1980; Bateson, 1977; Berry, 1974; Cattaway, et al., 1989; Chochrane, 1980).

A migrant has a lot of adaptive problems when coping with the demands of the host country. This will generate internal conflict which can be seen as the stress of acculturation. Scott and Scott (1989) expect such conflicts to produce attendant strains, including a lowering of threshold for physical disease and mental disorder as one response to acculturation. In the coping process of resettlement, an immigrant is likely to be exposed to stressful situations leading to experiences of demoralization. As predicted by Figueiredo (1983), demoralization is a condition that is likely to be experienced by socially marginal groups such as migrants.

Although marked individual differences exist in the ability to adapt to a different culture, a wide range of psychiatric disorders have been associated with the stress of acculturation in a number of immigrant and refugee groups (Nicassio and Pate, 1984). An immigrant often feels like a "foreigner", confronted with serious difficulties in adjusting to the new norms, values and cultural conditions for creating a new life in the host country. A migrant needs to adjust to the new environment internally as well as externally. These two adjustments are somehow linked and are interactive. We need to consider mental breakdowns, which may be taken to represent signs of poor internal adjustment. It seems that migration and its consequent problems play an important role as a precipitating cause. It has been argued that the stresses associated with adjusting to a society that is very different from the one in which the person was socialized, lead to conflicts and disintegration within the migrant's primary group. Krupinski et al. (1973) found high rates of psychotic illness (schizophrenia and depressive

states) in immigrant women from southern and eastern Europe, most of whom were completely unassimilated after more than seven years in Australia, and relatively low rates for Western Europeans. They attribute this breakdown to the end of their usefulness in families in which the husband and the children have become assimilated and have left the mother in a state of isolation. However, it should be noted that there are rates of mental illness that are due to national differences and those due to the strains of migration. Krupinski's earlier study (1967) also found a significant difference between the incidence of schizophrenia in males and females in terms of length of stay in Australia. The incidence in males was highest one to two years after arrival, while in females the peak was found seven to fifteen years afterwards. In males a peak in depressive states and alcoholism occurred a year after arrival.

As pointed out by Lipson (1992), the amount of stress associated with immigration adjustment depends on different factors such as individual, social and migration factors. Individual factors include language and occupational skills, educational level, social support and family resources. Social factors include mainstream social support and the availability of an ethnic/community support system. Immigration factors include the reason for and circumstances surrounding immigration and the magnitude of cultural differences of the host and the native culture.

Many researchers have documented the influence of social ties on aspects of mental health, where derived social support reduces depression and influences somatic and affective complaint behaviour (Kleinman, 1986; Marsella, 1979; McGarvey and Schendel, 1986; and Mechanic, 1980: all cited in Hanna, 1998). The immigrant's ethnic group could be considered as an important source of support. Kuo and Tasi (1986) found that, one's ethnic community is the most powerful influence in lowering stress and preventing the development of psychological problems among migrants. They also found that refugees whose families are intact tend to experience better mental health due to greater family support. Based on these findings, it can be presumed that the larger ethnic groups such as Greeks and Italians in Australia are more advantaged in forming support networks than smaller groups such as the Persian community. The ethnic groups' organizations will be in the position to assist their members with issues such as family reunification, employment referral, financial assistance, cultural orientations and crisis intervention. Fraser and Pecora (1985) and Kuo and Tsai (1986, p. 147) suggest that "strong social support is a crucial factor for good mental health" of migrants.

Isolation has been raised as an issue in mental illness in migrants. Syrotuic and D'Arcy (1984) examined the relationship between primary (spousal) and secondary (community) support and mental health. They found that primary and secondary support acted independently on mental health, and that one could not compensate for the lack of other. However, it was found that spousal support exerted a more protective impact upon immigrant's mental health than community support. Krupinski et al. (1965) found that the incidence of mental disorders among Non-English Speaking Background women is due in part to social isolation caused by a lack of English skills and in part due to differential rates of assimilation with the family. He also in his later study (Krupinski, 1986) found that adolescents and young adults who are not working and not seeking employment have the highest psychiatric morbidity rates compared with those studying or working.

Lack of English proficiency was associated with greater depression in a study by Nicassio et al. (1986). The authors found that greater English proficiency leads to less depression and less acculturative stress.

The existence of social support in the host country gives migrants a sense of being welcome, which may lead to reduction of tension, anxiety, and isolation. It is evident from Coelho and Ahmed's (1980) study that lack of support may hinder migrants' adjustment, specially when a support network has not been built strongly enough to protect a migrant in the new environment.

Mental pressure on a migrant is usually associated with the need to change in the new environment (Eisebstadt, 1954; Kosa, 1957; Menges 1959: all cited in Taft, 1973). These studies have indicated that the best adjustment is achieved when the adaptation occurs within a solid primary group; preferably, when the family adapts as a unit to the new country. These findings should be important for countries receiving migrants not to try to expedite the acculturation process by disturbing family coherence, or by discouraging ethnic associations. The results of these efforts will affect the adjustment of migrants and makes the adaptation process more difficult.

Loss of significant people in the migrants' life, such as family members, close friends and relatives, through separation or death has been found to have an effect on the mental health of

migrants. Finlay-Jones and Brown's (1981) study investigated the effect of four different types of loss namely; loss of a significant person by separation or death, loss of job and material possessions, loss of physical health and loss of valued ideas, on the onset of anxiety and depression in female patients attending a general practice in London. They found that severe loss of any kind, which occurred in the three months prior to the onset of psychological problems, was associated with the onset of depression, but not the onset of anxiety.

Nicassio and Pate (1984) studied the effect of age on the mental health of migrants. The investigators found that advanced age was associated with greater alienation, leading to poorer mental health. They found that longer residence in the host country, meaningful employment, higher education and higher income produced less alienation. Lack of English proficiency was associated with greater depression in Nicassio's later study (Nicassio, et at. 1986). English proficiency was found to be associated with depression, with greater English proficiency leading to less depression and less acculturative stress.

The relationship between acculturation and psychological distress has been a long-standing finding in research (Madianos, et al., 1998). It seems that acculturation of the migrant leads to alienation and isolation from the native group, while striving for achievement in a non-protective environment. This psychological process results in frustration and distress (Madianos, 1984). However few other researchers reported higher level of psychological distress among less acculturated immigrants (Fabrega, 1969, Garyfallos et al., 1991; cited in Madianos, et al., 1998). According to Ruesch et al. (1948, cited in Madianos, et al., 1998) acculturation stress is the result of the immigrant's continuous and unsuccessful efforts for social integration, assimilation into a dominant culture and acceptance by the natives as well. This way acculturation is linked with the development of feelings of frustration. Subsequent efforts of the immigrants for acculturation produce aggression, directed toward themselves or others and alienation from both cultures (Berry, 1986; Figueiredo, 1983). Madianos, et al.'s (1998) findings indicate that the higher educated migrants exhibited high levels of acculturation and 60% of highly acculturated migrants were diagnosed as "cases" with the majority suffering from anxiety and adjustment disorders (Madianos, et al., 1998, p 105). Madianos and his associates supported acculturation as being a long-lasting pathogenic experience, affecting the life of the individual during and after migration and believed that identification with the native culture could prevent some of the psychosocial problems among migrants.

As pointed out by Verdonk (1979), it is not migration in itself that generates psychiatric vulnerability but many other variables such as conditions in the host country (poverty, stereotypes, and prejudices towards immigrants), characteristics of the individuals, the stress of adaptation to a new country and discrimination in the host country. All these are contributing factors in the psychological well-being status of an immigrant. It seems that economic problems, membership in a minority group with all the stereotypes and various forms of discrimination involved, separation from family, the marginal position of children caught between two cultures, etc. often play a part in the possible development of mental illness of immigrants.

As Morrison (1973) pointed out, literature reviews on the relationship between migration and mental illness generally conclude that the data on incidence and causation are contradictory. Morrison suggests that there are some intermediate variables linking migration and mental illness. He summarizes these variables into three major categories: 1) variables operating prior to migration such as; the personality of the migrant, life experiences, cultural background, reason for leaving the old environment, and reason for moving to the new location; 2) variables operating in the migration process such as; stress of moving and, 3) variables operating after migration such as; attitudes of the new environment to migrants (such as pressures to acculturate, economic opportunity, etc.), fulfillment of expectations and the aspirations and personality of the migrant. He argues that by considering these variables greater flexibility in interpreting results is allowed which consequently suggest areas of intervention.

Verdonk (1979) adds five more variables for consideration as he believes Morrison's scheme includes factors that may account for mental illness in certain groups of immigrants under specific conditions. Verdonk's extra five factors include: type of migration (voluntary, involuntary, temporary); amount and quality of change in the environment; content of a specific cultural pattern, including concepts of illness and their relations to the more general worldview; varying measures of psychic and social problems, admissions to psychiatric hospitals; and political and social characteristics of the host culture (Verdonk, 1979, p. 302).

3.5 Previous studies of Persian Immigrant Groups

The case of Persian immigrants in Australia is a difficult one to address, if only because few studies have been conducted on Persians abroad and even fewer of these have been done on the mental health of Persian women migrants. Most of the research refers to Persians who live in Iran. There has been some studies on Persian women and their role in the new social order in Iran (Hegland, 1984, Higgins, 1985), but not very many on Persian women in the equally new social order they face when they move to a Western country (Hanassab & Tidwell, 1989). Some of the Iranian authors have noted the difficulty of doing research among exile Iranians, and this may only be one of the reasons for the lack of attention which they have been given. As Ansari (1974) who proposed a typology of adaptive strategies among Iranians in the United States remarks, "There are of course....political reasons for such widespread suspicion and distrust. But unwillingness of Iranians to be questioned or observed lies also in their cultural traits. The typical Iranian has no regard for a researcher" (Ansari, 1974, p. 43; cited in Hoffman, 1989a).

Overall, there has been little published material on Iranian migrants living in Western countries, and they continue to remain among the least studied and least understood of Australian cultural minorities. Generally speaking, however, the scope of research which investigates the process of migration, social adjustment and cultural adaptation of Persian migrants is limited to a few studies carried out in the United States, a handful in Canada, Australia and other countries. There has been remarkably little research on the mental health of this population. There are many factors that may have contributed to this lack of attention, not the least of which is Persian cultural and political sensitivities. Furthermore, the relative recency of the large-scale influx of Persians after the Iranian revolution (1979), their religious, political, and ethnic heterogeneity, and their lack of internal cohesiveness are characteristics that make their status as a minority community problematic. However, in some countries such as the United States where the number of Persian migrants is noticeable [Time (1983, cited in Sabagh 1987) claimed 200,000 lived in Los Angeles, and ranked Iranians as the second largest ethnic minority in Los Angeles], more attention has been given to the research on this minority group. Persian immigrants to the United States probably number about 1 million (Beauchamp, 1988, cited in Lipson, 1992), with some 450,000 living in California (Tyler, 1989, cited in Lipson, 1992).

Studies of Persian groups in the United States were mainly carried out around the theme of acculturation and its euphemistic variations: socialization, adaptation, absorption, social adjustment and integration. Research has focused mainly on the family, political, economic and cultural systems (Abyaneh, 1989; Banuazizi, 1977; Barati-Marnani, 1981; Bateson, 1979; Beeman, 1976; Dollalfar, 1994; Farjad, 1981; Ghaffarian, 1998; Hoffman, 1989a, 1989b, 1990; Kamali, 1986; Sabagh, and Bozorgmehr, 1987; Zehtabchi, and Houck, 1996; Zonis, 1971) with some research on clinical descriptions (Ardehali & Backer, 1980; Jalili, 1982). Recent studies on mental health include topics such as depression (Good, et al. 1985; Lipson, 1992), grief (Kashani, 1988, cited in Lipson, 1992) and marital satisfaction (Rezaian, 1989 & Vatan, 1991, cited in Lipson, 1992).

Another theme which has particularly occupied the attention of researchers working on Persian background immigrants in the United States concerns the younger generations of Persian immigrants and their adjustment to life between two cultures (Farmer et al, 1982; Ghaffarian, 1987; Hanassab, 1991; Hanassab and Tidwell; 1989 and 1993; Mehryar et al, 1978; Shapurian and Hojat, 1985). These studies point to the inter-generational conflict that has emerged as a result of the incongruity between the 'traditional' values of the old country and the 'modern' values of the Western culture. The findings of these studies reveal that some psychological dilemmas have persisted into the young generation of Persian-Americans who also seem to be undergoing a significant identity crisis.

Studies of Persian groups in Canada focussed on the psychiatric problems among Persian immigrants and the integration strategies among them (Bagheri, 1992; Moghaddam et al, 1987). The only four studies of Persian immigrants in Australia dealt with the demography of Persians in Australia, the acculturation of young Persian-Australians, expression of care in Persian culture, and the mental health of this immigrant group (Adibi, 1994; Khavarpour, 1997; Omeri, 1997; Ziaian, 1994, 1995). Plisken (1987) has considered themes of somatic distress among Iranian patients in Israel. In this section, those studies that are relevant to the present study have been highlighted and those studies that are fundamental to the present research are given greater consideration and discussed in more detail.

3.5.1 American and Canadian Studies

Iranian immigration to the United States is essentially a post-World War II phenomenon which can be divided into two cohorts: 1) after World War II until the Iranian revolution (1979) and 2) during and after the revolution. Los Angeles is the favored destination of Iranian immigrants to the United States as the U.S. Bureau of Census (1980 cited in Sabagh 1987) ranked Iranians the second largest ethnic minority in Los Angeles, Mexicans being the first (Sabagh, 1987). Despite an awareness of the increasing number of Persian immigrants to the United States, there is little published material about this rapidly growing population (Hanassab, 1991; Momeni, 1984; Zehtabchi and Houck 1996). Many counselors have little expertise in providing cross-cultural counseling due to the lack of knowledge and understanding of cultural values of this ethnic minority group (Zehtabchi and Houck 1996).

The motives for emigration is different in these two phases as the second cohort composed a large number of political refugees. Sabagh (1987) found the occupational, income characteristics, and educational levels to be significantly lower in the second cohort as clear evidence for these different motives. Sabagh's findings reflect only partially, however, the difference between immigrants and exiles for this population because the second cohort included a higher proportion of religious minorities, more age balance and a similar proportion of men and women. While Iranians who migrated to the U.S. were not officially admitted as refugees, the lives and welfare of many of them were affected just as adversely as the well-being of the official refugees from Cuba or Vietnam. Therefore, the status of Iranian exiles has a sociological rather than a legal or political basis (Suhrke, 1983 cited in Sabagh 1987). Viewed by their educational levels, occupational status, and income, Iranian immigrants were found to be well adjusted and formed an emerging successful ethnic group in the United States (Iranians richer, saner than others living in America, 1994; cited in Zehtabchi, 1996).

According to Abyaneh (1989), much recent literature on the family and the status of women in Western countries tends to assume that male dominance has broken down significantly in industrial societies. The bulk of literature, which does conceptualize immigrant families as male dominated, however, argues that the pre-migration values of immigrant families are the source of male dominance carried over into the host culture and explains patriarchy in terms

of "cultural heritage" from the immigrant's own past. Abyaneh (1989), examined the power structure of Persian immigrant families and assessed the position of Persian women within the family in relation to their husbands both before and after migration, that is, in Iran and in the United States. She found that Iranian immigrant families are more male dominated in the United States than they were prior to migration and that males were more helpful domestically in Iran than they now are in the United States. Her findings indicated that, women's status appears to have deteriorated after migration.

Abyaneh's (1989) finding further suggested that Persian women immigrants had increased domestic responsibilities due to the lack of their husbands' participation. The same pattern held for Persian women's control over family income as their control decreased following migration to the United States. Persian women had more control over family income through direct access to family back accounts, financial decision making and financial independence in Iran than in the United States. However, Persian women's decision making power did not change after migration. Women were restricted in Iran, where they tended to have little control over major decisions that were not financial. After their migration their ability to make decisions did not improve, despite the view that they now lived in a "more permissive" society. This finding raises an interesting challenge to commonly held beliefs that male dominance has been broken down significantly in industrial and western societies. The question that remains to be answered is "what factors influence a Persian family to become more male dominated after migration?" The present research will hope fully find some answers to this question.

A study conducted by Kamali (1986) explored the adjustment process of Iranian students to American society. He examined the changes, which had occurred in different aspects of Iranian students' lives while in the United States. The study found that most students in the survey had more favorable attitudes toward Americans at present than in the past, and a strong link existed between the social interaction pattern prevalent in American society in the past, and the favorableness of the students' attitude toward the surrounding environment. In this study the individual's characteristics did not play a determining role in the adjustment process; however, their marital status seemed to be the single most important operating factor in this process. Specifically, unmarried individuals appeared to be better adjusted as they performed higher on the adjustment scale. Kamali reports that "this may be due to the fact that married Persian immigrants isolate themselves from many social activities with Americans by forming their own enclaves" (1986, p. 162).

Ghaffarian (1987, 1998) conducted two studies, on the acculturation of Iranians who are recent immigrants to the United States. In her first study that focused on Iranian college students, she found that the longer the individuals are away from Iran, the more acculturated they tend to be. Her findings indicated that young men are more acculturated to the American society than young Persian women and there is a relationship between the level of acculturation and psychological health. She found that Persian men had accepted more American values and behaviors than the Persian women, and postulated that the men had been accustomed to more freedom, self-determination, and exposure to the western world prior to migration. However, she found that for both sexes, their values were contradictory with their behavior towards the opposite sex, as men were more acculturated but kept their traditional values concerning the role of women, whereas, women had acculturated less, but had modern values concerning the role of women.

Ghaffarian's second study (1998) explored the process of acculturation among Iranian immigrants in the United States and the relationship between acculturation and mental health, age, gender, level of education and length of residence in the United States. In this questionnaire survey study, acculturation was measured by Mendoza's (1989) Cultural Life Style Inventory, which included: cultural resistance, cultural incorporation and cultural shift. The questionnaire also contained an Anxiety Scale, Depression Scale and Psychological Dysfunction Scale. The study targeted 238 Iranian immigrants aged 25-72 years who were living in the Los Angeles area in 1989, when the study was conducted. The results of Ghaffarian's study (1998), indicated that Iranian immigrants in the United States who adopt U.S. culture while keeping their Persian culture, as well as those who assimilate to the U.S. culture, tend to have better mental health than Iranian immigrants who resist U.S. culture. She argued that this might be due to the struggle that the latter group will go through to fit in with the host culture without behavioral change and that leads them to emotional and psychological difficulties. Ghaffarian's findings support 'the melting pot' hypothesis and 'the bicultural' hypothesis. The melting pot hypothesis predicts that the more immigrants hold their original cultural values, the more they will experience adjustment problems (Griffith, 1983), emotional stressors, and psychological problems. The 'bicultural hypothesis' predicts that those immigrants who hold both adopted and native cultural values will have a healthier adjustment (Buriel et al. 1980; Szapocznik et al., 1980). However, the findings of this study contradicts Ortiz & Arce (1984) and Ramirez (1969) who argue that adopting the customs of

U.S. society and abandoning the traditions of the native society will lead to higher stress and consequently to greater mental illness.

Furthermore, level of education was found to be important in the acculturation process. Ghaffarian found in her study that those who were more educated had adopted more cultural values of the host culture and therefore, had better mental health. She concluded that those who were more educated were more exposed to U.S. and western culture generally. Ghaffarian's study also found a gender difference in acculturation and mental health of Iranian immigrants in the United States. She found that the men demonstrated a greater cultural shift and lower cultural resistance than the women. There was also a significant difference between the men and women on their mental health scores, which indicated that the men had better mental health than the women. In addition, the culturally shifted Iranians had better mental health than the culturally resistant Iranians. This finding is in agreement with Ortiz & Arce (1984) who suggested that, compared with immigrant men, immigrant women live under more stressful conditions in general.

Zehtabchi and Houck's (1996) study was one of the studies carried out in the United States on the acculturation of Persian-Americans. Their study investigated Persian couples' interpersonal communication, and the study results were compared with a previous study looking at American couples' interpersonal communications. They found higher levels of satisfaction with Iranian-American marital communication in the areas of: common interests, openness, shared goals and values, attention and inviting verbal interactions compared with American couples. The only area of less satisfaction with marital communication for Iranian-American couples was on conflict resolution. Considering many life adjustments and the significant shifts in the sex-roles of couples in the new environment, it is not surprising to find that resolving conflicts was difficult and less satisfactory for Iranian-American couples.

The exposure of Persian immigrant families to contrasting western and Persian cultures has generated many tensions and pressures for the younger generation as well as their families who migrated to western countries. Hence these families have been faced with problems of retention of their original cultural traditions. Young women in particular, are caught between two cultures; they live in the traditional culture of their parents at home and at the same time are constantly exposed to a host culture which is a very different social environment. Therefore, their world is neither traditional nor modern but rather a combination of both.

Consequently, stress inevitably arises for these young women. Most prominent among the researchers who have shown interest in Persian young immigrants to the United states and have investigated their adjustment to life between two cultures with special focus on their premarital sexual attitudes and dating relationships are Hanassab and Tidwell (1989 and 1993; and Hanassab, 1991). These researchers have targeted young Iranian women and their social rituals of dating because these are a source of major problems between Iranian parents and their daughters.

Hanassab and Tidwell (1989) investigated dating relationships of young Iranian women who lived in the United States for eight years or more and their experience of conflict between the traditional values of their culture and the values of the mainstream culture. As one would predict, they found that young women who had close relationships with their parents were confronted with much less confusion and anxiety over dating than those young women who could not communicate openly with their parents. They also found that those young women who internalized their parents' values and beliefs were less confused than those who did not share these values, yet, conformed to their parents' expectations. The latter group was also more anxious and conflicted. Furthermore, Hanassab and Tidwell examined how these young women negotiate conflicts with their families and within themselves. Hanassab (1991) examined the relationship between acculturation and young Iranian women's premarital behaviour and sexual attitudes, as well as their attitudes regarding gender roles. She found a significant positive relation between the women's acculturation level and their score on a measure of pre-marital sexual attitudes and sex role attitudes. Her study found that the higher acculturated a young individual is, the more liberal her attitudes are towards sex roles and intimate relationships. Her findings also confirmed the positive correlation between the length of time the individual had been away from Iran, and her acculturation level. Hanassab argues that the younger the individual is when immigrating, the less shaped her identity is, and therefore, the more flexible and amenable she is to change when exposed to the new environment.

Hanassab and Tidwell, (1993) investigated the sexual and premarital behavioural attitudes of young Iranian women in Los Angeles and compared them with those of their counterparts in Iran before the revolution. Their findings indicate that young Iranian women in Los Angeles have more permissive sexual and premarital attitudes than do their counterparts in Iran. The results of these studies indicate a significant positive relationship between acculturation and

permissive sexual attitudes among young Iranian women immigrants in the United States. Furthermore, a significant positive relationship was found between educational level and premarital behaviour and sexual attitudes among these young women.

Shapurian and Hojat, (1985) compared the premarital behaviour and sexual attitudes of young Iranians in Iran (data collected prior to the Islamic Revolution in 1979) with those of British students (Schofield, 1965 cited in Shapurian and Hojat, 1985). They found similarities as well as differences between the two groups. Iranian students overall were less permissive and more conservative in their attitudes than were their British counterparts. They also found that Iranian men were more permissive and liberal than Iranian women in their premarital sexual attitudes. They indicated this might be a reflection of the double standard of sexual morality, sex-roles and values assigned through traditions for different sexes among Iranians.

Very little research has been carried out in the United States on the language systems of Persian-Americans in terms of its association with the theoretical perspective of assimilation or socialization. Hoffman's (1989b) sociolinguistic study, which investigates the symbolic role of language in the cross-culture acquisition process, stands on its own among acculturation research on the Persian migrant population. Hoffman's anthropological studies (1989a, 1989b, 1988 and 1990) have considered aspects of cultural adaptation and cross-cultural learning. Hoffman's (1990) ethnographic research focused on the cultural adaptation of Iranian immigrants and exiles in California. Her study examined how self as it is experienced and defined in Persian culture affected the cross-cultural learning process. The study data was derived from extensive participant observation and in-depth individual and group interviews. She found that, cultural conflict between Iranians and Americans was significant. However, the majority of participants successfully adjusted to life in the U.S. and viewed their adaptation as an occasion for positive learning and self-enhancement. For the majority of Iranians the process of cultural adjustment was not experienced as a source of cultural shock, conflict, or confusion, but as a learning experience in which the self played a primary role as mediator for cultural learning. Hoffman found this learning had positive effects for the individual, both in terms of facilitating adaptation to American culture, and in terms of self-growth or self-development. Hoffman's thorough observational inspection of the Iranian adjustment process revealed that it was a "positive" learning not a "wholesale" learning of every aspects of American culture as she referred to "cultural eclecticism".

Hoffman's study (1990) indicated that "cultural eclecticism" is an extremely powerful adaptive strategy in that it encourages situationally adaptive flexibility without engendering a sense of "loss of self" or threat to cultural identity. In the case of Iranians in her study, though Iranians felt they were quite successful in learning American culture and adapting to it, they did not feel that they were in any sense becoming a part of the American system, or losing their identity as Iranians. Hoffman pointed out that behavioural and instrumental adjustment of Iranians did not bring any change in their inner self, nor affected their sense of cultural identity. In fact, instrumental and behavioral integration with American society, combined with lack of cultural identification, thus seemed to be a basic theme in Iranian adaptation.

Hoffman's (1989a) study on Iranian immigrants in the United States indicated that, learning the host culture, appears to occur on two levels – one, a superficial, instrumental sort of learning geared toward successful social integration in certain cultural domains such as the workplace, and a second "deep" level type of learning in which the cultural nature of self underwent change, what she referred to as "identity-impacting". She found among Iranians studied, the outer self in most cases can undergo radical "adaptive" transformation at the level of behavior, expression, and knowledge, while the inner self remains, "pure" a core of cultural being far removed from superficial dimensions of cross-cultural experience. This is in line with what was found by Brati-Marnani (1981) who explored assimilation among Iranians in Southern California. He found that, Iranians living in Los Angeles and San Diego experienced high levels of structural assimilation, but low levels of cultural and identification assimilation. Of all types of assimilation examined, Iranians most disapproved of identification with the host society.

Barati-Marnani (1981), investigated the effect of a number variables on the assimilation of Iranians, including educational background, age at entry into the United States, length of residence, religion, income, and English proficiency. He found no significant correlation existed between length of residence in the United States and total assimilation, but those with higher educational levels were less likely to experience assimilation. Hojat and Herman's (1985) study, which investigated adjustment and psychological problems of Iranian physicians in the United States, also supported Barati-Marnani (1981) and Hoffman's (1989a) findings. They reported no significant relationship between perceived adjustment problems, age and total years in the U.S. among Iranian physicians. Hojat and Herman (1985), however, found psychological problems such as loneliness, anxiety, depression, homesickness, and low

self-esteem was closely related to the adjustment problems of Iranian physicians in the United States.

According to Hoffman (1989a), there are three important characteristics of Iranian cultural adjustment in the United States. First, Iranians in the United States are characterized by fragmentation rather than by a cohesive "community " orientation. She argues that this fragmentation has been the result of political and religious heterogeneity as well as a fundamental style of intercultural relations directed towards the maintenance of internal differentiation rather than toward the outward communication of a collective solidarity or group identity. Second, is the Iranians' engagement in a process of explicit cultural critique of their U.S. experience, characterized by a consciousness of differences in cultural values, as well as by a consensus as to what elements of both Persian and American cultures are "good" or "bad". She argues that this characteristic had contributed to a sense of shared knowledge and experience capable of overcoming heterogeneity and fragmentation at the social level. Third, is the Iranians' focus upon "eclectic learning" as the key to successful adjustment to life in the United States.

In the case of the majority of professional Persians in the United States, Hoffman found (1989a), cultural eclecticism to be the primary adjustment/acquisition strategy. According to Hoffman, this response is based on a mode of relation of self to culture in which the inner self remains relatively autonomous and impermeable to changes occurring in the social self. Thus cultural acquisition is largely instrumental, leading to successful and flexible situational adaptation, without deeper identity impacting learning. However, for Persians who experienced less "success" in their adjustment to the United States, it appears that the primary mode of relation of self to culture was one in which "inner self" was identified more closely with changes in "outer self", thus leading to the possibility of more identity-impacting. In this context, alienation (as an avoidance reaction to such potential) and loss of self (as a potentially positive reaction) were more common responses (Hoffman, 1989a).

Good et, al. (1985) have explored the cultural idioms prominent in the discourse of Iranians suffering from depressive illness. Their study on depressed Iranian patients represented a significant contribution to the study of Persian immigrant groups in the United States. Their investigation examined several aspects of discourse prominent with depressed Iranian patients and the network of meanings and associated experiences to which they refer. Good and his

colleagues' clinical assessments suggested that Iranian immigrants to the United States grieve their loss of family, home, work, country, and culture. They found that depressed Iranian patients have a well-developed affective discourse related to sadness, loss and grieving caused by migration. In addition, four specific forms of discourse commonly existed among them. The symptom complexes identified in the clinical research were "sadness and grief", "anger", "mistrust" and "sensitivity". Good and his colleagues believe that each of these discourses relates to a symbolic domain or cluster of meanings and to experiences associated with those meanings for members of Iranian society. Good, et al.'s study seems to point to the important role played by emotional and psychocultural factors in the cross-cultural adjustment process, pointing out that traditional Persian idioms for illness, suffering, and pain are used to describe the psychological stresses that appear to have been considered by the very experience of living in a new cultural environment.

Good et al.'s (1985) findings in their clinical research led them to a survey of psychiatric symptoms among Jewish Iranian women, most of whom had recently immigrated to California. In particular, they examined the range of losses experienced and the relationship between the experience of loss and psychological symptoms. The cultural patterning of psychological distress among this population was also examined. Good et al.'s (1985) second study found that more recent immigrants experience a higher level of psychiatric distress. No significant relationship between age and psychological symptoms was found, however, women aged 16-29 consistently had the lowest psychological distress, where as women 30-49 tended to have the highest scores. The greatest distress was expressed by respondents who had lost their "very life" (*zendegi*), that is, the material losses of home, wealth, and occupational position of self or spouse. With respect to the relations of psychological distress and length of stay in the United States, the Iranian immigrant depression factor most significantly correlated to years in the United States. Their findings supported their hypothesis that depressive illness is culturally patterned among Iranian immigrants. "Depressive illness is experienced, in part, as distress (*narahati)* that results from an inability to find positive meaning in losses, conflicted social relations, and repressive conditions of the social order" (Good et al.'s 1985, p. 420). Indeed, according to Pliskin (1992), Iranians express dysphoria through an undifferentiated term called '*narahati*', meaning depressed, ill at ease, nervous, inconvenienced, or anxious. Good et al.'s (1985) findings of these two studies which combined ethnographic, clinical and epidemiological methods to investigate the question of

what is culture specific about depressive illness has provided a useful guide in understanding concepts and meanings of depression among Persian immigrants.

Bagheri (1992) in Canada conducted the first study, which looked at the prevalence of psychiatric problems among Iranian migrants and assessed the effect of migration and displacement on the integrity of the psychic life of this population. He studied psychiatric illness among Iranian immigrants (consisting of 85.5% refugees and 14.5% migrants with the age range of 13-67) in Canada who were referred for psychiatric treatment between 1985-88. Bagheri found that 60% of the sample had adjustment disorders with depressed and anxious mood with almost the entire sample complaining of high levels of anxiety and fear of failure (the symptoms were in accordance with the DMS-III-R criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder). The majority of the sample had strong feelings of guilt over their dependence on social assistance in Canada. In considering Bagheri's findings, it must be remembered that there is a distinction between mental health measured by the questions asked of a particular group of migrants and as measured by admission to psychiatric hospitals. As reported by Verdonk (1979), methods of admitting patients to hospital do not yield a true picture of the psychic morbidity in the particular population.

Bagheri's study (1992) suggested that there are three stages of adjustment for Persian immigrants. The first stage was found to be a stage of excitement and euphoria that starts immediately after arriving to the new country. The excitement is mainly related to the sense of freedom from the extreme restrictions and suppressions experienced at home. The second stage is found between a few months, to two to three years after arrival and this is a stage of atypical depression and anxiety due to the difficulties experienced in adaptation. Bagheri found the discrepancy between the subject's social and employment status held in Iran and in Canada, and subjects' familiarity with Western culture were the key factors in the development of psychiatric problems, particularly for middle-aged males. Furthermore, these men's wives were also affected, as they were sensitive to their husband's employment status. His finding was also supported by Cochrane's (1981) study that found psychological symptoms among Indian employed women immigrants in UK caused by their husbands' employment status. Bahgeri indicated that psychological problems were more common in the very young group due to their ego vulnerability and identity confusion and in the oldest group due to ego rigidity. The third stage, is the somatization of illness. He indicated that a great

number of Iranians present with physical problems when suffering from depression, anxiety or other psychiatric symptoms.

There are some unpublished PhD and Masters dissertations, that focus on Iranian immigrants in the United States. These dissertations are mainly carried out around the theme of acculturation and its euphemistic variations: adaptation, social adjustment, integration and coping style. In some studies the impact of acculturation and coping styles on the mental health of Iranian immigrants in the United States also have been explored (Abedin, 1995; Aghdassi, 1994; Akhavanhaidary, 1995; Alai, 1994; Barati-Marnani, 1981; Douraghy, 1981, Famili, 1997; Kohbod, 1997, Ostovar, 1997; Pezeshki, 1993; Safdar, 1998; Sameyah-Amiri, 1998, Sazan, 1994; Shadbash, 1994; Thomas, 1996; Tousinezhad, 1993; Zarnegar, 1997; Zarrinnejad, 1992). Because these dissertations have not been published it was not possible to access all the findings of these studies. However, major findings that have been noted in abstracts will be reported in this thesis later in the discussion chapter.

3.5.2 Australian Studies

Many Australian studies of immigrant groups tend to reflect the fashion of assimilation research as was carried out in countries such as the United States, Canada and England. However, unlike the North American studies which tended to be grounded within specific sociological/psychological traditions, early Australian research generally confined itself to analyses of Census data or naturalization papers with substantial reliance on published sources (Chiro, 1998). With regard to the Persian immigrant group in Australia, there have been very few studies, which have examined the Persian community (Adibi, 1994; Khavarpour, 1997; Omeri, 1997a, 1997b; Ziaian, 1994, 1995).

Adibi's study (1994) relied heavily on census data to trace Persian immigration settlement patterns in Australia. Adibi examined the Persian community in Australia from historical, social and economic perspectives. He outlined the process of community formation in Australia and assessed the factors that have historically facilitated the Persian migration process to Australia.

Ziaian (1994,1995) conducted the first sociological research on Persian immigrants in Australia. This qualitative study investigated the cultural adaptation of Persian-Australian

secondary students who immigrated to Australia after the Iranian Revolution (1979). While investigating issues associated with the experience of Persian youth adjusting to Australian schools, the work also reveals valuable information about the cultural adaptation and ideological pressures bearing upon this young group. The investigation was set in the theoretical framework of humanistic sociology as developed by Znaniecki (1964) and extended by Smolicz (1979). The study focused on the extent to which these students retained their Persian culture, the sociological and socio-cultural influences involved in living in a multicultural society and the factors within home and the school that contributed to their life history as they perceived it. The study found that female students had more adjustment problems than male students, possibly because females reported they were restricted and lacked personal freedom, whereas, male students were accustomed to freedom in the new society. The study also found that the pattern of personal social system for Persian-Australian youth was ethnically diverse at the secondary level, but it was mainly Persian at the primary level. Close family bonds and family unity was highly valued by Persian-Australian youth and family was rated as the most important part of their lives. There was no relationship with the length of stay in Australia and acculturation level. Students who had more positive attitudes towards Persian culture and maintained Persian cultural values to a higher degree had been in Australia for a longer period of time. This finding was in line with Barati-Marnani's (1981) study that investigated a number of variables on the assimilation of Iranians in the United States that found no significant correlation between the length of residence in the U.S. and total assimilation.

Qualitative research by Omeri (1997a; 1997b) contributed to transcultural nursing knowledge and gave an understanding of the meanings of 'care' in Persian culture. Omeri's study focused on care meanings, expressions and practices of Persian immigrants in New South Wales. She used Leininger's (1991) three modes of actions and decisions in order to develop appropriate and culturally meaningful nursing care actions to fit cultural beliefs of Persian immigrants (for detailed information on Leininger's three modes of actions see Leininger's, 1991; Omeri, 1997a). Her study discovered 31 linguistic care terms and five types of care in the Persian language. The five categories describe care as: action; thoughts, reflecting family ties and togetherness; care as being Iranian, reflecting Persian identity; and care as related context and expressed in safety and peace (Omeri, 1997b).

Khavarpour and Rissel's (1997) study investigated the mental health status of Iranian immigrants in Sydney, Australia, as part of a health needs assessment. The study examined the levels of psychological distress in the Iranian community in Sydney. Participants of this psychological quantitative research were selected through snowball sampling. Four hundred thirteen participants of Persian cultural background who were over 18 years of age were selected for a brief telephone survey. Participants were asked some brief questions about their health risk behaviour and demographic characteristics and then were asked whether they would participate in a longer mailed survey. Two hundred sixteen people agreed and 161 completed a questionnaire containing the GHQ-20, measures of acculturation, questions assessing health service utilization and health behaviors, and demographic questions. Khavarpour and Rissel identified an elevated level of psychological distress among the Iranians surveyed (36.5% had GHQ-20 score $\geq$ 4), with no significant differences in sex or education. However young people, single people and students were significantly more likely to report psychological distress compared with other groups. Another relevant finding which emerged from this study indicated that, feelings that migration had contributed to distress was significantly correlated with higher GHQ scores. A greater proportion of respondents with a high acculturation score had above-threshold scores than respondents with low acculturation scores. This finding is consistent with the acculturative stress model of acculturation, which proposes that the process of acculturation is inherently stressful, and hence, might predict more stress among the more highly acculturated (Neff and Hoppe, 1993).

3.6   Aims and scope of the present study

This study is concerned with the psychological effects of migration on Persian women who live in Australia; the population that has not been studied in Australia before and little studied in the world generally. Interest in studying the adjustment of migrants has been the subject matter of many investigations during the past few decades. The direction of their attention varies considerably from one investigation to another. Overall, there is a rich body of literature focussing mainly on the cause and the consequence of migration but little work that focuses on migrant women's struggle to minimize obstacles resulting from living in another social context.

The investigator who is a Persian-Australian immigrant herself, has observed that the exposure of Persian women living in Australia to contrasting Australian and Persian standards

has generated many tensions and pressures. Persian women immigrants are exposed to social values that are perceived to be different from the values practiced in Iran. Consequently women experience conflicts within themselves as well as within the family.

Persian women immigrants in Australia are experiencing great difficulties which appear to be post-migration problems. With the social and cultural problems brought on by revolutions, war, immigration, and accommodation to a new society, Persian women immigrants experience changes in family, role, status, finances, language, and other sociocultural ways of being that may cause them to feel depressed.

Major problems faced by Persian women immigrants in Australia can be classified into marital problems, problems with children at home, loss of status within the family and assimilation difficulties. Ghaffarian (1987) found that many problems developed between parents and their children, especially among those who lived in the United States for a relatively long period of time. One of the areas that needs more attention is the conflicts that immigrants and the subsequent generation experience in the host country which may be due to their different acculturation rates. The present study will hope to explore this issue in conjunction with the exploration of the adjustment process among Persian women immigrants in Australia.

The present study is concerned with several aspects of Persian women's life in a foreign country. The objective of this study is to examine Persian women's adjustment to Australian society. To be more specific, the study attempts to understand the psychological impact of migration on this group of women who live in an environment, which has been foreign, strange, and alien to them.

The rationale for the selection of Persian women as the target group under this investigation is my own life situation -- as an example among many other Persian women who have experienced many problematic situations during their course of living in Australia. Also, my familiarity with social and cultural aspects of Persian women's life in Australia has inspired my interest in searching for an understanding of the aforementioned problem.

The study aims at examining factors and relations that are considered to be the determinants of Persian women migrants' adjustment to Australian society. The selected factors are

classified as sociological, psychological, cultural and social structural variables. The observed effectiveness of mentioned variables makes it an area that is worth investigating, not only for their importance to immigration policy development, but for the health and well-being of the specific group involved. Another aim of this study is to provide health professionals such as psychologists, psychiatrists, and counselors with some useful notions regarding cross-cultural counseling of Persian clients.

The purpose of the study is also to investigate the position of Persian women within the family after migration and their well being. The study will examine how Persian women immigrants are affected emotionally by the conflict between the changing values of their husbands, their children and those of their own. In particular it will discuss Persian women's role within the family and the psychological effects of migration on them. In this study the various aspects of acculturation will also be studied including measures of assimilation through attitudes to Australia, the desire to live in Australia and the desire to return to Iran.

This study hopes to examine the extent to which Persian women in Australia have retained their central role within the family and maintained a happy and healthy life in Australia. It also hopes to find out the extent to which Persian women have retained their culture in the Australian society, and what psychological factors are involved in living in a society different from the one in which they were born and raised.

Review of the previous studies of migrants and their adjustment problems in the host country in general and Persian immigrants in the United States, Canada and Australia in particular, inspired the researcher to test the following hypotheses in the present study:
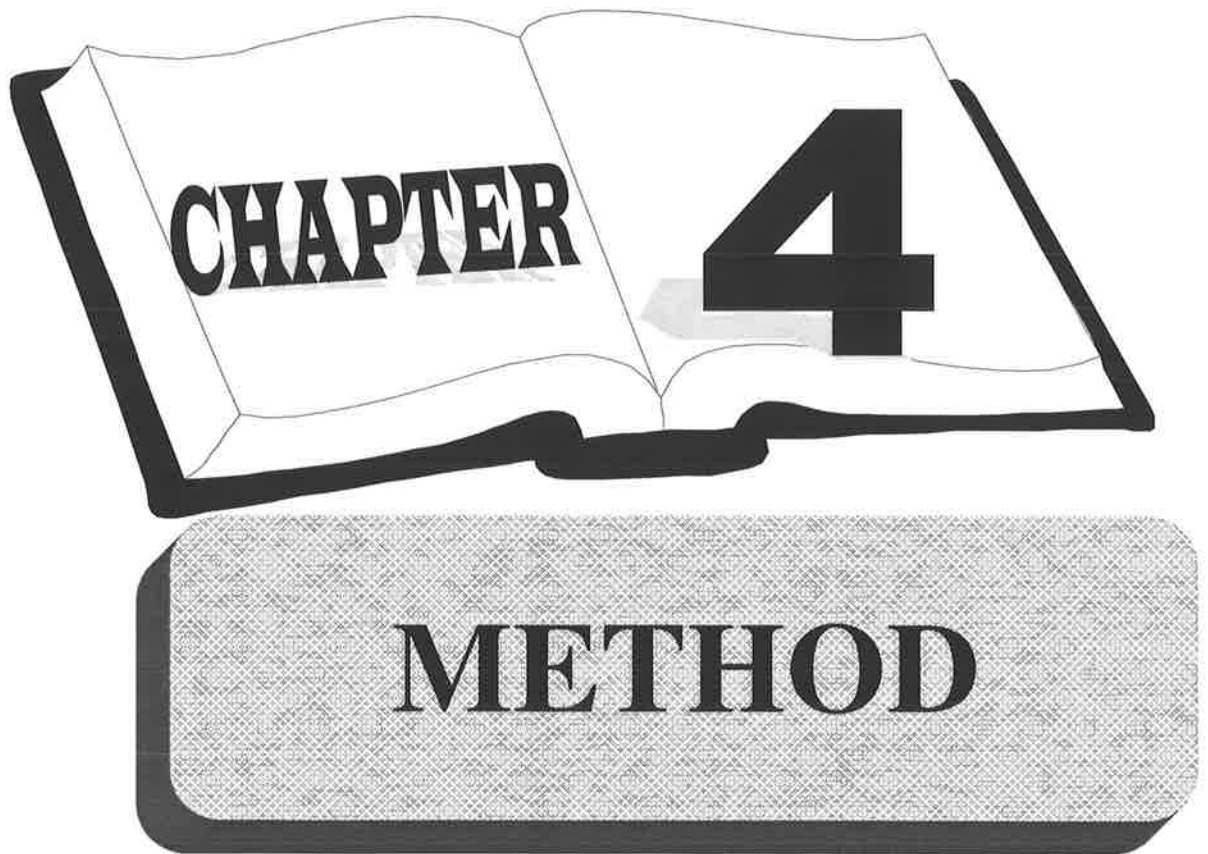
1. Marital status is one of the most important operating factors in the adjustment process. Specifically, unmarried individuals are expected to be better adjusted.

2. Employment status and length of residence have impacts on participants' psychological well-being.

3. Younger Persian women identify more with Australia than older Persian women.

4. Younger Persian women hold less traditional Persian values than other age groups and identify less with Persian culture.

5. There is a relationship between the age of Persian women and their life satisfaction.

6. Male authority increases in the immigrant Persian household and women's status within the family deteriorates after migration. A variety of factors that influence a Persian family to be more male dominated after migration will also be explored.

7. That many problems develop between parents and their children, especially among those who have lived in Australia for a relatively long period of time.

8. Persian women's central role within the family changes after migration and that change has an impact on their mental health status.

9. Persian women have less control over family income and greater domestic responsibilities after migration.

It should be noted that the present study is not a comparison study. It examines the effects of a number of factors and relations between these factors that are considered to be the determinants of Persian women migrants' adjustment to Australian society.

The adaptation process takes place over time and in the present study, time of residence in Australia was treated as an important variable.
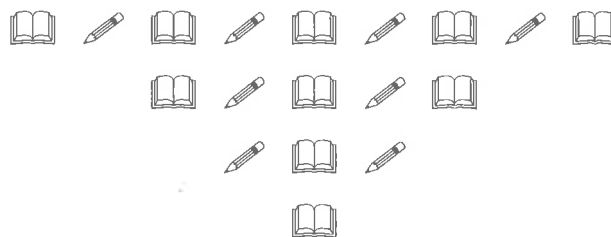
CHAPTER 4

METHOD

Up to this point, theoretical and empirical studies related to the present investigation have been examined. The aim of the present chapter is to describe how the participants were selected, who they were, and the methods that were employed to elicit, record and analyze the data. After describing sources of the data in section one, section two presents the composition of the study group, section three outlines the strategies and procedure used to recruit Persian women for the study, section four explains the design of the study, section five deals with the measurement instrument used, specifically, the definitions, operationalisation, and the response formats for the variables and the characteristics of the focus groups. Section six describes what methods were used to analyze the data.

4.1 Sources of data

This research project intended to partly examine the replicability of some previous findings in terms of their applicability to the case of Persian-Australian women and partly to examine a set of hypotheses that have not been targeted in previous studies.

Careful sampling methods were used to ensure that the participants are representative of the population. Qualitative and quantitative methods were employed in this study. All surveys were conducted by the researcher. Data sought in this study were obtained directly from the respondents.

Survey and group interview methods were employed to obtain the required data. This approach combines a self-administered questionnaire survey and the collection of verbal statements from the focus group interviews. It was considered that the information gathered with one technique would tend to complement that gathered by the other, and together the use of both methods would allow cross-checking to verify the validity of observations, thereby leading to more reliable results (Bellaby, 1991). However not much research has been done in the cross-cultural field using qualitative methods. According to Ting-Toomey (1984, cited in Hoffman, 1990), qualitative methods have much potential yet are not often used because of the length of time and the foreign language facility they require.

A questionnaire survey was initially developed including closed and open-ended questions. Most questions had been used in previous surveys with known validity and reliability. A set of instructions was attached to each questionnaire on the front page.

The survey method allowed the investigator to design a questionnaire measuring the respondents' present situation as well as when they first came to Australia. According to Warvick (1975), the survey method is more suitable for acquiring quantitative data for the purpose of replication and generalization to a larger population with known limits of error.

Semi structured in-depth focus group interviews were conducted to collect qualitative data. A focus group interview was selected as a method for qualitative data collection due to the nature of the information required for the study. The questionnaire which was used in the survey for quantitative data had closed-ended response choices for most of the questions. In the survey, the respondents were limited by the choices offered. Thus, even the questionnaire survey, while respecting the principles of representatives, reliability and validity, can be designed in a humanistic way to uncover some of the respondents' intentions, activities and experiences (Krueger, 1994). The advantages of focus group interviews is that respondents can be relatively free to express their thoughts, feelings, aspirations and assessments with far less interference from the researcher. Often feelings can provide a depth of understanding of the social environment of the participant which cannot be achieved with a questionnaire survey. According to Stewart and Shamdasani (1990) there is another advantage for a focus group method and that is the low cost of the research. They agree that "focus groups provide data from a group of people much more quickly and at less cost than would be the case if each individual were interviewed separately" (p. 16). However, Krueger (1994) challenges the low cost of focus groups and reports, "focus group analysis begins earlier and usually lasts longer than analysis used in quantitative research procedures.....A distinctive feature of qualitative inquiry is that data inquiry and data analysis are simultaneous activities – they occur together" (p. 133).

In the focus group interviews, which were semi structured, participants were allowed to respond without setting boundaries or providing clues for potential response categories. The researcher who has had extensive experience working with migrants found that it is only through personal contact with migrants that they are willing to slowly disclose personal information. According to Krueger (1988) open ended approaches allow the subject ample

opportunity to comment, to explain, and to share experiences and attitudes. He argues that focus group interviews are a particularly appropriate procedure to use when the goal is to explain how people regard an experience, idea, or event.

One of the questions that arise in studies of immigrants from NESB background is how the researcher is to communicate with the respondents. This becomes a major problem when the participants are adults and have recently arrived or when the sample is linguistically heterogeneous. This might be one of the reasons that there are not many studies in this field.

Cultural values are embodied in language and it is usually difficult to understand the culture and these values without understanding the language. NESB problems can easily be misinterpreted and misunderstood unless they can communicate with the investigator who can speak their language and who knows or is interested in their cultural heritage. Although an investigator who does not know the language and the culture of the migrant can use an interpreter there are some issues associated with the use of an interpreter as: pauses, silence or other nuances of speech can not be so easily interpreted. Non-verbal aspects of language and communication help create a friendly and stimulating atmosphere in which interviewees can talk freely about their doubts, fears, anguish and other problems.

Communication is also much more fluid, open and rich if the participant enters into a conversation or discussion with an investigator who shares a cultural affinity. Investigators who have the same cultural background as their participants can more accurately appreciate the person's problem form his/her own perspective and understand them in the context of the participant's culture. Nevertheless, the investigator must be sensitive to ethnocentric attitudes, and of the tendency to interpret human situations in the light of one's own personal experience, making exclusive reference to the values of one's own ethnic group.

The personal experience of the researcher as a Persian immigrant woman in Australia, knowing the culture and being fluent in the Persian language was found to be useful in the process of data collection and reflection. Thus the researcher was able to relate to the group's core values such as family and language. The researcher can be seen as an insider to the group's experiences of migration. Taking the 'inside out' view permits researchers to escape what Denzine (1978) has termed the *fallacy of objectivism*. According to Smolicz and

Secombe (1989) it is often useful, that researchers themselves originate from the group being studied and are familiar with its culture and socio-historical context.

It might be argued that this approach represents a trap for unwary researchers who may be tempted to introduce personal bias into their analysis. On the other hand, it may offer considerable advantages in terms of the quality of interpretative understanding of the subject matter. In addition, it may avoid the danger of oversimplifying the real concerns of the group, or the risk that investigators may, unintentionally, impose the values of their own group upon the participants of the research in the faulty belief that such values are universal. In this research, all attempts were made to avoid such biases which may interfere with the reliability and credibility of data.

The researcher was well known in the Persian community Australia wide. This made it easier for the researcher to recruit Persian women for the research. According to Leininger (1991) information gathered during the initial entry to the research site by researchers as 'strangers' to the participants may not be as accurate and meaningful as information collected after the researcher has become known, accepted, and trusted.

All participants were provided with an information page in the Persian language indicating that participation is voluntary, that they may withdraw at any stage of the study, and that confidentiality and anonymity will be guaranteed.

4.2   The study group

One problem that arises constantly in social survey research is that of sampling. This is a particular problem in migrant investigations, since the more assimilated immigrants are more difficult to sample. Since most of the Persian immigrants were recent migrants of less than 15 years living in Australia, this study sample was probably fairly representative of the full population concerned. Nevertheless, any generalizations from these results should be made with caution as only 209 Persian women participated in this research.

The sample of the study was comprised of Persian women who live in Australia. "Persian women" was defined as women who were born in Persia (Iran) or have parents born in Persia (Iran) and have been living in Australia permanently. The sample was selected from different

religious faiths and from the different age groups (young, mature age and elderly). The sample included refugees and voluntary immigrants from all levels of education and occupational skills.

Three states were targeted: South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales, because they presented a concentrated Persian-Australian population. According to the ABS (1996b) census, 13,351(82 %) persons of the Persian population were living in these three states (Figure 4.1). Moreover, it was not possible to target other states due to the financial constrains in conducting this research.
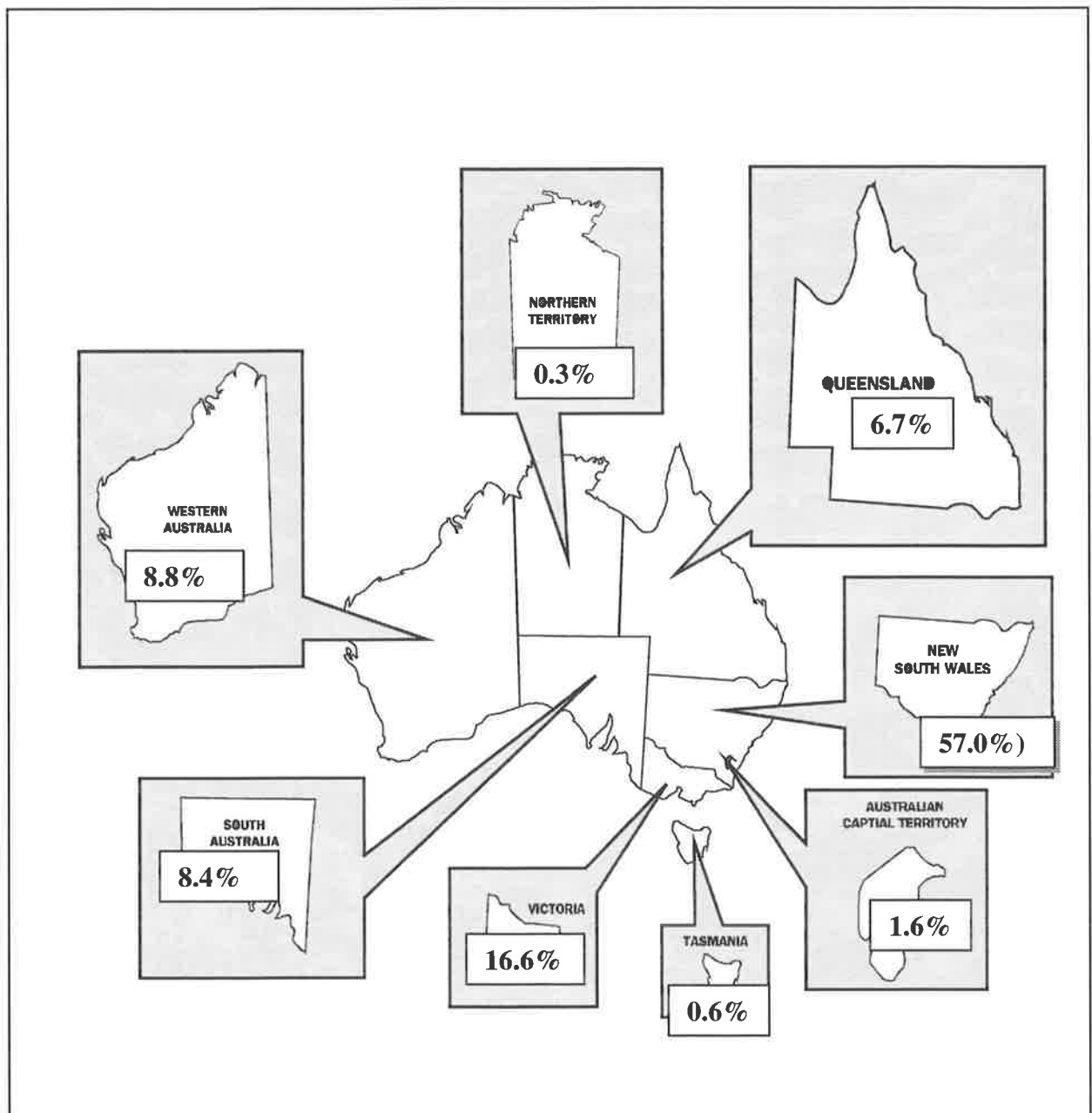
Figure 4.1---State and Territory distributions of Persian-born persons

Source: figures are from 1996 Census, Persian Community Profile

For several reasons the researcher decided to concentrate this study on different age groups. Young adults were included in the sample (18-26 years), because positive intervention is more important for young people, who have their whole lives before them, and whose adaptation to Australian society will be crucial not only for their own future well-being, but also for the benefit of the host society. A mature age group (37-49 years) was selected because they would provide valuable insights into the maintenance of Persian culture in Australian society and they would be in the process of making life-choices about the extent of

their participation in Australian society in general and in the Persian community in particular. The investigator also wanted to compare these groups with Persian elderly women (50+), who it was assumed, would have greater difficulties in adapting to the new culture and the new way of life.

Due to political issues in Iran, every precaution was taken to reduce any anxieties of the participants. All participants were assured that this research did not have connections with any political or religious groups.

The participants of the study were comprised of Persian migrant/refugee women, who were of different religious and political backgrounds. Due to Iran's political climate, some Persian women might have been forced to sign documents against their will before migration. By asking these women to sign a consent form, they may be reminded of those traumatic events that they were subjected to in Iran and might choose not to participate in the research. Advice was sought about appropriate ways to gain consent from Persian women as written consent could limit the number of participants. To overcome this problem the investigator received permission from the Human Ethics Committee from the Department of Psychology for the exemption from the need to obtain signed consent from the participants. Verbal consent was obtained from the focus group participants where discussions were tape-recorded. The completion of the questionnaire was seen as consent for the participation in the first stage. Figure 4.2--- Shows the composition of the study group:
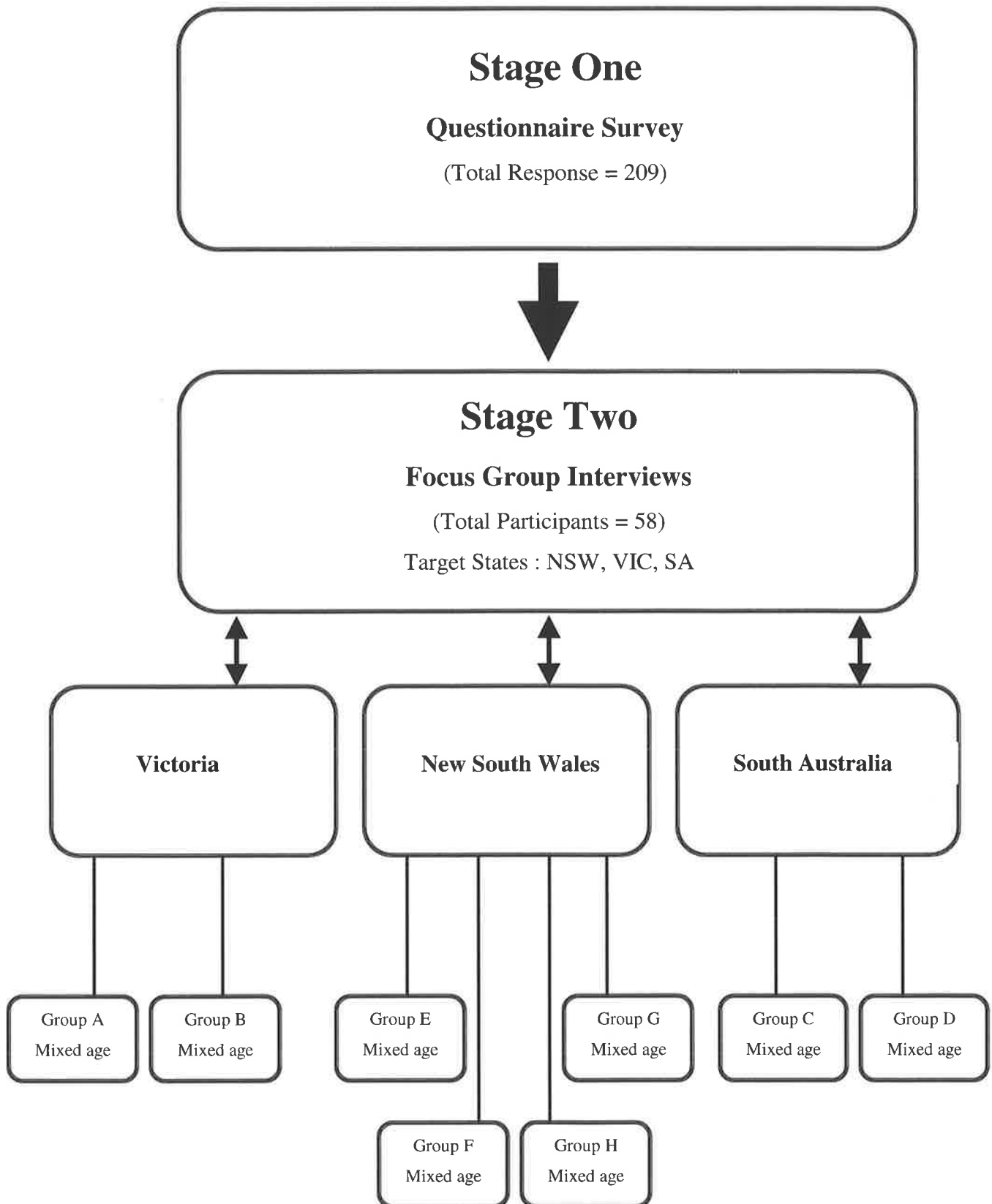
Figure 4.2---Composition of the Study Group

4.3   Procedure

4.3.1 Sample selection

Various methods were employed in an attempt to recruit women for the study. Persian women immigrants were approached for their expression of interest to participate in this study through a 'Call for Volunteers Sheet' (see appendix A). This was translated into Persian and was distributed within the Persian community as widely as possible. In this sheet the purpose of the study was explained and women were assured that participation is voluntary and that their responses will be treated with full confidentiality. The 'Call For Volunteers Sheet' was published in different Persian newspapers and magazines (5 newspapers and magazines published in Sydney and Melbourne), and distributed through Iranian Associations in South Australia, New South Wales, Victoria, and the Persian New Year Feast (21 March each year, the biggest cultural event in which the whole Persian community is involved). The project was also promoted through other social gatherings which are arranged by different Persian religious groups during the sample selection period.

The project was also announced through the SBS Persian Radio Program (Australian wide program) and an interview with the investigator was broadcasted. The investigator was already known by the program listeners through running a series of sessions on this program and by being interviewed on many occasions. This method was found to be the most effective method in promoting the project in other states where a personal approach was not possible.

An effective method of recruitment was to approach key women in the Persian community in target states and ask them to distribute the 'Call for Volunteers Sheet'.

268 responses were received from women expressing interest in participating in the project. The research package was sent to each of them for participation.

The research package consisted of:
- The Information page
- The questionnaire - either in English or Persian, the preferred language selected by the participant.

- The Expression of Interest Form for participating in a focus group and;
- Two pre-stamped and pre-addressed envelopes.

Extreme care was taken to avoid the possibility of coercing people into volunteering, or exploiting the women volunteers once they expressed their interest in participating.

4.3.2 Data Collection

268 research packages were posted to Persian women who had expressed interest in the study.

The questionnaire was translated into Persian by the researcher, due to the lack of funding from the department for this purpose. Although the researcher had her education up to honors in Persian language, and she was fluent in the language, the questionnaire was translated in Persian and then a back translation into English was made to determine the adequacy of the original translation. The help of bilingual professionals, proved to be invaluable in terms of using the correct term where the translation of the exact meaning of each word was absolutely essential. This was achieved during long sessions between the researcher and these professionals at which the meanings of critical words were discussed extensively. To ensure the loyalty of meaning and accuracy of the language, to validate the appropriateness and credibility of linguistic terms, as well as to monitor personal interpretations by the researcher, four Iranian experts were consulted. Two of these experts were psychologists practicing in Australia and the others were experts in Persian literature and language. The questionnaire was available to the participant either in English or in Persian translation and participants were asked to choose the language with which they felt more comfortable. The Persian translation of the questionnaire was obtained through the method of back translation (Brislin, 1970). Due to political issues in Iran, every precaution was needed to reduce anxieties of the participants. The questionnaire was carefully designed and considered many sensitive cultural and political issues. In the questionnaire, certain areas of inquiry were excluded - namely, those related to political beliefs and contacts with relatives in Iran, as it was felt that such inquiries might be threatening to respondents.

Taking extreme care, the initial draft of the questionnaire was piloted with 10 Persian women who were professionals either in the educational field of study or Persian literature. The pilot study served not only for the development and testing of the questionnaire, but also for the

credibility of linguistic terms and sensitivity for cultural and political issues. On the basis of comments received regarding its clarity of format, expression and concepts, the survey was revised and mailed to the study group.

4.3.3 Stages of data collection

Data collection was in two stages:

4.3.3.1 Stage one

Quantitative data was collected in phase one through the questionnaire (*see* Appendix B). The questionnaire was available to the participants either in English or in Persian translation. The main advantage of the Persian version was that it catered for the participants who were more fluent in Persian. Fourteen (5.2 %) women requested both versions to see which one was easier for them to complete. Only 17 (6.3 %) women requested the English version and 237 participants asked for the Persian version.

Information was given to the participants in the information page which explained that the purpose of the study was to explore the adaptation of Persian immigrant women in Australia, and the process of their adjustment to the Australian culture. Participants were given three weeks to complete and return the questionnaires. Each of them then received a letter which thanked those who had already taken part in the study and reminded the remaining participants that their response would be greatly appreciated. The study was then extended for a further two weeks.

Two hundred and twelve completed questionnaires were received. Three questionnaires were excluded from the study because the participants did not meet the criteria (one was under 18 years and two others were not Persian themselves, though they were married to Persian men). Thus, of the total of 268 questionnaires sent, 212 were returned, giving a response rate of 79.1 %. Of those, 69 (32.5 %) returned the attached form indicating their willingness to participate in the second stage of the study which was, the focus group interview. Of those who showed interest in participating in the focus group interviews, 58 women participated. Despite assuring anonymity and confidentiality, the response rate for the focus group interviews was low. Given the difficulties encountered within the Persian community in gaining trust, this result was satisfactory. However, the response rate compared with some studies carried out in

the United States (Lipson 1992, a response rate of 19% for a written survey) is relatively high. It is noteworthy that some Persian immigrants are reluctant to provide information to "strangers" about their private lives and suspicious of anyone who gathers information about them. This is a recurring problem, as other Persian researchers have also reported the same problem (Chaichian, 1997; Khavarpour and Rissel 1997; Kamalkhani, 1988, cited in Chaichian 1997). However, mistrust of research in general is characteristic of immigrants from the Middle East (Lipson & Meleis, 1989, cited in Lipson 1992). Table 4.1 illustrates the participation rate of the study group.

Table 4.1 – Participation rate of the study

Interested in participation		Number of participants	Participation rate %
Survey	268	212	79.1
	212	69	32.5
Focus groups	69	58	84.5

4.3.3.2   Stage two

The qualitative data was collected through focus group discussions in phase two. In this phase 8 focus groups were run for a sample of 58 Persian women in three target states: NSW, VIC and SA. This phase focused on a sub sample of the participants in phase one who had expressed their interest in participating in phase 2 – the focus group discussions. The focus group was introduced to participants as a follow-up to the first stage of the study (*See* cover page of Appendix B and Appendix C). In the focus group a semi-structured interview was employed.

The size of the Persian community is relatively small. Therefore, the investigator knew many of the Persian women. This resulted in extreme precautions being taken to avoid the possibility of unintentionally coercing women into volunteering.

Trust within the members of the Persian community has always been a major issue. Issues of trust and mistrust are widespread themes in the talk of Persians about each other and in social scientists' interpretations of Persian culture (Banuazizi 1977; Beeman 1976; Good, et al., 1985; Zonis 1971). This is due to many cultural and political issues. Some Persian women

were suspicious of any type of research. This was particularly so for those women who escaped from Iran due to their political or religious backgrounds. Although no names were recorded in the focus group discussions, an important issue was that some participants knew each other in focus groups. Some of these women were hesitant to participate in the discussion as they felt they might provide personal information that could be used "against" them in some way at a future time. This affected the depth of the discussion in the groups held, in South Australia in particular.

Lack of trust among the focus group participants was found to be one of the major issues preventing some members from participating actively and / or giving honest answers to the questions that were asked. To overcome this issue, participants were given a set of written open-ended questions with space provided for their written answers (The same key questions discussed in the focus group). They were given these to take home and to return their responses by mail. These participants were asked to use the same ID number on the top of the questionnaire that they were given in the focus group.

4.4   Design of the study

The intention of the research design, therefore, was to move from an exploratory survey of the group through the questionnaire survey, and to then focus more closely on the experience of individuals in the adaptation process and the impact of social and psychological factors involved in this process. Taking account of these factors, a model of psychological adjustment was developed. The model simply represents predictor variables, but makes no a priori assumptions about the level of psychological well-being expected. The variables from the model were operationalised in a survey instrument. Figure 4.3 provides a representation of the inter-related factors which informed the design of the questionnaire.

CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDY GROUP

(Predictors)

Personal factors
Age
Religion
Education
Marital status
Length of residence
Health status before migration

Social factors
Employment
Family role performance and relations
Maintenance of former occupational status
Consistency of occupation with qualification
Problems of adaptation

Adjustment Problems

Adaption

Reaction to the new environment – changes in roles and responsibilities

National self-identity and cultural maintenance

Life satisfaction
&
Work satisfaction
In Australia

Psychological factors
Self-esteem
Emotional well-being

(outcomes)

Figure 4.3   Design of the Questionnaire Survey

4.5 Measures

4.5.1 The Questionnaire

In order to measure the psychological adjustment problems faced by Persian women, a series of questions were asked each of which is assumed to reflect one aspect of the adjustment process. A likert type scale was employed to measure most variables.

Indices were constructed for each adjustment variable based on the combined scores of items in each set assuming that the overall score reflects that particular variable which provides a reasonable measure of the variable under scrutiny. This technique is commonly used for measuring a combination of the values of several variables into a composite measure.

Before constructing indices, two statistical tests were employed to detect the importance and contribution of each item to the total body of the index: 1) Pearson product moment correlations which indicated the correlation between items in each set and, 2) Internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha) which determined the strength of the correlation between each item in the set with the remaining items in the index. These tests were used for selecting index items which had the highest correlation with other items and had stronger contribution for constructing the index.

4.5.1.1 Operationalization of Variables:

Background Demographic Characteristics - The questionnaire began with a series of background demographic questions. These included questions, such as: age, nationality, length of stay in Australia, religion, number of children, spouse's nationality, educational qualifications and marital status. These comprised questions 1 to 11 in the questionnaire (*see* Appencix B). Age and length of stay were measured in years. The highest education level was measured on an ordinal scale and classified in five levels, 1= no schooling, 5=tertiary complete. Marital status was coded, 1= single, 2=married, 3=divorced, 4=widowed, 5=separated. Women who were separated/divorced, were asked when it happened, 1=before migration, 2=after migration. If it was after migration, women were asked whether migration caused the situation, 1=yes, 2=no, 3= do not know.

Employment and job satisfaction –

This scale was adapted from the Migrant and Settlement Questionnaire (MASQ) developed by Minas & Klimidis, (1993a). The major areas covered in this section included information about respondents' and their partners' occupation in Australia and was classified into five levels: 1=employed, 2=unemployed, 3=self-employed, 4=retired, 5=housewife, 6=student. Job classification was coded into six levels: 1=professional/managerial, 2=semi-professional, 3=clerical or sales, 4=skilled, 5=semi-skilled, 6=unskilled. Consistency of work with qualification was measured with a two point scale: 1=yes, 2=no. Maintenance of former occupational status was coded as: 1=very much better, 2=better, 3=about the same, 4=not as good, 5=very much worse. Work satisfaction in Australia was measured using a five point Likert scale, 1=very satisfied and 5= very dissatisfied. Job satisfaction was considered to be an important component of women's health status. Therefore, job satisfaction was treated as an independent variable predicting mental health status. This scale was also treated as a dependent variable to predict some of the factors, such as high levels of self-esteem, making external attributions for failure, and making internal attributions for success.

A composite job satisfaction scale included three variables: maintenance of former occupational status, consistency of work with qualification and work satisfaction in Australia. Variables were unit weighted and added to form the scale. All of these three variables were rated negatively and the higher the score, the less the work satisfaction. This scale measured the occupational adjustment of the participants. Internal liability for this measure for this sample was alpha = 0.62. The relatively low internal reliability of the job satisfaction scale may have been due to the fact that the scale includes only 3 items.

Problems of Adaptation

This scale was adapted from Scott & Scott's questionnaire (1989) which measures the number of problems that participants experienced upon arrival in Australia. This was an eight item scale; each item indicated a problem: getting a job, accommodation, language, Australian customs, loneliness, lack of friends, homesickness, and if other problems, please specify. Each item was coded: no=0, yes=1. For the last item, 1=the specified problem, 0=no response. The composite score was 0 - 8. This scale aimed to assess the correlation with the number of

problems that respondents reported having encountered upon arrival with their adjustment problems (problem Index) and with their post-migration psychological well-being. This scale had a low internal reliability of 0.63.

Life satisfaction in Australia

This section of the questionnaire mainly dealt with the personal aspects of the individual's life while in Australia. The life Satisfaction in Australia scale was adapted from the Migrant and Settlement Questionnaire (MASQ- Minas & Klimidis, 1993a).

This scale was a seven item scale measuring the participants' life satisfaction in Australia in the following areas: financial opportunities, educational opportunities, employment opportunities in a desirable area, social life, child raising, religion, moral & ethical issues. Respondents evaluated the degree of satisfaction of each item by selecting a rating of either 0 (not satisfied), 1 (a little satisfied), 2 (quite satisfied but not completely), 3 (completely satisfied). The composite score was 0 – 21. Life satisfaction was assessed using likert scales; 0-5=not satisfied, 6-11= a little satisfied, 12-16=quite satisfied, 17-21=completely satisfied. Internal reliability for this measure for this sample was alpha = 0.76.

Identification with Australia

One aspect of the study was to assess the national self-identification of the participants. A five-item scale was used in order to measure the feelings of national self-identification of the participants as either Australian or Persian or as balanced bicultural (both Persian and Australian). Three items were adapted from Scott & Scott (1989). These three items measure feelings and attachments to the Australian culture and two were developed by the investigator to measure feelings and attachments to Persian culture. The item which assessed feelings about Persian nationality was rated along a 5-point scale: *a strong positive feeling(1), a moderately positive feeling(2), no feeling(3), a moderately negative feeling(4), a strong negative feeling(5).* The item that measured feelings about being considered as an Australian were rated on a 5-point scale similar to the previous question with the same 5 point orders but with different values: *a strong positive feeling(5), a moderately positive feeling(4), no feeling(3), a moderately negative feeling(2), a strong negative feeling(1).* For the item '*except for possible overseas holidays, would you like to spend the rest of your life in Australia*'

responses were given on a three point scale: *yes (3), undecided(2), no(1),* and for the item *'would you like to go back to live in Iran if there were a change of situation,'* responses were given on a 3-point scale as in the previous question with the same orders but with different values: *yes (1), undecided(2), no(3).* For the item *'do you ever wish you were back in Iran with things the way they used to be'* responses were given on a four point scale: *often(1), sometimes(2), rarely(3), never(4).* These items were weighted equally (values of each of four and five point items were multiplied by 3/4 and 3/5 respectively). Therefore, responses of the five items were equally weighted and added together then grouped into three groups of equal size: low, medium and high to form the scale. High scores represented stronger identification with Australia. Internal reliability for this measure for this sample was alpha = 0.69.

Change in responsibilities in the process of resettlement.

This 4-item scale was adapted from the Migrant and Settlement Questionnaire (MASQ) developed by Minas & Klimifids, (1993a). This scale consisted of four items measuring changes in responsibilities in relation to: family financial matters, important family decisions, decisions affecting the children, and responsibilities over other family members. These four items responses were given on a three point scale: 1 = decreased, 2 = stayed the same, 3 = increased. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was = 0.69

Change in roles in the process of resettlement.

This 3-item scale was also adapted from MASQ developed by Minas & Klimifids, (1993a). This scale measured pre- and post migration differences in the family and community environment of participants. This scale assessed the views of women in relation to 'changes to gender roles in Australia in terms of marriage, courtship, or career matters', 'role changes in parent-child relationships' and 'general ethical and moral environment in the Australian-Persian community'. For each item responses were given on a three point scale: *1 = basically the same, 2 = a little different, 3 = quite/very different.* For each item, if participants rated the role was different, they were asked, to assess the change on a three point scale: *1 = for the better, 2 = neither better nor worse, 3 = for the worse.* Internal reliability for this measure for this sample was alpha = 0.61. The relatively low internal reliability of this scale may have been due to the fact that it includes only 3 items.

Self esteem

This scale was derived from Scott & Scott's study (1989) and was selected to measure the level of participants' self-esteem. It was intended to assess the impact of the migration process and adjustment problems on the participants' self-esteem and the relations of self-esteem and emotional well-being among different age groups. In terms of personal coping resources, it was anticipated that consistent with Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), a major resource driving from a strong ethnic identity would be a sense of self-esteem that would strengthen migrants in their responding to the demands of acculturation.

The composite index of self-esteem included the following three subscales: task competence (three items which measure own abilities), interpersonal comfort (four items), morale (one item measures the feeling that what one is doing is worthwhile). For all eight items, responses were given on a four point scale: 1= very happy (very competent, very easy, very interesting, strongly agree), 2 = happy (fairly competent, a bit easy, fairly interesting, agree), 3 = unhappy (not too competent, a little difficult, not too interesting, disagree), 4 = very unhappy (not competent at all, very difficult, not interesting at all, strongly disagree). Responses on these items were added together to form the scale. High scores equal low levels of self-esteem. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was 0.76

Marital relationship after migration

Marital relationship after migration was a single item scale which was designed by the investigator to measure the spouse's support after migration: *"How is your relationship with your husband since coming to Australia?"*. Responses were given on a three point scale *1= better than before, 2 = the same, 3 = worse than before*. High scores equal low levels of support.

Family role performance

Family role performance was assessed with a 12-item scale adapted from Scott & Scott's (1989) study. The scales measured the level of participants' satisfaction in the areas of: satisfaction with spouse (3 items), satisfaction with children (3 items) satisfaction with parents (3 items) and overall satisfaction with the family (3 items). In all four sub-scales responses

were given on a four point scale: 1 = very happy (very close, all the time, completely satisfied), 4 = very unhappy (pretty distant, hardly ever, not satisfied at all). Responses to questions were added together to form the scale. The total score was grouped: 1-12 = very high satisfaction, 13-24 = high satisfaction, 25-36 = low satisfaction, 37-48 very low satisfaction. High scores equal a low level of family role performance. Cronbach's alpha for the scale was 0.88.

Measures of Emotional well-being

This section was comprised of three scales which were taken from the Scott &Scott questionnaire (1989). Emotional well-being was scored as an equally weighted composite of the following three scales: Recent symptoms – GHQ-12, Goldberg (1972), Chronic symptoms – 20 items from Taylor (1953), Symptoms of Tension – 11 items adapted from Rutter (1967), Sines & Pulker (1969). Cronbach's alpha for the Emotionl well-being scale was 0.81 which was higher than the reliability coefficients for the scale in Scott & Scott's study (alpha: 0.75, 1989, p. 180)

Recent symptoms. The General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12) was included because according to (Goldberg, 1988) its objective is to detect psychiatric disorders among respondents in community settings and non-psychiatric clinical settings and its focus is on psychological components of illness and health. The GHQ-12 has been used extensively in Australian studies and is generally accepted as a valid and reliable measure of psychological impairment in the Australian population (Winefield et al., 1989).

The Goldberg GHQ-12 was chosen to measure psychological distress because of its psychometric properties and shorter completion time. The GHQ-12 is relatively brief, has good psychometric properties and has validity studies with a sensitivity median value of 86 %, and specificity of 80 % (Goldberg 1988). The GHQ was developed by Goldberg (1972) for detecting psychological problems in community settings (Tarnopolsky et al.,1979). Tennant (1977) stated that the GHQ is a valid and most common screening instrument used for evaluating mental health status. The GHQ method of scoring was used in the data analysis for case identification by weighting the columns: 0,0,1,1. This method of scoring was chosen because Goldberg (1978) reports that this will reduce response bias. The threshold score of 3 or above was used to estimate 'case rates'. Analysis of the GHQ was performed only on the

total score which was obtained by adding across the 12 items. The higher score indicated greater psychological ill-health. Internal reliability for this measure for this sample was alpha = 0.90, which was higher than the reliability coefficients of the scale obtained by Scott & Scott (alpha: 0.86, 1989, p. 180).

Chronic symptoms. This 20-item scale measured the chronic symptoms of the participants. For all the items, responses were scored on a two point scale: *"generally false"*, *"generally true"*. The questions required participants to answer *"generally true"* if they are emotionally ill and *"generally false"* if they are healthy. Responses were scored as: 1= unhealthy or 0 = healthy, and they could range from 0 to 20. A total score was taken by adding across the 20 items to obtain a total severity score. Higher scores indicated greater psychological ill health. Internal reliability for this measure for this sample was alpha = 0.80, which was higher than the reliability coefficients of the scale obtained by Scott & Scott (alpha: 0.73, 1989, p. 180).

Symptoms of tension. This 11-item scale measured the tension symptoms of the participants. Participants were asked to describe themselves by a tick ($\sqrt{}$) if the question applies to them to some extent and put two ticks ($\sqrt{}\sqrt{}$) if it applies to them a lot and if it does not apply to them at all, to leave the space blank. For all the items, responses were scored on a three point scale: 0 = no tick, 1 = 1 tick, 2 = 2 ticks. A total score was taken by adding across the 11 items to obtain a total severity score. Higher scores indicated greater psychological ill health. Internal reliability for this measure for this sample was alpha = 0.81, which was much higher than the reliability coefficients of the scale obtained by Scott & Scott (alpha: 0.65, 1989, p. 181).

Health status before migration

This single item scale was adapted from the Migrant and Settlement Questionnaire (MASQ-Minas & Klimidis, 1993a). This scale of general health was included to give an indication of the perception individuals had of their health prior to their migration to Australia. The item was answered on a three point scale: *1 = not healthy most of the time, 2 = reasonably healthy /sometimes unhealthy, 3 = very healthy always.* High scores indicated better health.

Problems of adjustment

This 19-item scale was used to assess the potential problems of adjustment for Persian women immigrants and their families. Eighteen items of this scale were adapted from the Nicassio Problem Index (1984) and 1 item *("conflict and negative feelings that exist between Persian families")* was developed by the investigator. The Nicassio Problem Index consists of 32 items each relating to potential problems of adjustment for Indo-chinese refugees. For the purposes of this study, only 18 potential problems were chosen. However, the language was modified to fit the study sample. The potential problems included separation from family, job satisfaction, Australian customs and conditions, and socio-economic status. Respondents were required to rate the seriousness of each potential problem as: *1 = "not serious", 2 = somewhat serious"* and *3 = "very serious"*. A total score was obtained by adding across the 19 items to obtain a total severity score. Higher scores indicated more serious adjustment problems. Respondents were asked to indicate how serious each problem was for themselves and their family. It was important that they considered the problem in the light of their own family. However, two of the potential problems were more oriented to married than single respondents, i.e. items 8 and 10 "conflict between husband and wife", "problems in raising children". Cronbach's alpha for the scale was 0.86, which was lower than the reliability coefficient for this scale reported by Nicassio, (alpha: 0.93, 1984, p. 137).

Comment Section

A final question enabled the respondents to make any additional comments in response to the questionnaire. This section encouraged respondents to add their written comments on their choice of answers. Such comments not only 'humanise' the data and assist with the interpretation of results, but also provide valuable insights into the concerns of participants which a closed questionnaire could not predict. In particular, participants could write in the Persian language more extensively about the experience of migration and living in Australia as persons of Persian cultural background.

4.5.2 Qualitative data: Focus Group Discussions

4.5.2.1 Characteristics of the focus groups

Each focus group has been labeled differently for the identification of participants' responses. A clearer picture of the focus groups' characteristics are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2   Characteristics of the Focus Groups

	STATE	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	AGE RANGE		TYPE OF GROUP
			YOUNGEST	OLDEST	
Group A	Victoria	11	18	49	Mixed age group
Group B	Victoria	10	35	60	Mixed age group
Group C	South Australia	6	20	25	Young age group
Group D	South Australia	8	28	70	Mixed age group
Group E	New South Wales	4	23	56	Mixed age group
Group F	New South Wales	4	39	46	Mature age group
Group G	New South Wales	7	36	56	Mixed age group
Group H	New South Wales	8	37	68	Mixed age group

Total number of participants: 58

Ideally it was best if the participants did not know each other in the focus group interviews. Extreme care was taken to invite complete strangers in each focus group. This was virtually impossible to do so in South Australia as the Persian community was small compared to VIC and NSW. It was noticed that the familiarity of some of the participants in the focus groups presented special difficulties for the focus group discussions, as familiarity tended to inhibit disclosure. This affected the depth of the discussion in some focus groups. To overcome this issue, participants were given a set of questions with space provided for their written answers (same key questions discussed in the focus group) to take home and post it later. These

participants were asked to use the same ID number on the top of the questionnaire that they used in the focus group.

Verbal consent was sought from participants in each focus group to record the discussion. Each participant was given a tag with a number on it and in the discussion she was referred to by that number. No name was recorded with the group discussions so that the participants' anonymity and confidentiality was fully protected. Participants also were asked when referring to any of the other participants in the group to use their number and not their name.

The focus group discussions were tape recorded and then transcribed into Persian. A copy of the transcript of each focus group was sent to one of the participants who had a more active role in the discussion. The specified participant was asked to make comments on the transcription for the accuracy of the discussion and then the transcript was translated into English for qualitative data analysis. Every effort was made to retain the original meaning in the Persian language.

A working journal was used to register all the activities in relation to each focus group.

The focus group interview was semi-structured. The 11 key questions for stimulating the discussion were carefully designed to elicit the maximum amount of information. The key questions stimulated the discussion, focused the interview, and were the heart of the group discussion. The key questions were distributed to participants at the beginning of the session to enable them to read through them and think over the topic before the session formally started.

The focus group discussion was divided into the following parts:

The first part of the discussion included questions (questions 1 and 2 in appendix D) about the positive and negative changes in the women's lives after migration and how these changes impacted on participants' lives. The range of coping strategies that participants used was also discussed. These questions were aimed at eliciting responses to the stress of migration and the psychological adjustment of the participants. These questions required the greatest attention in the subsequent analysis.

The second part of the focus group discussion included questions (questions 3 and 4 in Appendix D) about the participants' attitudes to the new environment and their migration. These questions addressed issues concerning the fulfillment of expectations and aspirations of the participants in the host culture.

The third part of the focus group discussion was designed to ask questions concerning the degree of changes in the family structure and the level of family support after migration (questions 5 to 8, in Appendix D).

The fourth part of the focus group discussion consisted of questions regarding family relationships after migration. These questions probed the impact of migration on the participants' family relationships.

The last section of the focus group discussion covered questions (question 10 and 11, in Appendix D) measuring personal aspects of the participants' life satisfaction while in Australia. Question 11 *("in summary, all points considered, are you happy that you have migrated to Australia?")* brought closure to the discussion and enabled participants to reflect back on previous comments and allowed them to consider all the comments shared in the discussion, identifying which aspects were most important.

4.6   Analysis

According to Yin (1984) data analysis consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating, or otherwise recombining the evidence, to address the initial propositions of a study. In the present study, major themes, patterns and ideas relating to the aims of the study were identified. The importance of the information was inferred on the basis of emphases, uniqueness, primary and frequency.

Analysis of the questionnaire data was carried out using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (Norusis, 1990) by performing a number of statistical calculations. To establish internal consistencies of the separate scales within this questionnaire alpha coefficients were calculated. This was followed by performing a series of descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations, and multiple regressions.

Analysis of the qualitative data was transcript-based analysis. Tapes were transcribed into Persian and then translated into English. As a result, a phenomenal amount of data was produced (270 pages). In the qualitative data analysis, the primary focus was on key questions that were the foundation of the present study (see appendix). According to Krueger (1994, p. 130), "focused analysis conserves resources, but most importantly it enables the analyst to concentrate attention on areas of critical concerns…Certain questions, I've called them the key questions…drive focus groups because they represent areas of primary concern from the sponsor. These are questions that are the backbone of the study" (Krueger 1994, p. 130).

Transcripts were used coupled with field notes and debriefing notes. Field notes included the key points in the discussion, notable quotes, and important observations which helped the researcher to have more insight into the nature of the discussion, which in some cases was not captured on the recording tapes (e.g. indications of group mood, obvious body language). Debriefing notes included the most important themes and ideas expressed, unexpected findings, and a comparison of the specified focus group with other focus groups conducted by the researcher.

For each focus group a diagram of the seating arrangement was drawn by the researcher to help her to place the person (her number) with the memory. Krueger (1994) believes this is a helpful tool for placing a name with the memory in a focus group analysis. This sketch was found to be useful in recalling the number of the participant while analyzing the transcripts.

A summary of the key themes and issues that emerged from the discussion was offered at the end of the session. This process allowed and encouraged the participants to verify that the summary was accurate and complete.

The old fashioned analysis strategy (Scissors, Colored paper and Marking Pens) was employed for analysis of the qualitative data. When conducting this analysis the following factors received major consideration:

> **Words** – The actual words used by the participants and the meaning of those words were considered. A variety of words and phrases were used so that the researcher needed to determine the degree of similarity between the responses.

The context – Participants' responses were examined as to whether they had been triggered by a previous comment by another respondent. This was mainly the case where a respondent spoke of a specific experience. These comments then provided a stimulus for the next respondent. There were some situations where the second speaker, triggered by the extreme comments of the earlier speaker, wanted to provide a degree of balance in the discussion.

Internal consistency – Participants may have changed or reversed their positions after interactions with others. Although the shift in opinion rarely happened, the researcher traced the flow of the conversation to determine cues that could explain the change.

Frequency and extensiveness of comments – Some topics were discussed by most participants and some comments were made more often than others. These topics were seen as more important or of special concerns to participants. Furthermore, the topics that were expected to be discussed extensively but received limited attention also were considered.

Big ideas – The researcher looked for the big ideas throughout the discussions. There were a few unique approaches as coping strategies in dealing with adjustment problems that emerged from the discussion. These approaches are discussed and classified as coping strategies in the following chapter.

The framework for the qualitative data (focus group) results is composed of key questions that were asked and the major themes that emerged from the discussion. These questions and themes serve as the outline for the results. The style of presentation of the results is the "interpretive model" approach. This style of reporting begins with a "summary description with illustrative quotes followed by an interpretation" (Krueger, 1994, p. 167). With this style, the researcher made her best efforts to provide the greatest depth in the analysis. To reduce the volume of the qualitative results chapter, when appropriate, participants' comments were arranged on a continuum. According to Krueger (1994), this style of reporting has the advantage of providing the reader with the total range of comments.
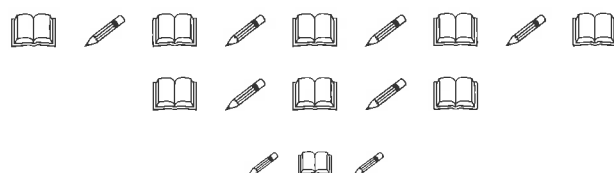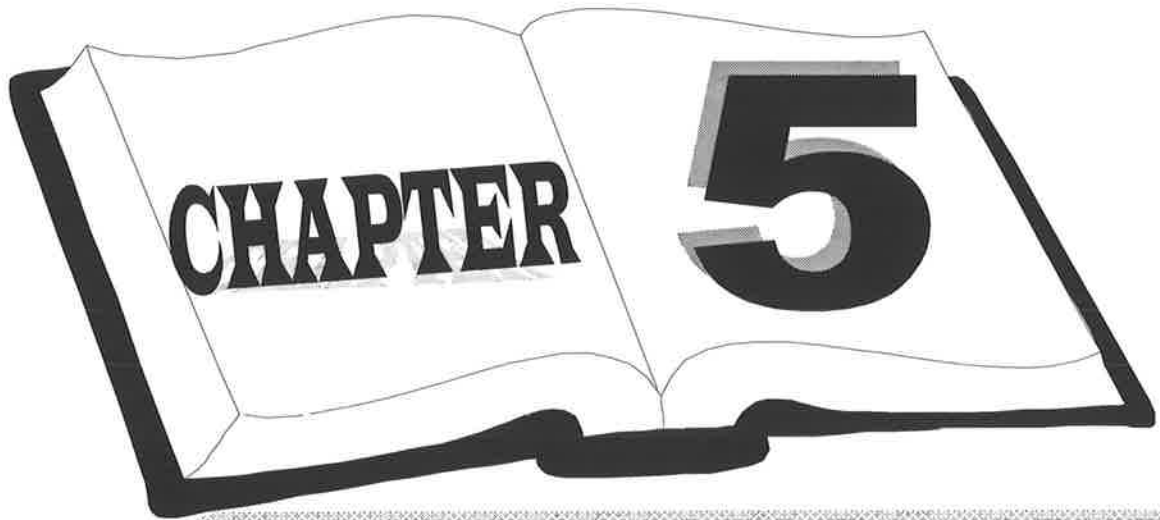
CHAPTER 5

SURVEY RESULTS

The following chapter reports the results of the questionnaire survey as they pertain to the participants' experience of migration and problems encountered adjusting themselves to Australian society. Specifically, section one describes the characteristics of the participants. Section two presents the demographic profile of the study group and the representativeness of the sample compared with the overall Persian-Australia population. Section three explores the problems participants encountered upon their arrival. Sections four to eleven explore reported life satisfaction in Australia, participants' level of Australian and national self-identity, changes in roles and responsibility due to migration, participants' level of self-esteem, satisfaction with their family role performance, participants' psychological well-being, physical health prior to migration and problems encountered during their adjustment to the new society. Section 12 illustrates the intercorrelations of variables in order to identify any significant correlations of selected variables. This section presents the developed composite study model, based on interactions of concerned measures. Section thirteen presents the regression analysis and potential predictors of psychological outcome measures. Section fourteen summarizes the findings from the statistical analysis of the questionnaire survey performed to test hypotheses relating to Persian women immigrants and their psychological well-being.

5.1   Sample Characteristics

Many researchers accept that certain personal characteristics of migrants play important roles in their settlement process. In the discussion that follows, attention is paid to exploring the general personal characteristics of Persian women participating in this study. While some personal characteristics such as age, marital status, number of children, occupation, length of stay and financial status were treated as variables, an analysis of the effect of such personal characteristics on adjustment variables are also discussed in this chapter.

Of the 268 questionnaires that were sent, 212 were returned, giving a response rate of 79.1 %. Given the difficulties encountered in gaining the trust of Persian women this response rate was quite high. A return rate of 50% is generally considered sufficient for analysis and reporting (Babbie, 1990). Based on the information collected, Persian women participating in this study can be described as heterogeneous.

5.2 Demographic profile of the Persian women sample:

Table 5.2 shows the means, standard deviations, missing cases, and alpha coefficient values for all variables. More detailed descriptive data on the demographic characteristics of the sample is summarized in the relevant sections (frequencies and percentages).

Table 5.2 Means, Standard Deviation, Missing Values and alpha Coefficients of all variables

VARIABLE	M	SD	Number of Missing Cases	Alpha
Age	41.64	12.18	3	-----
Country of Birth	1.02	.14	2	-----
Length of residence	8.84	4.81	1	-----
Religion	2.01	1.82	20	-----
Highest Education level	4.02	1.02	_	-----
Marital status	2.22	.90	_	-----
Number of children	2.33	1.1	40	-----
Occupation	3.9	1.97	19	-----
Partner's occupation	2.46	1.53	53	-----
Types of employment	2.61	1.65	117	-----
Partner's types of employment	2.28	1.71	108	-----
Work satisfaction	2.09	0.80	115	-----
Occupation prior to migration	1.64	0.61	7	-----
Work consistency with qualifications	1.37	0.51	112	-----
Maintenance of occupational status	3.08	1.17	124	-----
Overall work satisfaction (q14+q16+q17)	5.05	2.49	92	0.62
Problems of adaptation	2.86	1.63	11	0.63
Life satisfaction in Australia	1.95	0.57	3	0.75
Identification with Australia	8.62	2.25	1	0.66
Change in responsibilities in the settlement process	8.28	2.25	4	0.69

Change in roles in the settlement process	7.19	1.59	1	0.61
Self esteem	2.5	0.54	1	0.76
Marital relationship after migration	2.05	.67	55	----
Family role performance	21.19	7.96	2	0.88
Emotional well-being : GHQ-12	12.73	6.89	3	0.90
Emotional well-being: Chronic symptoms	7.48	4.25	5	0.80
Emotional well-being: Symptoms of tension	5.65	4.22	4	0.81
Emotional well-being: total composite variables	15.88	10.12	1	0.81
Health status before migration	2.39	0.61	7	----
Problem index	27.81	8.09	6	0.84

5.2.1 Age

As reported in Table 5.2.1 (*CF* Figure 5.2.1) the age of those taking part in this study ranged from 18 years of age to 79 years of age at the time of questionnaire completion. After recording the frequency distribution on age, it was observed that about 13.2 % of the sample were in the 18 to 26 years category; 19.1 % was aged within the 27 and 36 years category, close to half of the sample (43.1 %) were aged in the 37 and 49 years category, and there was 24.5 % aged above 50 years.

The majority of the sample was located in the 25 to 49 years old category (63.64 %) which was predominantly in the prime working age group (M=41.64 years, SD=12.18). This corresponds to the actual proportion of Persian women migrants found in the population. The sample was also well distributed with respect to age group membership as the age distribution of the sample was similar to that of the 1996 census. According to ABS data (1996b) Iranian immigrants have a relatively young age structure and there is a strong concentration in the prime working ages of 25-49 years (53.92 % compared with 34.3% of the Australian born).

This suggests that the research sample was reasonably representative of the Iranian population living in Australia using 1996 Census data.

Table5.2.1 - Age group by birthplace of the participants

age group	country of birth				Total	
	Iran		other		Count	Table %
	Count	Table %	Count	Table %		
18-26	25	12.3%	2	1.0%	27	13.2%
27-36	39	19.1%			39	19.1%
37-49	86	42.2%	2	1.0%	88	43.1%
50+	50	24.5%			50	24.5%
Total	200	98.0%	4	2.0%	204	100.0%

Note: The percentages reported here are based on responses to the individual questions
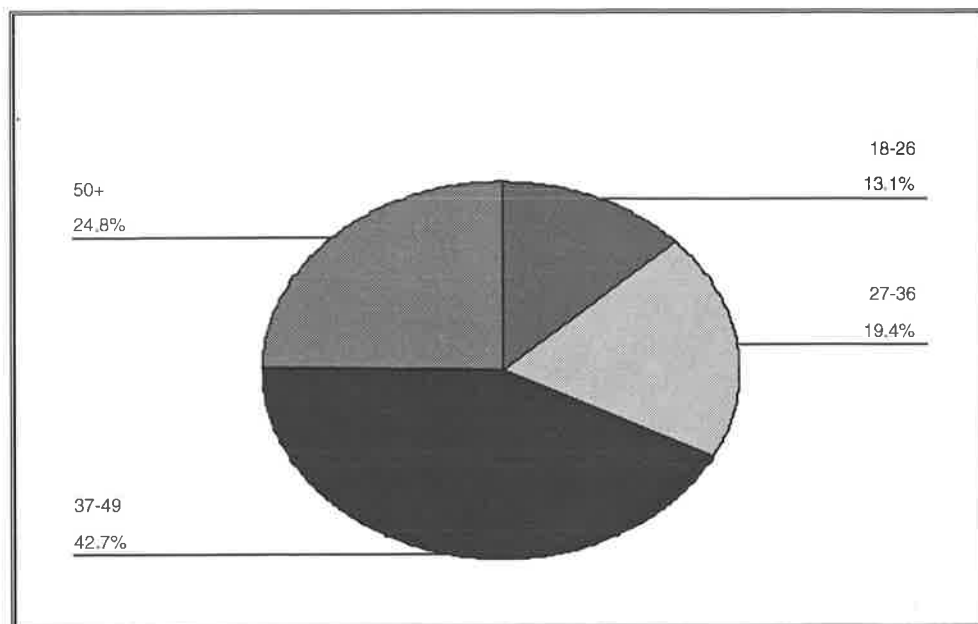
Figure 5.2.1 - age group of the participants

Figure 5.2.2 shows that at the time of migration to Australia the participants' age patterns were very different compared to the present time. On the whole, participants on arrival were relatively young (M=32.67, SD=12.10); 90.7 % of them aged under fifty years and only 9.3 % out of the working age category. In comparison, nearly one quarter of the sample is over fifty at present (24.8 %).
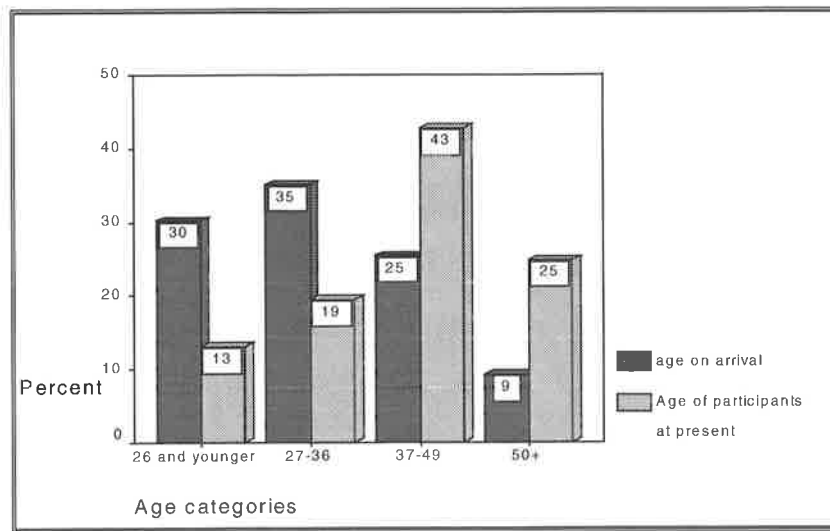
Figure 5.2.2 - Participants' age at migration and present

5.2.2 Ethnicity

As shown in Table 5.2.1, the total sample comprised of 209 Persian women selected from the Persian community in NSW, VIC, and SA. The vast majority of the sample was born in Iran (98 %) and only 2 % born elsewhere (they considered themselves Persians because they were born of Persian parents).

5.2.3 Religion

As indicated in Table 5.2.3, almost two thirds of the participants reported that they were Muslims (64.5 %), whereas Baha'is constitute 31.1 % and Christians only 3.8 % of the participants. The response rates show an under representation of Christians and an over representation of Muslims in the study group. Baha'is were reasonably representative of the Persian women population living in Australia using 1996 Census data.

Table 5.2.3 – The religion of participants compared with Persian women population in Australia

TYPE OF RELIGION	PERSIAN WOMEN POPULATION – ABS 1996	SAMPLE POPULATION
	Number (%)	Number (%)
Muslim	2409 (32)	118 (64.5)
Baha'is	1926 (25.6)	57 (31.1)
Christian	2059 (27.3)	7 (3.8)
Other	18 (0.002)	1 (0.5)
No religion	543 (0.07)	6 (0.02)
Not stated / Inadequately described	565 (0.07)	20 (0.09)
Total	7520 (100)	209 (100)

5.2.4 Levels of Formal Education

A notable feature of the participants was the high level of education they had achieved. As shown in Table 5.2.4, about 65 % of the sample had either completed tertiary education, or were half way through university. Close to one third of the sample had high school certificate (29.6 %) and almost half of the sample had tertiary qualifications (46.1 %). Almost one fifth of the sample had not completed tertiary education (18.0 %). Only 6.3 % of the sample attained primary school education (84.6 % of this group are aged 50+ years).

Table 5.2.4 - Highest education level of the participants

highest education level	age group								Total Table	
	18-26 Table		27-36 Table		37-49 Table		50+ Table			
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
primary	1	.5			1	.5	11	5.3	13	6.3
high school	9	4.4	16	7.8	21	10.2	15	7.3	61	29.6
tertiary incomplete	12	5.8	7	3.4	15	7.3	3	1.5	37	18.0
tertiary complete	5	2.4	17	8.3	51	24.8	22	10.7	95	46.1
Total	27	13.1	40	19.5	88	42.8	51	24.8	206	100

Note: The percentages reported here are based on responses to the individual questions

tertiary complete
45.9%

primary
7.2%

high school
29.2%

tertiary incomplete
17.7%
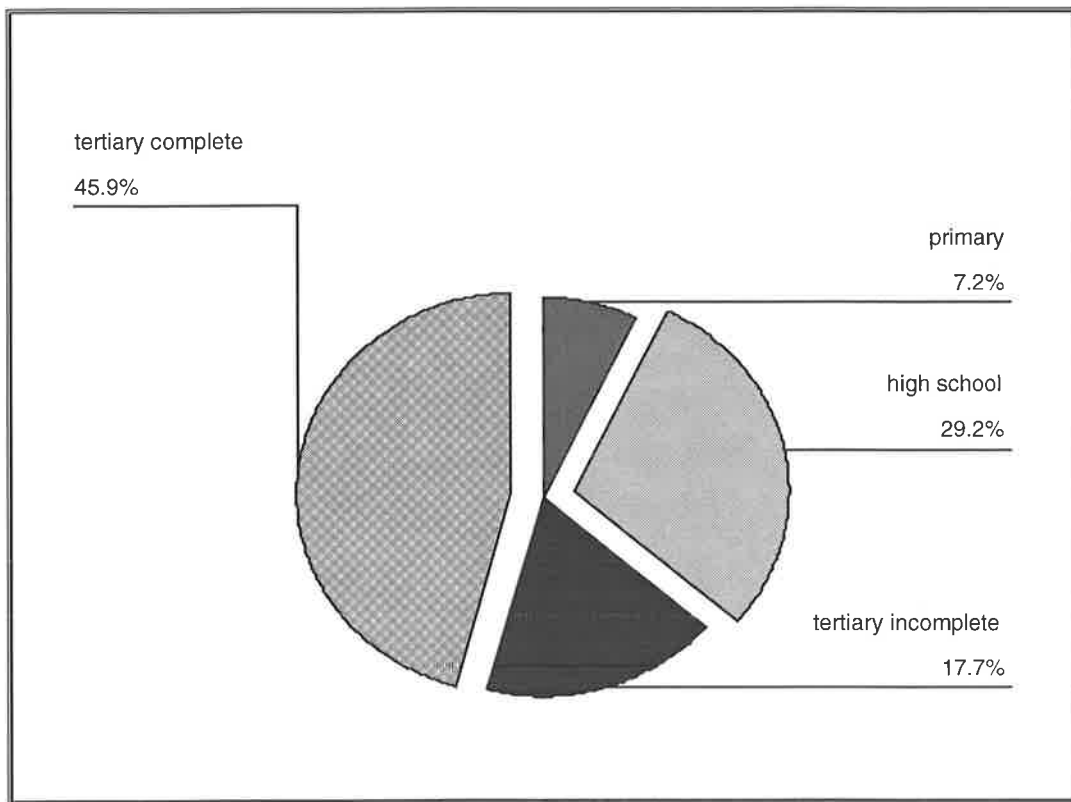
Figure 5.2.4 - Highest educational level of the participants

5.2.5 Marital Status

The majority of the sample was married (72.0 %) while the separated, and divorced categories accounted for 10.5 % of the sample and 6.2 % of the sample were widowed. Only 11.0 % of the sample were never married. About 86.4 % of those divorce had divorced after migration. Of these, 26.3 % believed that the divorce was caused by migration, 36.8 % did not know whether it was caused by migration, while 36.8 % believed that it did not happen because of migration.

The majority of the sample had children (80.9 %) while 19.1 % did not have any children. The number of children varied between 1 to five. Eighteen percent of the sample with children had one child, 49 % had two, 21 % had three, 7 % had four, and only 4 % had five children. The modal household composition comprised of four persons.

The vast majority of married respondents indicated their spouse was from Iran (97.5 %). Only 2.5 % were married to other nationals.

In Table 5.2.5 the marital status of the sample is compared with that of the total Persian women population in the 1996 census:

Table 5.2.5 – Marital status of participants compared with Persian women population in Australia

MARITAL STATUS	PERSIAN WOMEN POPULATION – ABS 1996	SAMPLE POPULATION
	Number (%)	Number (%)
Married	4173 (63.4)	151 (72.2)
Separated/divorced	633 (9.6)	22 (10.5)
Widowed	498 (7.5)	13 (6.2)
Never married	1280 (19.4)	23 (11)

The comparison suggests an under representation of single women and an over representation of married women in the research sample. For separated/divorced and widowed women the sample was reasonably representative of the Iranian population using 1996 Census data.

5.2.6 Length of Residence in Australia

As the data in Table 5.2.6 suggest, the length of stay in Australia varied from less than five years to more than 15 years. Close to one third of the sample were living in Australia less than five years (29.2 %). Almost the same number (28.7 %) had lived in Australia between five to ten years. Just over one third of the sample (34.92 %) had resided in Australia for between 10 - 15 years. Just 5.3 % of the sample lived in Australia more than 15 years and only 1 % migrated to Australia well before the Iranian revolution (1979). The sample reported a mean length of residence in Australia of 8.84 years at the time the research was conducted (SD=4.81 years). This corresponds to the actual proportion of length of stay in Australia found in the population using 1996 census data. The following table suggests that the research sample was reasonably representative of the population living in Australia for up to ten years using 1996 Census data. The sample was over representative of Persian women who lived in Australia for 10 – 15 years but it was under representative of Persian women who lived in Australia for more than 15 years. This may suggest that the latter group may not have been

interested in participating in the research as they might see themselves as migrants who are very well settled in Australia.

Table 5.2.6 - Length of stay in Australia

LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN AUSTRALIA	PERSIAN WOMEN POPULATION IN AUSTRALIA (ABS 1996)	SAMPLE
	Number (%)	Number (%)
1 – 5 years	2246 (30.17)	61 (29.2)
5 – 10 years	2307 (30.9)	60 (28.7)
10 – 15	1410 (18.9)	73 (34.92)
15+ years	1366 (17.9)	11 (5.3)
Not stated	114 (1.53)	4 (1.9)
Total	7443 (100)	209 (100)

5.2.7 Employment

The employment rate for the sample was remarkably low with 35.8 % being employed and 11.2 % self-employed at the time of the study. Just over 12 % of the sample were unemployed because they were either students (16.3 %), housewives (19.5 %), or retirees (5.3 %). The rate of unemployment in the sample (i.e. 'those looking for work' / 'working' + 'those looking for work' the denominator refers to the available workforce) is 37.7 %, which is a much higher proportion of unemployed in the working-age population than is the case among the Australian-born. Nonetheless, as reported in Figure 5.2.5, the rate of women's husbands' employment was higher than theirs, especially in respect to self-employment (29.3 % compared with 11.1 %). However, of those women in employment just 6.4 % were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied and only 13.8 % were uncertain about their work satisfaction, whereas 19.1 % were very satisfied and 60.6 % were satisfied with their work in Australia.

Of those in the sample who were employed, 40.2 % had obtained work in a professional and managerial level. This rate was much lower than their husbands' employment in the managerial level (57.4 %). Almost 63 % of those working reported that their work was

consistent with their qualifications and 35.1 % reported that their job was not consistent with their qualifications.

The employment pattern of participants two years prior to migration was different to patterns after migration, as half of the sample were either employed (43.1 %) or self-employed(6.9 %) before migration. Of those who were employed prior to migration almost one fifth had managerial positions (18.4) and one third had teaching positions in a tertiary or secondary and primary education system (33.4 %). Just over one fifth of the sample worked in an office work setting (21.2 %). The remaining worked as dress-makers and hairdressers.

Of those who worked before and after migration, 10.6 % considered their occupation after migration as very much better and 21.2 % as better whereas, 29.4 % considered it to be not as good or very much worse (10.6 %). Just over one quarter of the sample considered their occupation after migration to be much the same (28.2 %).
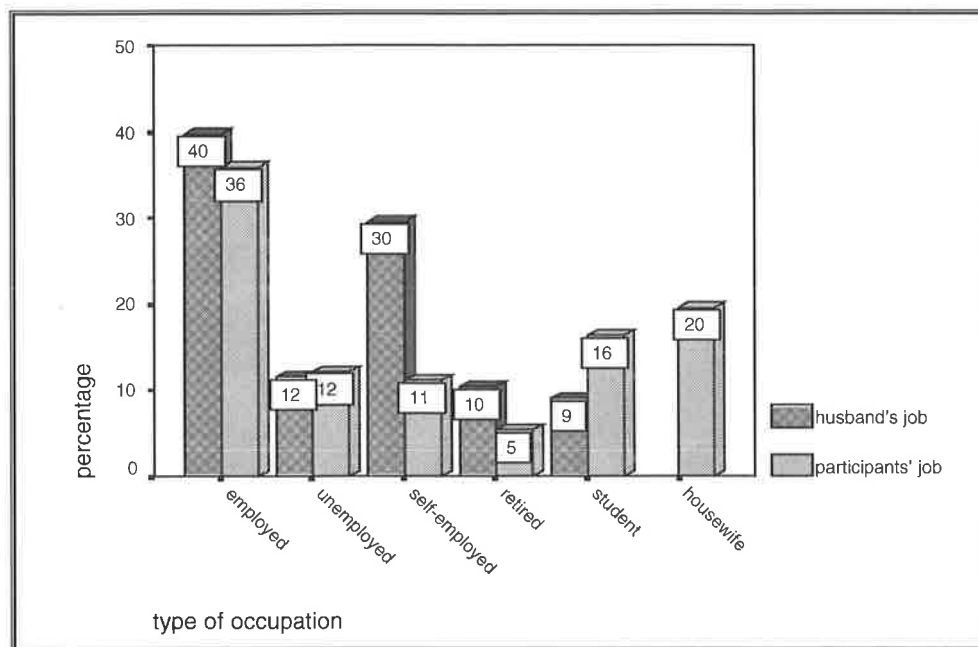
Figure 5.2.5 - Participants' job compared with their husbands' job

In spite of the high educational level of the sample, the high level of unemployment reflects considerable socio-economic diversity in the sample.

5.3   Problems of adaptation

In terms of the participants' problems of adaptation on arrival, 91.4 % of participants (N=191) reported that they had at least one problem when they arrived in Australia (M = 2.86, SD = 1.63). Most migrants who are from non-English speaking countries have language problems on arrival, and Persian women in this sample were not exceptions. As shown in Figure 5.3, language proficiency was the major common problem among the participants (76.3 %), whereas a lower percentage found accommodation (41.8 %) and unfamiliarity with Australian customs (42.2 %) to be problematic. More than two thirds of the participants (72 %) had difficulty in getting a job on arrival. Loneliness (59.7 %), lack of friends (59.5 %) and homesickness were found to be significant problems amongst participants upon their arrival. Figure 5.3 displays the classification of problems and percenages of each problem encountered for participants upon their arrival.
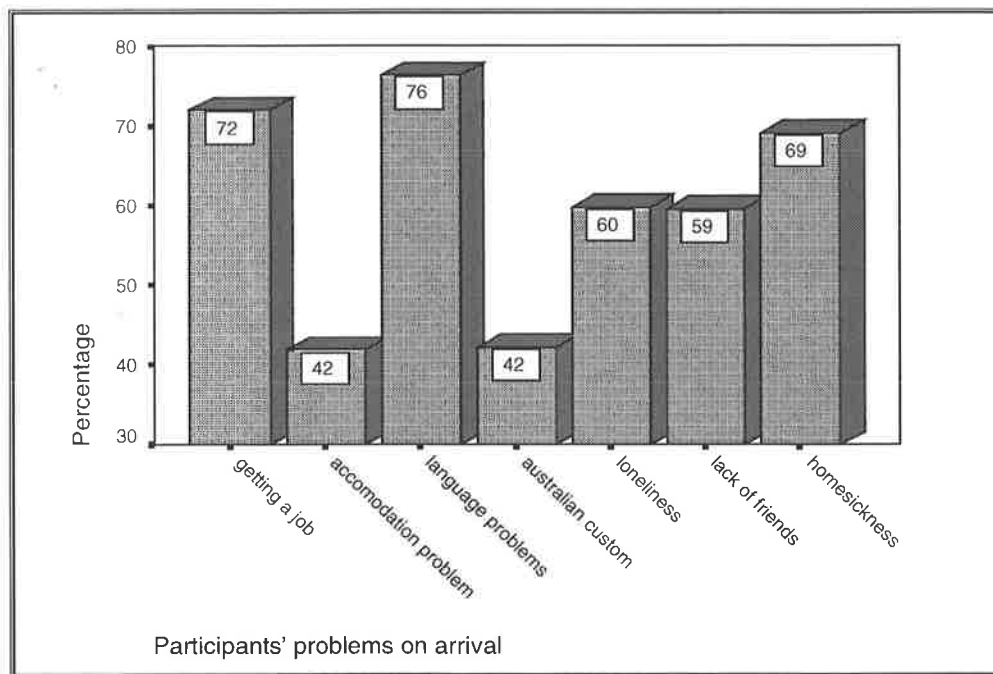
Figure 5.3 – Problems encountered upon arrival

5.4   Satisfaction with life in Australia

As reported in Table 5.4.1, over half of the sample (57.1 %) reported that they were quite satisfied but not completely with the financial opportunities available to them and their families in Australia. About one seventh of the sample (14.7 %) was completely satisfied and

only 9.4 % reported that they were not at all satisfied. A much different picture was evident with respect to satisfaction for educational opportunities for the respondent or the respondent's family members as the great majority of the participants (94.3 %) were quite or completely satisfied with this aspect of Australian society. This result suggests that the host society has fulfilled this expectation of the sample. In contrast, a good number reported that they were either not satisfied (24.7 %) or a little satisfied (25.3 %) with opportunities to work in a desirable job for which they might be qualified. Only one fifth of participants (20.3 %) were completely satisfied with this aspect of Australian society. Nonetheless, this was a different picture for the young age group as over half of the participants (51.8 %) were quite or completely satisfied with this aspect of Australian society. Social and community life in Australia was rated to be either quite (45.3 %) or completely (31.8 %) satisfactory by the sample, with 7.3 % reporting no satisfaction at all with this. The young age group (18-26) was more satisfied with this aspect of Australian society as 51.9 % were completely satisfied and 22.2 % were quite satisfied with their social and community life in Australia.

Table 5.4.1 – The level of participants' life satisfaction

Level of life satisfaction	Financial opportunities	Educational opportunities	Work opportunities	Social life	Child raising	Practice religion	Ethical environment
	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)
Not at all satisfied	18 (9.4)	1 (0.5)	39 (24.7)	14 (7.3)	30 (16.6)	5 (3.2)	14 (7.4)
A little satisfied	36 (18.8)	10 (5.2)	40 (25.3)	30 (15.6)	60 (33.1)	16 (10.1)	52 (27.5)
Quite satisfied	109 (57.1)	73 (37.6)	47 (29.7)	87 (45.3)	63 (34.8)	50 (31.6)	81 (42.9)
Completely satisfied	28 (14.7)	110 (56.7)	32 (20.3)	61 (31.8)	28 (15.5)	87 (55.1)	42 (22.2)

Note: The percentages reported here are based on responses to the individual questions.

Overall, the sample tended not to be satisfied with the way children are reared in Australia. While 33.1 % reported a little satisfaction, 16.6 % reported no satisfaction at all and only 15.5 % were completely satisfied with the way children are reared in Australia. Opportunities to practice religion in Australia were considered in a favourable manner as 86.7 % of the sample had either quite or complete satisfaction with such opportunities available in the Australian setting and only 3.2 % were not satisfied at all. Almost two thirds of the participants (65.1 %)

reported either quite or complete satisfaction with the general moral and ethical environment of Australia, whereas, one third of the participants reported either no satisfaction at all or a little satisfaction with this aspect (34.9 %). As indicated in Figure 5.4.2, participants had the highest satisfaction for educational opportunities in Australia for them and their family members and the lowest satisfaction were in the areas of child raising and work opportunities. Moreover, Australia's 'free' society brought a high satisfaction for participants for allowing them to practice their religion in Australia.

Figure 5.4.1 provides an indication of variations of life satisfaction in Australia within the age groups of participants. The figure shows that the younger age group (18-26) had the highest life satisfaction compared with the other age groups. Conversely, participants in the older age group (50+) had the highest life dissatisfaction rate compared with other age groups. The average mean of participants' different aspects of life satisfaction is displayed in Figure 5.4.2. Overall, the mean life satisfaction of the sample was M = 1.95 (SD = 0.57) which indicated a relatively good level of satisfaction.
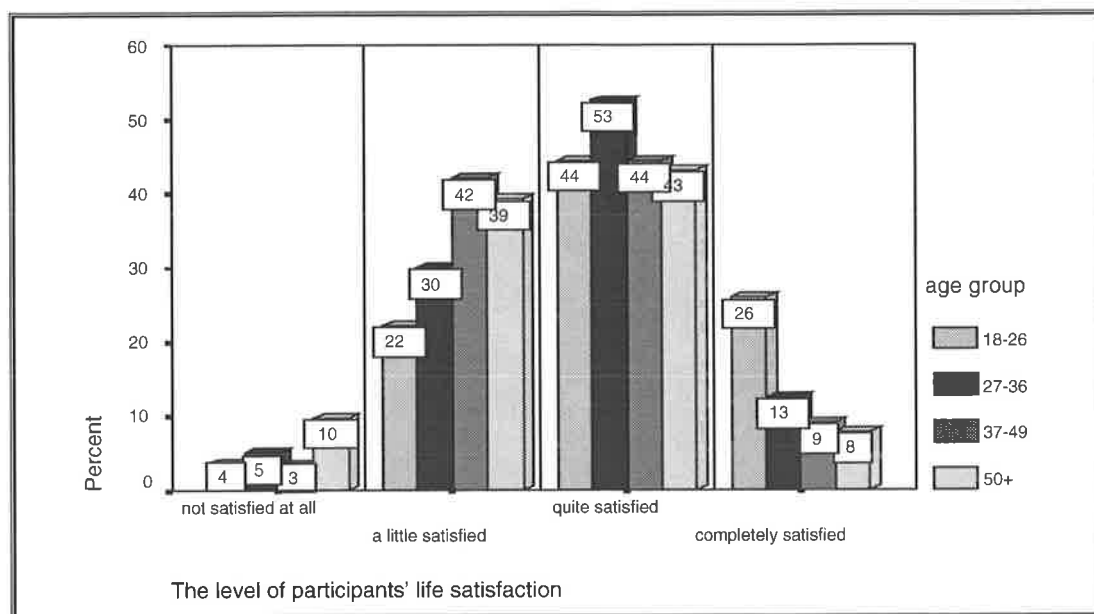
Figure 5.4.1 – Participants' life satisfaction by participants' age
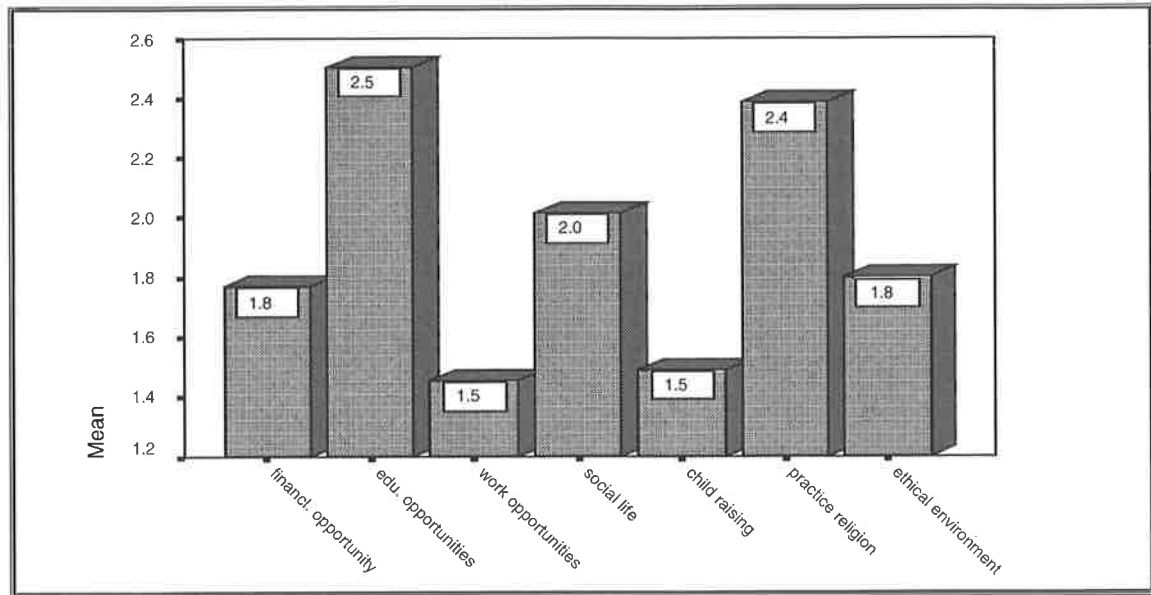
Note: The following scale was used for each aspect: Not at all satisfied = 0, a little satisfied = 1, Quite satisfied but not completely = 2, completely satisfied = 3.

Figure 5.4.2 – Different aspects of life satisfaction of the sample

5.5 National Self-identification

Persian national identity was very strong among the participants as a majority of the sample (86.1 %) had either strong positive (58.2 %) or a moderate positive (27.9 %) feeling about their Persian nationality. Only 0.5 % had a strong negative feeling and 5.3 % had a moderately negative feeling of their Persian nationality. 8.1 % had no feelings. Conversely, Australian national identity was not highly rated among the participants as 40.8 % of the sample had no feelings of being considered Australian with 17 % having either strong negative or moderately negative feelings of being considered Australian. However, 42.2 % reported either a strong positive feeling (13.1 %) or a moderately positive feeling (29.1 %) for this identification.

However, there were different rates of Australia and Persian national identification across the different age groups. The young age group (18-26) reported the highest feelings of being considered Australian (25 %) as well as the highest identification with Persian nationality (70 %) compared with other age groups. Conversely, the mature age group (37-49) reported the lowest positive feelings of being considered Australian (9 %) as well as the lowest positive feeling about their Persian nationality (19 %). The level of Persian national identity by the age group of participants is shown in Figure 5.5.1 and the level of Australian national identity by the age group of participants is shown in Figure 5.5.2. Results for age groups may,

however, be skewed by the disproportionately greater number of elderly, mature and working age participants than young (18-26) participants in the study.
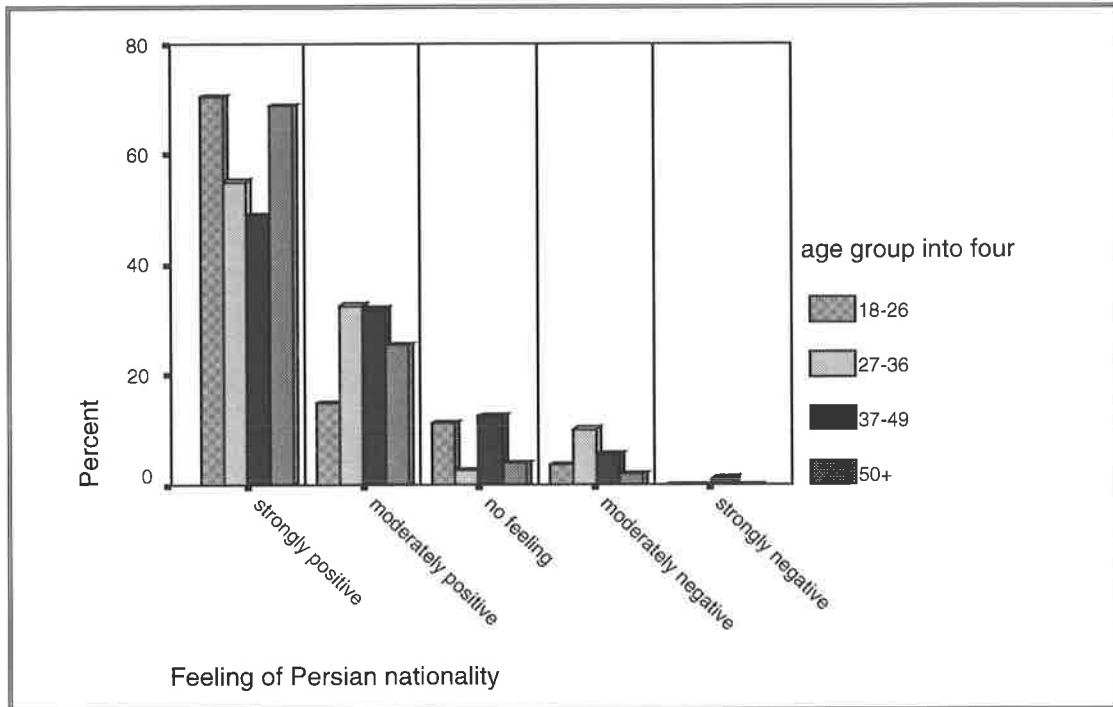
Figure 5.5.1 – Participants' feeling of Persian nationality
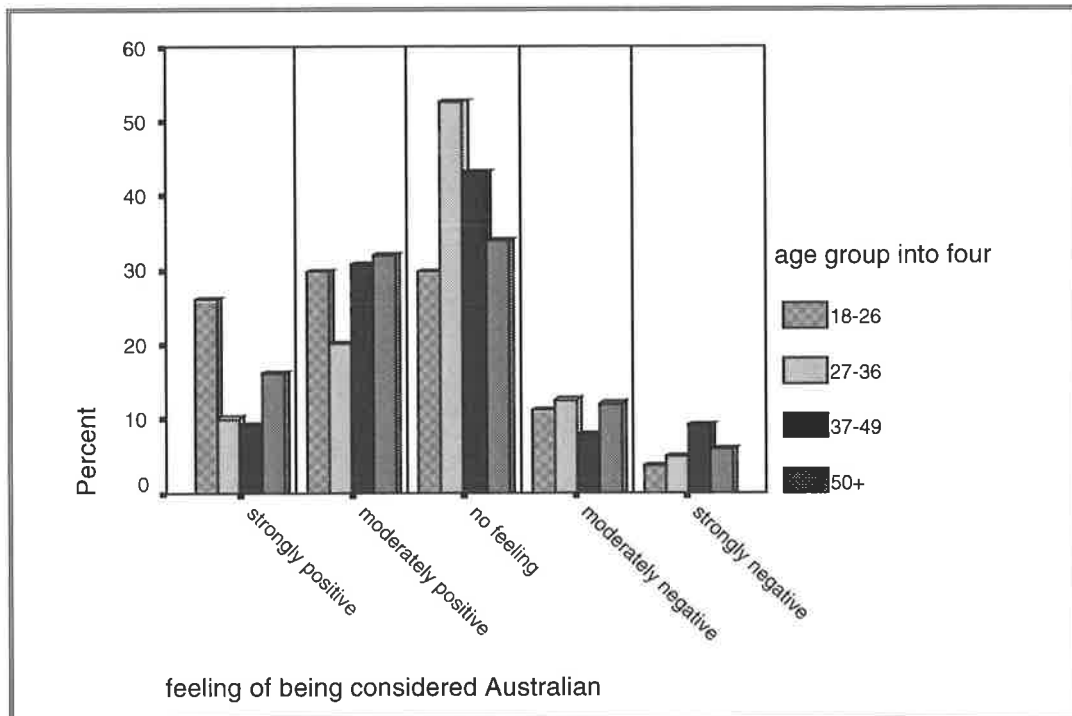
Figure 5.5.2 – Participants' feeling of being considered Australian

Almost half of the participants of the study group (48.8 %) reported that they were happy to spend the rest of their life in Australia. A further 81 participants (39.1 %) were undecided. 25 participants (12.1 %) did not want to spend the rest of their life in Australia. One third of the participants (33.8 %) were undecided whether they would go back home whether the situation changes or not, whereas 38.6 % wanted to go back home if the situation changes. The study group also contained 57 participants (27.5 %) who did not want to go back home if a positive change occurred. Furthermore, participants' responses portrayed a similar pattern when the participants were asked whether they wished they were back in Iran with things the way they used to be. 81 participants (39.3 %) wished very often, and over one third (37.4 %) wished sometimes that they could return to their pre-migration situation. However, 23.3 % wished either rarely (13.6 %) or never (9.7 %) to return to their pre-migration situations.

Table 5.5.1 (figure 5.5.3) displays the overall level of participants' identification with Australia across age groups. It appears from the results that the young age group had the highest identification with Australia (31.6 %). Conversely the older age group (50+ years) had the lowest identification with Australia.

Table 5.5.1 – Participants' level of Australian identification by age group

Level of Australian Identification	age group			
	18-26	27-36	37-49	50+
	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)
low	1 (5.3)	1 (2.7)	5 (8.1)	2 (5.)
medium	12 (63.2)	29 (78.3)	44 (71.0)	35 (88.0)
high	6 (31.6)	7 (18.9)	13 (21.0)	3 (8.0)
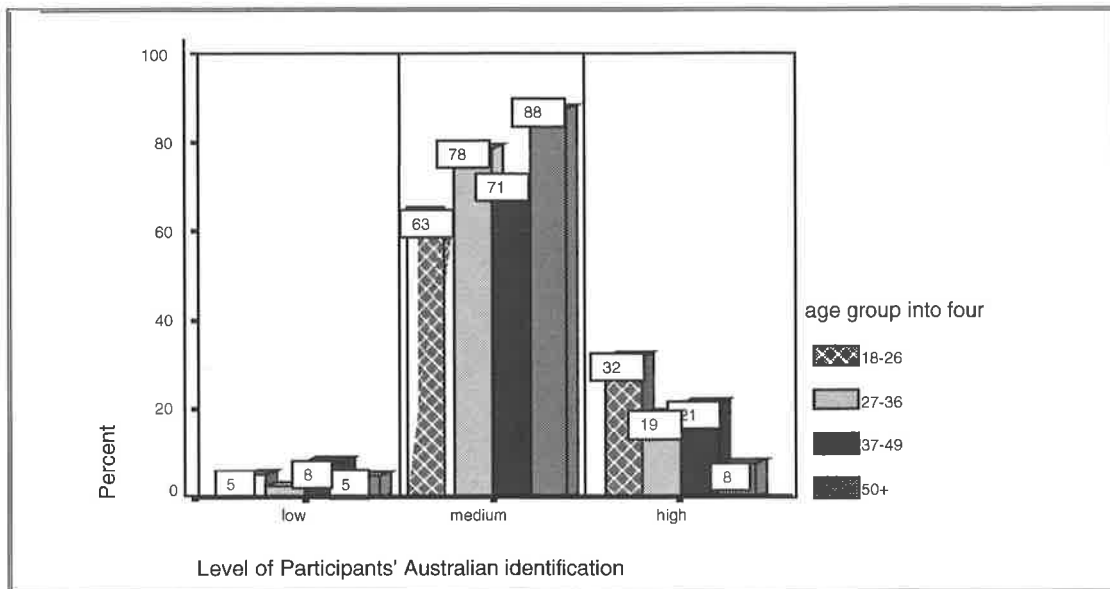
Figure 5.5.3 – Participants' level of identification with Australia

5.6   Changes in roles and responsibilities in the process of resettlement.

As shown in Table 5.6.1 a reasonable proportion of the sample reported increases in the level of responsibilities that they have had to undertake in the process of resettlement. Increased responsibilities included: family financial matters (46 % of the participants), important family decisions (48 %), decisions affecting the children (29.9 %), and the level of social activities and social engagements (34.5 %). Responsibilities were judged to have remained at the same levels to pre-migration for 41 % of participants in family financial matters, 43.1 % for important family decisions, 50 % for decisions affecting children, and 29.1 % for social participation and social engagements. Nonetheless, one fifth of the sample (20.1 %) perceived a decrease in responsibilities in respect to children's decisions, and 36.5 % reported a decrease in social activities and social engagements. In contrast, responsibility for important family decisions was decreased for only 8.9 % of the participants. A similar number (12.5 %) experienced decreased responsibility over family financial matters during the resettlement period. Figure 5.6.1 displays the participants' perceived changes in responsibilities after migration. It appears from the results that participants' responsibilities increased in financial matters and family decisions much more than for their children's welfare and social engagements.

Table 5.6.1 – Changes in responsibilities after migration

Level of responsibility	Financial matters	Family decisions	Children's welfare	Social activities and social engagements
	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)
Decreased	25 (12.5)	18 (8.9)	33 (20.1)	74 (36.5)
Stayed the same	82 (41.0)	87 (43.1)	82 (50.0)	59 (29.1)
Increased	92 (46.0)	97 (48.0)	49 (29.9)	70 (34.5)
Total	200 (100)	202 (100)	164 (100)	203 (100)

Note: The percentages reported here are based on responses to the individual questions.
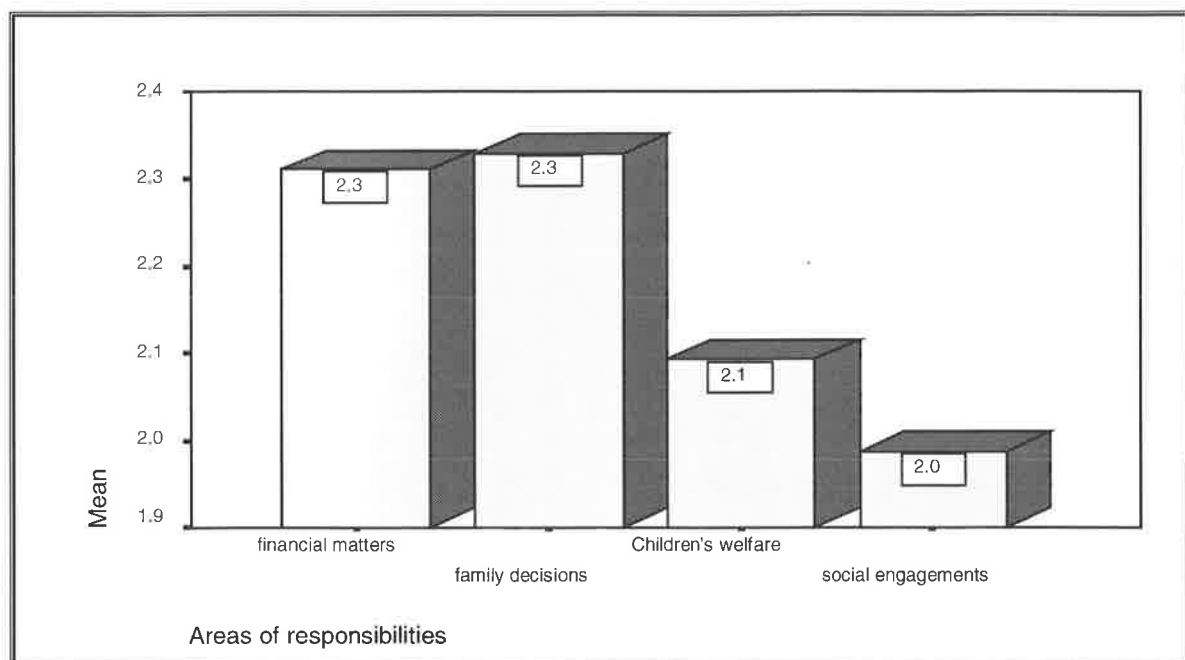
Note: The following values were used for each area of responsibility: decreased = 1, stayed the same = 2, increased = 3.

Figure 5.6.1 – Changes in responsibilities after migration

Gender roles (e.g., relating to marriage, courtship, career matters) were perceived by 48.3 % to be very different to the situation in Iran, while 45.4 % considered these to be a little

different (*CF* Table 5.6.2). Only 6 % perceived gender roles to be the same as those experienced in Iran. A sizable proportion of the participants (39.7 %) considered this difference to be generally for the better and viewed it favorably, while 27.5 % viewed this difference unfavorably. Nonetheless, almost one third of the respondents (31.7) perceived this difference neither for the better nor for the worse. A similar picture was found in relation to parent-child roles which were perceived to be very different by 55.1 % of respondents and 39 % considered them to be a little different. Only 5.9 % reported them to be the same as in Iran. Close to half of the respondents (46.5 %) viewed the changes in parent-child roles unfavorably and only 23.2 % considered them favorably, whereas close to one third of the respondents (30.3 %) rated them neither for the better nor for the worse. Just under half of the sample (49 %) reported that the general ethical and moral environment in the Australian-Persian community to be very different to that in Iran, and a similar proportion (40.7 %) considered this environment to be a little different. Such changes were viewed unfavorably by half of the respondents (50 %) while 13.2 % considered them to be for the better.

Table 5.6.2 – Pre- and post-migration differences in family and community environment

Level of difference	Persian males and females roles in terms of marriage, courtship, career matters	Persian parents and children's relationship	General ethical and moral environment of the Persian community
	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)
Basically the same	13 (6.3)	12 (5.9)	21 (10.3)
A little different	93 (45.4)	80 (39.0)	83 (40.7)
Quite/very different	99 (48.3)	113 (55.1)	100 (49.0)
Total	205 (100)	205 (100)	204 (100)

Note: The percentages reported here are based on responses to the individual questions.

5.7 Self esteem

The composite index of self-esteem included satisfaction with one's own abilities (task competence), interpersonal comfort and morale (the feeling that what one is doing is worthwhile). The self-esteem scale was scored as an equally weighed composite of these sub scales.

As indicated in Table 5.7.1, just over half of the respondents (51 %) showed overall high self-esteem and close to the remaining half (47.1 %) indicated a low self-esteem. Only one respondent (0.5 %) indicated a very high self-esteem and only 3 respondents scored very low levels of self-esteem (1.4 %). From the data in Table 5.7.1, it appears that respondents had different levels of self-esteem in the different composite indices of the scale. For example, one third of the respondents (33.8 %) had a very high level of self-esteem for morale, whereas, the level of esteem for task competence and interpersonal comfort were much lower.

As shown in Figure 5.7.1, those who were in the 37-49 age bracket had the highest rate of low self-esteem. In contrast, those who were in the 27-36 age bracket had the highest rate of high self-esteem.

Table 5.7.1 – Participants' levels of self-esteem and the components of self-esteem scale

Level of self-esteem	Interpersonal Comfort	Task Competence	Morale	Overall self-esteem
	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)
Very high self-esteem	7 (3.4)	15 (7.2)	70 (33.8)	1 (0.5)
High self-esteem	77 (37.0)	124 (59.6)	116 (56.0)	106 (51.0)
Low self-esteem	119 (57.2)	57 (27.4)	20 (9.7)	98 (47.1)
Very low self-esteem	5 (2.4)	12 (5.8)	1 (0.5)	3 (1.4)
Total	208 (100)	208 (100)	207 (100)	208 (100)
Mean	2.6	2.3	1.77	2.5
SD	0.60	0.69	0.63	0.54

Note: The percentages reported here are based on responses to the individual questions.
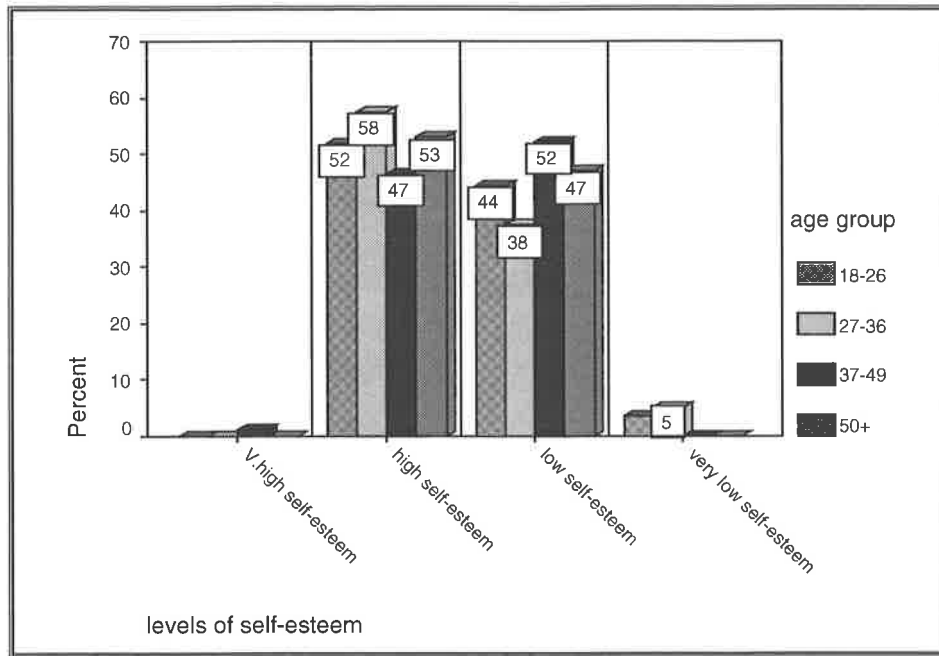
Figure 5.7.1 – Participants' level of self-esteem by age group

5.8 Family role performance

Family role performance was scored as an equally weighed composite index of the following: satisfaction with family, satisfaction with spouse, satisfaction with children, and satisfaction with parents. Question 40 was considered separately as a single item measuring the impact of migration on marital relationship and weighted independently from other variables in this section.

Just over half of the participants (55.1 %) had high satisfaction with their family role performance (*cf* Table 5.8). However, 28.5 % of the participants had low satisfaction with their family role performance and only 15.9 % had very high satisfaction with this aspect of their life.

It appears from the results (*cf* Figure 5.8) that the young age group (18-26) had the highest level of satisfaction with their family role performance as the vast majority of them were either very satisfied (65 %) or satisfied (35 %). Conversely, participants who were in the 37-49 age bracket were the least satisfied with their family role performance compared with the other age groups.

Table 5.8 – Participants' levels of family role performance satisfaction and the components of family role performance scale.

Level of satisfaction	Performance satisfaction with family	Performance satisfaction with spouse	Performance satisfaction with children	Performance satisfaction with parents	Overall family role performance satisfaction
	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)
Very high satisfaction	45 (21.8)	22 (12.8)	33 (19.8)	46 (25.1)	33 (15.9)
High satisfaction	111 (53.9)	80 (46.5)	109 (65.3)	88 (48.1)	114 (55.1)
Low satisfaction	44 (21.4)	54 (31.4)	24 (14.4)	42 (23.0)	59 (28.5)
Very low satisfaction	6 (2.9)	16 (9.3)	1 (0.6)	7 (3.8)	1 (0.5)

Note: The percentages reported here are based on responses to the individual questions.
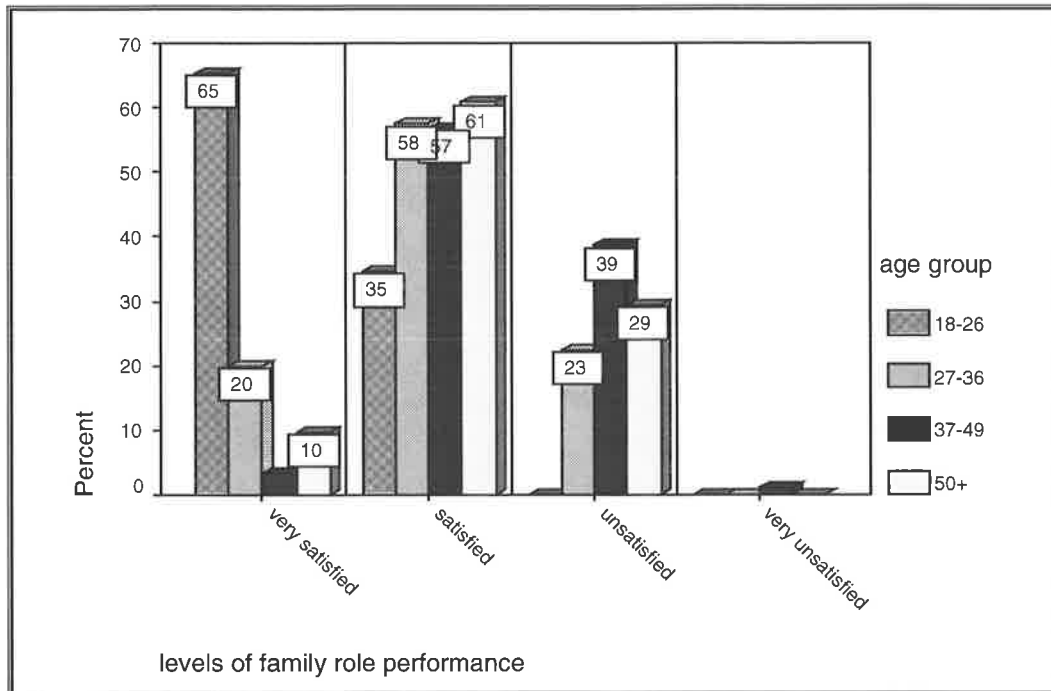
Figure 5.8 – Participants' family role performance by participants' age

5.8.1 Marital relationship after migration

Results indicated that over half of the married participants (55.2%) reported no effect of migration on their marital relationship, whereas, one fifth of the sample (20.1%) indicated that their relationship improved and one fourth (24.7%) reported that it became worse after migration. Figure 5.8.1 illustrates the marital relationship of participants after migration.
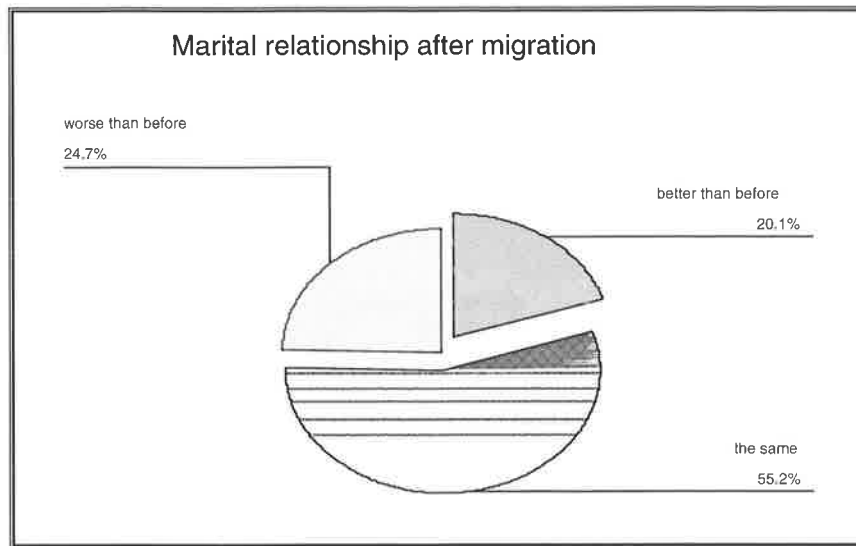
Figure 5.8.1 – Participants' marital relationship after migration

It appears from the results that (*cf* Figure 5.8.2) the young age group (18-26) have best maintained the quality of their marital relationship after migration compared with other age groups as their relationship was rated as either better (40%) or the same (60%) after migration. Conversely, participants who were in the 27-36 age bracket believed that the quality of their marital relationship had been affected due to migration as over one third (38%) rated their marital relationship worse than before migration and 29% as the same. The remaining third (33%) claimed improvement in their marital relationship after migration. A similar pattern of change in the marital relationship was evident for mature age participants (37-49 & 50+ age groups).
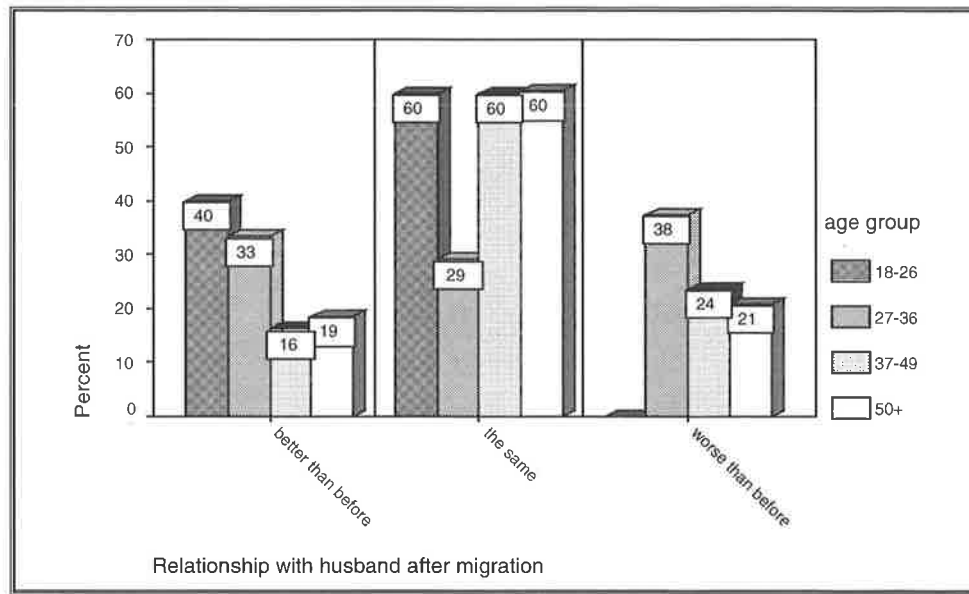
Figure 5.8.2 – Marital relationship after migration by age group

5.9   Emotional well-being of the participants

Emotional well-being was scored as an equally weighed composite of the following three scales: Recent Symptoms (GHQ-12, from Goldberg, 1978), Chronic Symptoms (from Taylor, 1953) and Symptoms of Tension (from Rutter, 1967). These scales were used by Scott & Scott (1989) in their research on the adaptation of immigrants in Australia.

Results of the GHQ scores were recoded using binary scoring. (Goldberg, 1988). This method was advised for dichotomizing the population into probable 'normal' and probable 'cases'. The total score range is 0-12. It was advised by Goldberg (1988) that a cut-off score of 2/3 indicates 'caseness'. Overall, 36.9 % of the sample had an above threshold score (cut-off score ≥ 3) and met GHQ criteria for caseness (Table 5.9.1). Bahaei women (52.6%) were more likely to have raised threshold scores than Muslims. Respondents who were in the mature age working group (37-49) were more likely to have higher scores (47.7%) than the younger group. As for divorced women (62.9%), scores were much higher than for single or married women. Women who had high school education (49.2%) were more likely to have scores raised above the threshold compared to those who had primary or higher education. Women who were unemployed (60.7%) were more likely to have higher scores than those who were working, housewives or were students.

Persian women who were little satisfied with their life (52.9%) were more likely to have above threshold scores to those who were either quite or completely satisfied. A greater proportion of respondents with a medium motivation to stay in Australia and to identify as Australian (50.4%) were more likely to have above-threshold scores than those reporting high or low motivation of being in Australia and identifying as Australian. Sixty nine percent of those women who were not healthy most of the time before migration were more likely to have higher GHQ scores than those who were healthy before migration.

Table 5.9.1 General Health Questionnaire (GHQ 12) scores by demographic and immigration-related variables.

Variable	Number* and % of participants' GHQ score (scoring≥3)		Number* and % of participants	
	number	%	number	%
Total	88	36.9	209	100
Demographic				
Religion				
• Muslim	46	38.01	121	65
• Bahaei's	30	52.6	57	30.6
• Christian	2	28.6	7	3.8
Age				
• 18-26	7	25.9	27	13.2
• 27-36	18	46.2	39	19.1
• 37-49	42	47.7	88	43.1
• 50+	20	40.0	50	24.5
Marital status				
• Single	9	39.1	23	11.0
• Married	57	37.7	151	72.2
• Divorced/widowed/separated	22	62.9	35	16.7
Education				
• Primary	6	40.0	15	7.2
• High school	30	49.2	61	29.2
• university	52	39.4	132	63.2
Employment				
• Employed +self employed	35	39.3	89	46.9
• Unemployed	14	60.7	23	12.1
• Housewife/retired	23	48.9	47	24.8
• Student	10	32.3	31	16.3
Length of residency				
• Under 10 years	51	42.1	121	57.9
• 10-20 years	35	42.7	82	39.4
• 20+	1	50.0	2	1.0
Migration related				
Life satisfaction				
• Little satisfied	18	52.9	34	16.5
• Quite satisfied	56	47.0	119	57.8
• Completely satisfied	13	24.5	53	25.7
Identification with Australia				
• Low	5	33.3	15	7.3
• Medium	57	50.4	113	54.9
• High	11	14.1	78	37.9
Health status before migration				
• Not healthy most of the time	9	69.2	13	6.4
• Reasonably healthy	43	43.9	98	48.5
• Very health always	34	37.4	91	45.0

*Figures may not add to 100% of sample due to missing values.

Table 5.9.2 displays mean scores, standard deviations and the alpha co-efficient for the composite variables of the overall emotional well-being of the participants.

Table 5.9.2 – Mean Scores, Standard Deviations and the Alpha co-efficient of Emotional well being composite variables.

Psychological well-being variables	M	SD	Alpha
1. GHQ	3.02	3.44	0.90
2. Chronic symptoms	7.48	4.25	0.80
3. Tension symptoms	5.63	4.22	0.81
4. Emotional well-being (total)	15.88	10.12	0.81

Note: Emotional well-being: higher score = lower well-being. Other variables, high scores indicate high levels on the variable.

5.10   Participants' health status before migration

A single scale of general health was applied to give an indication of the perception individuals had of their health prior to their migration to Australia. As is indicated in Figure 5.10.1, the vast majority of respondents (93.5 %) were either always very healthy (45 %) or reasonably healthy but did experience some ill health (48.5 %), whereas a low proportion were not healthy most of the time five years prior to migration (6.4 %). Of those who reported not being healthy most of the time or unhealthy sometimes (6.4%), 53.7 % identified the most frequently occurring health problems to be physical health problems and close to one thirds (29.6 %) identified emotional health problems.
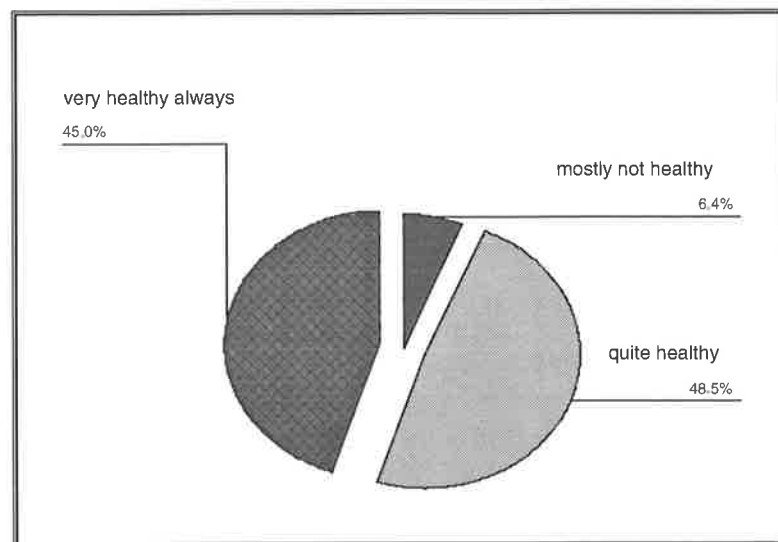
Figure 5.10.1 – Health status of participants five years prior to migration.

Thus, in the five years preceding their migration to Australia Persian women respondents generally perceived themselves to be healthy. At most, the significance of the health problems experienced by this group of women were perceived by them to be minimal.

5.11   Participants' problems of adjustment (Problem Index)

The 19 adjustment problems are presented in Table 5.11.1 in the order of their severity, based on the percentage of respondents evaluating each problem as very serious (M = 2.86, SD = 1.63). The data indicate a degree of reported concern by the Persian women participants in several areas of adjustment. Problems of separation from family members, English language, problems in raising children, lack of close friends, not having enough money, and conflict between Persian groups received the major emphasis as the majority of the sample rated them either as very serious or somewhat serious problems. Further inspection of the data reveals that problems which were evaluated as not serious by most respondents, still reflect a significant incidence of adjustment difficulty due to their idiosyncratic nature. For example, 41.2 %, 34.7% and 36.4 % of the participants reported that difficulty in understanding the Australian way of life, conflicts with family members and problems dealing with Australian people and agencies, respectively, were at least somewhat serious problems.

Table 5.11.1 – Problems of adjustment (Problem Index) in order of seriousness.

Problems	Mean	Rating		
		Not serious	Somewhat serious	Very serious
		Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)
1. Separated from family members	2.18	41 (21.1)	77 (39.7)	76 (39.2)
2. English language problem	1.95	75 (38.3)	56 (28.6)	65 (33.2)
3. Problems in raising children	1.83	71 (43.0)	51 (30.9)	43 (26.1)
4. Lack of close friends (loneliness)	1.89	68 (36.4)	71 (38.0)	48 (25.7)
5. Not enough money	1.89	65 (33.9)	84 (43.8)	43 (22.4)
6. Conflict between Persian groups	1.81	77 (41.2)	69 (36.9)	41 (21.9)
7. Need for counseling services	1.61	105 (58.3)	41 (22.8)	34 (18.9)
8. Conflict exists between Persian families	1.69	87 (48.1)	63 (34.8)	31 (17.1)
9. Low status of some Persians in Australian society	1.76	71 (39.7)	80 (44.7)	28 (15.6)
10. Conflict between partners	1.57	95 (58.3)	43 (26.4)	25 (15.3)
11. Communication with family and friends in Iran	1.73	84 (46.9)	69 (38.5)	25 (14.0)
12. Difficulty in Understanding Australian way of life	1.55	110 (58.8)	51 (27.3)	26 (13.9)
13. Not happy with present job	1.53	85 (59)	41 (28.5)	18 (12.5)
14. Conflicts with family members	1.44	115 (65.3)	45 (25.6)	16 (9.1)
15. Difficulties in adjusting to climate	1.41	128 (68.4)	42 (22.5)	17 (9.1)
16. Poor housing conditions	1.49	108 (59.3)	59 (32.4)	15 (8.2)
17. Problems dealing with Australian people and agencies	1.44	119 (63.6)	54 (28.9)	14 (7.5)
18. Transport problems	1.32	137 (74.9)	34 (18.6)	12 (6.6)
19. Getting Persian food	1.11	164 (91.1)	12 (6.7)	4 (2.2)

Note 1: The percentages reported here are based on responses to the individual questions.
Note 2: The following values were used for each problem: not serious = 1, somewhat serious = 2, very serious = 3.

5.12   Pearson intercorrelations of measures

Intercorrelations were obtained using Pearson product-moment correlations. Intercorrelations for all variables are reported in Table 5.12.1. To help describe the results, the product-moment correlation coefficients are defined as small, when r ≤.20, medium when r ≥.30 and large when r ≥.50 (Cohen, 1992). Data were screened for compliance with the assumption required by correlation analysis procedures. Specifically, checks of the data were made for missing data, normality and homogeneity. The data revealed a relatively small number of missing cases per question compared to the sample size. Questions which required respondents to answer every question, even 'not relevant' resulted in a higher number of missing cases (e.g. 'marital relationship after migration' for single women). These cases were reassigned logically appropriate values. Dummy variables were created for non-continuous variables (i.e. employment, marital status, level of education).

Table 5.12.1 – Pearson Intercorrelations of Variables.

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Demographic															
1. age															
2. No. of children	.50**														
3. Primary education	.38**	.26**													
4. high school	-.04	.22**	-.18**												
5. tertiary education	-.15*	-.35**	-.37**	-.85**											
6. Length of residence	.22**	-.05	-.08	-.20**	.23**										
7. Married	.21**	-.06	-.16*	-.05	.13	.03									
8. Single	-.56**	a	-.39	-.02	.04	-.03	-.57**								
9. Muslim	.07	-.03	.01	-.05	.04	.09	.14*	-.13							
10. Baha'i	-.62	.18*	.04	-.14*	-.19**	-.14*	-.10	.09	-.72**						
11. Health status before migration	-.14*	-.13	-.10	-.08	.13	.14*	.05	.07	.03	-.15*					
Employment															
12. working	.01	-.22**	-.20**	-.21**	.31**	.32**	.25**	-.21**	-.01	-.03	.06				
13. Not working	.13	.23**	.14*	.22**	-.28**	-.31**	-.04	-.10	.03	.05	-.10	-.83**			
14. Work satisfaction (Q14,16,17)	.22*	-.07	-.15	-.14	.17	.08	.17	-.26**	.03	.05	-.07	.32**	-.27**		
15. Maintenance of former occupation	.20	-.03	a	.01	-.01	-.03	.06	-.20	-.10	.16	-.24	-.07	.06	.72**	
16. Husbands' employment	.13	.25**	.12	.10	-.15	-.14	.02	a	-.17*	.23**	.08	-.31**	.31**	.07	.11
17. Consistency of work with qualification	-.06	.15	a	.23*	-.23*	-.07	-.11	.07	-.11	.19	-.03	-.19	.19	.34**	.25*
Adaption variables															
18. Problems of adaptation	-.03	-.09	.04	-.06	.04	.08	-.03	-.00	-.03	.06	-.15	.02	.02	.20*	.28*
19. Identification with Australia	-.06	-.09	.09	-.13	.17*	.21**	-.04	.12	-.01	-.07	.14	.17*	-.22**	-.16	-.30**
20. Life satisfaction in Australia	-.23**	-.11	-.11	-.12	.17*	.08	.08	.07	.07	-.10	.16*	.24**	-.25**	-.04	-.31**
21. Problem Index	-.10	-.02	-.06	.13	-.10	-.02	.02	.00	-.07	.14	-.18**	-.09	.14*	.07	.13
Adjustment variables															
22. Changes in roles	.05	-.02	.01	.11	-.11	.10	-.07	-.07	-.07	.10	-.02	-.00	-.02	-.13	-.03
23. Changes in responsibilities	-.06	-.19	-.13	.03	.04	.21**	.25**	-.22**	.11	-.10	-.02	.29**	-.22**	.09	-.06
24. Marital relationship after migration	.04	.07	-.02	.16*	-.15	.03	-.29**	a	-.10	.10	.08	-.09	.11	-.10	-.08
25. Family role performance	.27**	.04	-.13	.10	-.02	.11	.23**	-.44**	.12	-.04	.04	.13	.03	.10	.01
Mental health															
26. GHQ	.06	.16	-.01	.13	-.12	.05	-.07	-.01	-.10	.12	-.12	-.08	.12	.07	.09
27. Chronic symptoms	.13	.09	.02	.19**	-.19**	-.04	-.04	-.06	-.10	.14*	-.07*	-.16*	.20**	-.03	.20
28. Symptoms of tension	.10	.01	.02	.11	-.12	-.01	-.07	-.04	.04	.05	-.18*	-.14*	.16*	.08	.15
29. Emotional well-being	.08	.08	.00	.15*	-.14*	.01	-.05	-.03	-.06	.12	-.14*	-.14*	.19**	.05	.19
30. Self-esteem	.07	-.05	.02	.10	-.11	-.04	-.23**	-.23**	.02	.03	-.12	-.09	.21**	.08	.14

variable	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
16. Husbands' employment														
17. Consistency of work with qualification	.18													
Adaptation variables														
18. Problems of adaptation	.04	.05												
19. Identification with Australia	-.10	.03	-.16*											
20. Life satisfaction in Australia	-.11	-.16	-.16*	.37**										
21. Problem Index	.11	.05	.34**	-.20**	-.13									
Adjustment variables														
22. Changes in roles	.01	-.02	.16*	-.06	-.16*	.26**								
23. Changes in responsibilities	-.21*	-.13	-.06	.16*	.15*	.03	.03							
24. Marital relationship after migration	.14	-.04	.09	-.10	-.13	.20*	.12	-.15						
25. Family role performance	-.04	-.14	.11	-.12	-.17*	.33**	.13	.19**	.41**					
Mental health														
26. GHQ	-.02	.08	.24**	-.11	-.26**	.28**	.19**	-.20**	.21**	.22**				
27. Chronic symptoms	.02	.06	.22**	-.10	-.20**	.34**	.24**	-.13	.18*	.23**	.53**			
28. Symptoms of tension	-.02	.02	.25**	-.19**	-.18**	.34**	.22**	-.20**	.13	.15*	.52**	.68**		
29. Emotional well-being	-.01	.06	.26**	-.15*	-.23**	.40**	.24**	-.20**	.19*	.23**	.76**	.89**	.87**	
30. Self-esteem	.02	.17	.23**	-.14	-.25**	.31**	.13	-.12	.19*	.28**	.49**	.54**	.43**	.58**

Note: * $p<.05$.   **$p<.01$. (two-tail test).

   a = n too small for reliable correlation.

Changes in roles and responsibilities: high scores = increase, low scores = decrease. Marital relationship after migration and maintenance of occupational status: low scores = better, high scores = worse. Work consistency with qualification: yes = 1, no = 2. Family role performance: higher score = lower satisfaction. Husband's employment: working = 1, not working = 2, Identification with Australia: higher scores = stronger identification. Work satisfaction: higher score = lower satisfaction. Self-esteem: higher score = lower self-esteem. Emotional well-being: higher score = lower well-being. Changes in roles and responsibilities: high scores = increase, low scores = decrease. Identification with Australia: higher scores = stronger identification. All other variables, high indicates high levels on the variable.

5.12.1 Demographic and control measures

A number of intercorrelations were found between demographic/control variables. Most frequent intercorrelations were found between age, employment, number of children, level of education, length of residence in Australia, marital status and other demographic variables (*see* Table 5.12.1).

Demographic variables were clearly correlated with Employment variables. Specifically a number of small to medium positive correlations were found for: length of residence with working (r=24**); tertiary education with working (r=.31**); married with working(r=.25**); work satisfaction with age(r=.22*); number of children with not working(r=.23**), and husband's employment(r=.25**); Baha'i with husband's employment (r=.23**); and high school as the highest education level and not working (r=.22**). Furthermore, a number of small and medium negative correlations were found for: number of children with working (r=-.22**); length of residence and not working (r=-.31**); being single with working and work satisfaction (r=-.21** & r=-.26** respectively); Tertiary education and not working (r=-28**). These results show some consistency in the data. The majority of correlations of demographic variables with working and not working measures were significant (*see* Table 5.12.1, and Table 5.12.6).

Demographic variables showed some correlations with adaptation and adjustment measures. Age was negatively correlated with life satisfaction in Australia (r=-.23**). Length of residence had a small positive correlation with Australian identification (r=.21**). Health status before migration had small negative correlations with the problems index (r=-18**).

5.12.2 Employment measures

Working showed small negative correlations with three of the five mental health variables and had small positive correlations with identification with Australia; life satisfaction in Australia; and changes in responsibilities. In contrast, work satisfaction did not have any correlation with mental health, adjustment and adaptation variables (except with problems of adaptation) (*see* Table 5.12.10 and Table 5.12.11).

Not working had small positive correlations with four of the five mental health variables and medium positive correlations with husband's employment. Not working had negative small correlations with identification with Australia; life satisfaction in Australia; and changes in responsibilities. Husband's employment had a medium positive correlation with not working. Maintenance of former occupation had small to medium correlations with three of the four adoptation variables. There were no correlations between husband's employment and consistency of work with qualifications with mental health variables (*see* Table 5.12.10, and Table 5.12.1).

5.12.3   Adaptation measures

There was small to medium intercorrelations between most adaptation variables (Table 5.12.4). There was small to medium correlations with all adaptation variables and mental health measures (*see* Table 5.12.11). The relations between the adaptation set and adjustment set showed most associations occurring with the mental health measures.

Overall, problems of adaptation (problems encountered upon arrival), and the problems index showed fairly consistent associations with mental health measures. Self-esteem was negatively correlated with life satisfaction in Australia (r=-.25**) and positively correlated with problem index (r=.35**). It should be noted that self-esteem has been rated negatively for being in the same direction with other variables measuring emotional well-being (higher score = lower self-esteem). Those participants who had lower self-esteem had less life satisfaction in Australia and those who had more adjustment problems had lower self-esteem. The most frequent associations were found in the following order: problem index, problems of adaptation, life satisfaction in Australia and identification with Australia (*see*Table 5.12.11).

5.12.4   Adjustment measures

Adjustment variables were associated with each measures of mental health, showing small to medium associations; more adjustment problems were associated with more mental health problems. There were intercorrelaitons between adjustment variables, better family relationships after migration resulted in more satisfaction with the family role performance. Changes in responsibilities correlated with the family role performance. Relationships were found between the participants' self-esteem and the family role performance. The results

show that participants who had lower self-esteem had poorer performance in the family (both scales were negatively rated) (*see* Table 5.13.13).

5.12.5   Mental health measures

There were high inter-correlations between all measures of mental health (*see* Table 5.12.5). Participants who scored high on the GHQ had high Chronic and Tension Symptoms and more emotional problems as well as lower self-esteem. Participants' self-esteem was strongly correlated with their emotional well-being. Those who had lower self-esteem also experienced significant Chronic Symptoms, Symptoms of Tension, and Recent Symptoms.

5.12.6   Relationships

From the correlation matrices, four sets of variables which had significant correlations with the emotional health measures were found and a model was developed. The composite model included four groups of variables: i.e. Group A, Demographic; Group B, Structural Adjustment; Group C, Adaptation; and Group D, Psychological Outcomes. It was reasonable to consider the demographic and background characteristics before migration as interactive contributors to psychological well-being. These demographic variables were treated as a set of independent variables on which subsequent structural adjustment, adaptation and psychological outcome depends. Group A, a set of variables that included age, length of stay in Australia, marital status, education level, number of children and health status before migration, were seen in the model mainly as predictors. Group B (Structural Adjustment), a set of variables that included employment, changes in roles and responsibilities, maintenance of former occupation, consistency of occupation with qualification and marital relationship after migration, were treated in the model as a set of variables on which subsequent adaptation (Group C) and Psychological Outcomes (Group D) depends.   Group C (Adaptation Measures), a set of variables that included, family role performance, identification with Australia, work satisfaction in Australia, life satisfaction in Australia, problem index and problems of adaptation, were seen in the model as a set of variables on which Psychological Outcomes (Group D) depends.

The composite study model is shown in Table 5.12.1. Group A variables were significantly related with Group B, Group C and Group D. Group B variables were significantly associated with measures on Group C and Group D. Group C variables were significantly related with

measures in Group D. Variables in each group were intercorrelated. These results appear in Tables, 5.12.2 – 5.12.14, which present comprehensive summaries of all significant relations within each set of variables and between these four groups (predictors and outcomes).

Although the composite study model depicted in Figure 5.12.1, suggests four sets of variables, the analysis presented here treats all the independent measures as potential predictors of the Psychological Outcome measures.

As can be seen from the Composite Study Model, four major composite factors will be referred to throughout the remaining analysis. Demographic variables comprised of the following: Age, Time in Australia, Number of children, Single, Highest education level, and Health status before migration. Structural Adjustment is comprised of the following: Working, Not working, Changes in roles, Changes in responsibilities, Maintenance of former occupation, Consistency of occupation with qualification, and Marital relationship after migration. Adaptation refers to: Family role performance, Identification with Australia, Work satisfaction in Australia, Life satisfaction in Australia, Problem index and Problems of adaptation. Psychological Outcomes include: Self-esteem, GHQ, Chronic symptoms, Symptoms of tension, and Emotional well-being.

Composite Study Model
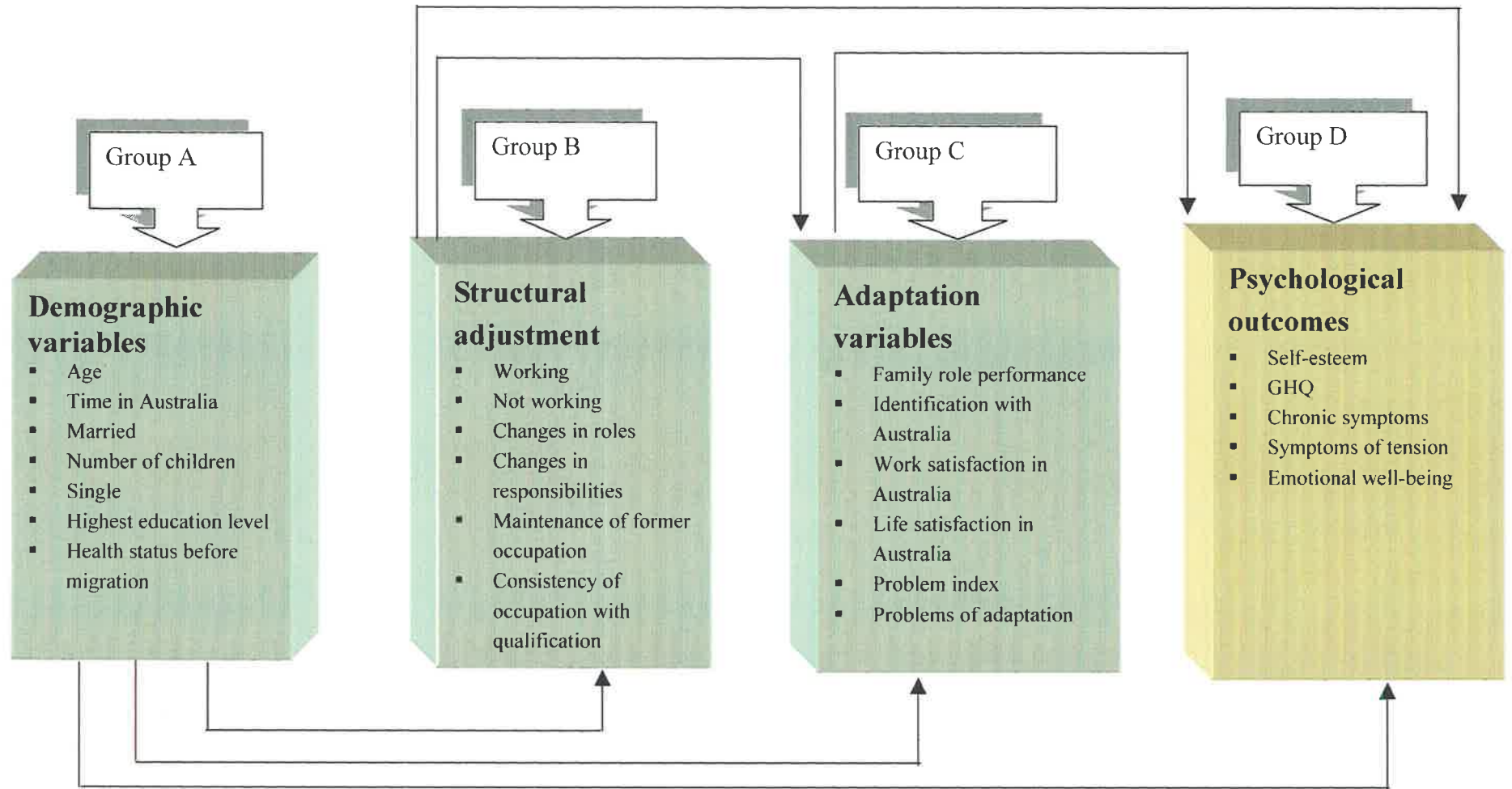
Figure 5.12.1 – The Composite Study Model

5.12.6.1   Correlation matrices for demographic variables (Group A).

A number of intercorrelations were found to exist between demographic variables (Table 5.12.2). These intercorrelations were found between age, employment, number of children, level of education, length of residence in Australia and marital status. Age had large positive correlations with the number of children and large negative correlations with being single. Age had a medium positive correlation with primary education. Length of residence had a small positive correlation with age and tertiary education and a small negative association with high school and being Baha'i.

Correlations were found between demographic variables (Group A) and Structural Adjustment (Group B) as shown in Table 5.12.6. Length of residence had a medium association with working and changes in responsibilities and a negative association with not working. Length of stay was associated with working and increases in responsibility. Marriage had a small correlation with working and changes in responsibilities and a small negative correlation with the marital relationship after migration. Marriage also correlated with employment and increased responsibility. Health status was negatively correlated with the maintenance of former occupation status. Better health before migration was associated with a better chance of maintaining the former occupation.

Some correlations were found between demographic characteristics (Group A) and Adaptation Variables (Group C). Age had small positive correlations with family role performance, work satisfaction in Australia and a small negative association with life satisfaction in Australia. Older age was associated with less family role performance satisfaction, less work satisfaction and less life satisfaction in Australia. Length of residence had a small positive correlation with identification with Australia. A longer residence in Australia was associated with more identification with Australia. Being single was related to better family role performance satisfaction and better work satisfaction. Table 5.12.7 illustrates the correlations between Group A and Group C variables.

Results indicated some correlations between Demographic variables (Group A) and Psychological Outcomes (Group D). It needs to be noted that all Psychological Outcome variables go in a negative direction. High school had very small positive correlations with Chronic symptoms and Emotional well-being. Conversely, tertiary education indicated very

small negative correlations with Chronic symptoms and Emotional well being. A higher education predicted less Chronic symptoms and better well-being. Health status before migration had very small negative associations with Tension symptoms and Emotional well-being. Better physical health before migration predicted less Tension symptoms and better psychological health. Table 5.12.8 illustrates the correlations between Group A and Group D variables.

5.12.6.2 Correlation matrices for Structural Adjustment (Group B)

A number of inter-correlations were found between Structural Adjustment variables (Table 5.12.3). Inter-correlations were found between working, not working, changes in responsibilities, maintenance of former occupation status and work consistency with qualifications. A small positive correlation was found between changes in responsibilities and working, and a small negative correlation with not working. Small positive correlations were found between maintenance of former occupation status and work consistency with qualification.

Some correlations were found between Structural Adjustment (Group B) and adaptation variables (Group C) as seen in Table 5.12.9. Small positive correlations were found to exist between changes in responsibilities with family role performance, identification with Australia, and life satisfaction in Australia. More changes in responsibilities were associated with less satisfaction in family role performance, less identification with Australia and higher life satisfaction in Australia. Small negative associations were found between not working and identification with Australia, work satisfaction in Australia, life satisfaction in Australia and a small positive correlation found between not working and the problem index. Not working was associated with less identification with Australia and less life satisfaction in Australia and with more problems of adjustment.

Relationships were found to exist between Structural Adjustment (Group B) and Psychological Outcome variables (Group D) as evident in Table 5.12.10. Small yet significant negative correlations exist between working and Chronic symptoms, Tension symptoms and Emotional well-being. Working was associated with less psychological disturbance. Conversely, small positive correlations existed between not working and Chronic Symptoms, Tension symptoms, Self-esteem, and Emotional well being. Not working was related to greater psychological disturbance. Changes in responsibilities were negatively correlated with

three of five psychological outcome measures whereas changes in roles had small positive correlations with four of the five Psychological Outcome measures. Less change in roles was correlated to better emotional well-being and more changes in responsibilities were correlated with better psychological well-being. Small positive correlations were found to exist between marital relationship after migration and four of the five Psychological Outcome variables. A better relationship after migration was correlated with better psychological well-being.

5.12.6.3 Correlation matrices for Adaptation (Group C)

A number of inter-correlations were found between adaptation variables (Table 5.12.4). Most frequent inter-correlations were found between Problems of Adaptation (problems encountered upon arrival), life satisfaction in Australia, Identification with Australia, Problem index, Family role performance and work satisfaction in Australia. Small to medium positive correlations were found between the problem index and family role performance, work satisfaction in Australia, and problems of adaptation. Identification with Australia was positively associated with life satisfaction in Australia and negatively correlated with the problem index and problems of adaptation. A small negative yet significant correlation was found between life satisfaction in Australia with family role performance and problems of adaptation and a medium positive correlation was found between life satisfaction with identification with Australia.

The relations between the adaptation variables (Group C) and Psychological Outcomes (Group D) showed several associations. Table 5.12.11 illustrates the correlations between these two sets of variables. Family role performance, life satisfaction in Australia, the problem index and problems of adaptation correlated significantly with all five Psychological Outcome measures. Conversely, work satisfaction in Australia was not associated with any of the outcome measures. Low satisfaction in family performance, low life satisfaction in Australia, more adjustment problems and problems of adaptation were correlated with high psychological problems.

5.12.6.4 Correlation matrices for Psychological Outcome measures (Group D)

High inter-correlations were found to exist between all dependent measures as evident in Table 5.12.5. However they were retained as separate measures of Psychological Outcomes because of clear conceptual distinctions between them.

Correlation matrix for Demographic variables (Group A)

Table 5.12.2– Inter-correlations of Demographic variables (Group A).

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. age	1.000	.504**	.381**	-.042	-.153	.218**	.213**	-.562*	.074	-.062	-.141*
2. No. of children	.504**	1.000	.260**	.223**	-.354	-.111	-.059	a	-.030	.181*	-.128
3. Primary education	.381**	.260**	1.000	-.179**	-.368**	-.080	-.159*	-.039	.012	.038	-.101
4. High school	-.042	.223**	-.179**	1.000	-.849	-.201**	-.049	-.024	-.049	.174*	-.080
5. Tertiary education	-.153*	-.354**	-.368**	-.849**	1.000	.233**	.131	.043	.040	-.185**	.127
6. Length of residence	.218**	-.048	-.080	-.201**	.233**	1.000	.033	-.027	.092	-.139*	.140
7. Married	.213**	-.059	-.159*	-.049	.131	.033	1.000	-.567*	.142*	-.100	.053
8. Single	-.562**	a	-.39	-.024	.043	-.027	-.567**	1.000	-.134	.094	.066
9. Muslim	.074	-.030	.012	-.049	.040	.092	.142*	-.134	1.000	-.718**	.030
10. Baha'i	-.062	.181*	.038	-.139*	-.185**	-.139*	-.100	.094	-.718**	1.000	-.151*
11. Health status before migration	-.141*	-.128	-.101	-.080	.127	.140*	.053	.066	.030	-.151*	1.000

Note: * p<.05.   **p<.01. (two-tail test)
        a n too small for reliable correlation

Correlation matrix for Structural Adjustment Variables (Group B)

Table 5.12.3 – Inter-correlations of structural adjustment variables (B).

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Working	1.000	-.883**	-.004	.289**	-.074	-.194	-.088
2. Not working	-.883**	1.000	-.024	-.223**	.056	.188	.110
3. Changes in roles	-.004	-.024	1.000	.031	-.028	-.016	.115
4. Changes in Responsibilities	.289**	-.223**	.031	1.000	-.057	-.127	-.153
5. Maintenance of former occupational status	-.074	.056	-.028	-.057	1.000	.251*	-.075
6. Consistency of work with qualification	-.194	.188	-.016	-.127	.251*	1.000	-.040
7. Marital relationship after migration	-.088	.110	.115	-.153	-.075	-.040	1.000

Note: * $p<.05$.** $p<.01$. (two-tail test)
Changes in roles and responsibilities: high scores = increase, low scores = decrease. Maintenance of occupational status: low scores = better, high scores = worse. Work consistency with qualification: yes = 1, no = 2. Marital relationship: low scores = better, high scores = worse

Correlation matrix for Adaptation Variables (Group C)

Table 5.12.4 - Inter-correlations of adaptation variables (group C)

Adaptation variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Family role performance	1.000	-.120	.100	-.174*	.328**	.111
2. Identification with Australia	-.120	1.000	-.163	.374**	-.202**	-.159*
3. Work satisfaction in Australia	.100	-.163	1.000	-.036	.065	.196*
4. Life satisfaction in Australia	-.174*	.374**	-.36	1.000	-.127	-.161*
5. Problem Index	.328**	-.202**	.065	-.127	1.000	.338**
6. Problems of adaptation	.111	-.159*	.196*	-.161*	.338**	1.000

Note: * p<.05. **p<.01. (two-tail test)

Family role performance: higher score = lower satisfaction. Identification with Australia: higher scores = stronger identification. Work satisfaction: higher score = lower satisfaction. All other variables, high indicate high levels on the variable.

Correlation matrix for Psychological Outcome Variables (Group D)

Table 5.12.5 - Inter-correlations of psychological outcome variables (group D)

Psychological outcomes variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Self-esteem	1.000	.490**	.537**	.428**	.575**
2. GHQ	.490**	1.000	.526**	.523**	.761**
3. Chronic symptoms	.537**	.526**	1.000	.678**	.885**
4. Tension symptoms	.428**	.523**	.678**	1.000	.873**
5. Emotional well-being	.575**	.761**	.885**	.873**	1.000

Note: **p<.01. (two-tail test)
         Self-esteem: higher score = lower self-esteem. Emotional well-being: higher score = lower well-being. Other variables, high scores indicate the high levels on the variable.

Correlation matrix between different groups of variables

Table 5.12.6 - Correlation Matrices Between Demographic Variables (A) and Structural Adjustment (B)

Variable	Working	Not working	Changes in roles	Changes in responsibilities	Maintenance of former occupational status	Consistency of occupation with qualification	Marital relationship after migration
Age	.014	.134	.048	-.059	.201	-.056	.042
No. of children	-.224**	.227**	-.019	-.194*	-.033	.152	.074
Primary education	-.202**	.139*	.005	-.129	a	a	-.016
High school	-.212**	.222**	.110	.027	.011	.227*	.164*
Tertiary education	.309**	-.284**	-.107	.042	-.011	-.227*	-.151
Length of residence	.324**	-.307**	.097	.206**	-.026	-.065	.034
Married	.253**	-.042	-.069	.253**	.058	-.114	-.292**
Single	-.210**	-.95	-.071	-.215**	-.196	.066	a
Muslim	-.010	.030	-.065	.113	-.099	-.105	-.091
Baha'I	-.028	.053	.097	-.103	.157	.194	.100
Health status before migration	.063	-.102	-.017	-.021	-.236*	-.034	.081

Note: * p<.05.   **p<.01. (two-tail test)
a = number is too small for reliable correlation.
Changes in roles and responsibilities: high scores = increase, low scores = decrease. Maintenance of occupational status: low scores = better, high scores = worse. Work consistency with qualification: yes = 1, no = 2. Marital relationship: low scores = better, high scores = worse

Table 5.12.7 - Correlation Matrices Between Demographic Variables (A) and Adaptation Variables (C)

Variable	Family role performance	Identification with Australia	Work satisfaction in Australia	Life satisfaction in Australia	Problem Index	Problems of adaptation
age	.270**	-.057	.222*	-.232**	-.104	-.033
No. of children	.041	-.091	-.068	-.111	-.019	-.093
Primary education	-.132	-.086	-.151	-.109	-.051	.035
High school	.095	-.129	-.135	-.122	.129	-.058
Tertiary education	-.020	.167*	.167	.173*	-.095	.035
Length of residence	.113	.209**	.080	.076	-.015	.077
Married	.225**	-.040	.171	.082	.022	-.030
Single	-.436**	.117	-.252**	.072	.002	-.001
Muslim	.122	-.006	.031	.071	-.072	-.032
Baha'i	-.040	-.006	.053	-.102	.135	.064
Health status before migration	.044	.135	-.066	.157*	-.184**	-.149

Note: * p<.05. **p<.01. (two-tail test)

Family role performance: higher score = lower satisfaction. Identification with Australia: higher scores = stronger identification. Work satisfaction: higher score = lower satisfaction. All other variables, high indicate high levels on the variable.

Table 5.12.8 - Correlation Matrices Between Demographic Variables (A) and Psychological Outcome Variables (D)

Variable	GHQ	Chronic symptoms	Tension symptoms	Self-esteem	Emotional well-being
age	.055	.128	.098	.014	.083
No. of children	.161*	.087	.010	.066	.078
Primary education	-.008	.018	.024	-.045	.001
High school	.126	.188**	.114	.100	.145*
Tertiary education	-.116	-.186**	-.120	-.106	-.138*
Length of residence	.049	-.042	-.005	-.035	.013
Married	-.071	-.041	-.071	.113	-.050
Single	-.007	-.062	-.035	-.229**	-.034
Muslim	-.100	-.103	.041	.017	-.055
Baha'i	.122	.138*	.053	.031	.122
Health status before migration	-.116	-.072	-.179*	-.117	-.144*

Note: * $p<.05$.   ** $p<.01$. (two-tail test)
Self-esteem: higher score = lower self-esteem. Emotional well-being: higher score = lower well-being. Other variables, high scores indicate the high levels on the variable.

Table 5.12.9 - Correlation Matrices Between Structural Adjustment (B) and Adoptation Variables (C)

variables	Family role performance	Identification with Australia	Work satisfaction in Australia	Life satisfaction in Australia	Problems Index	Problems of adaptation
Working	.132	.174*	.319**	.240**	-.92	.017
Not working	.032	-.217**	-.265**	-.254**	.138*	.018
Changes in roles	.133	-.062	-.129	-.159*	.257**	.164*
Changes in responsibilities	.187**	.164*	.088	.145*	.026	-.056
Maintenance of former occupational status	.014	-.299**	.718**	-.309**	.133	.281*
Consistency of work with qualification	-.140	.032	.336**	-.158	.049	.046
Marital relationship after migration	.413**	-.098	-.101	-.133	.203*	.091

Note: * p<.05.   **p<.01. (two-tail test)

Changes in roles and responsibilities: high scores = increase, low scores = decrease. Maintenance of occupational status: low scores = better, high scores = worse. Work consistency with qualification: yes = 1, no = 2. Marital relationship: low scores = better, high scores = worse. Family role performance: higher score = lower satisfaction. Identification with Australia: higher scores = stronger identification. Work satisfaction: higher score = lower satisfaction. All other variables, high indicate high levels on the variable.

Table 5.12.10 - Correlation Matrices Between Structural Adjustment (B) and Psychological Outcome Variables (D)

variables	GHQ	Chronic symptoms	Tension symptoms	Self-esteem	Emotional well-being
Working	-.083	-.161*	-.138*	-.085	-.142*
Not working	.123	.200**	.157*	.208*	.194**
Changes in roles	.194**	.244**	.215**	.133	.240**
Changes in responsibilities	-.200**	-.128	-.201**	-.119	-.195**
Maintenance of former occupational status	.187	.150	.154	.142	.192
Consistency of work with qualification	.077	.061	.018	.174	.059
Marital relationship after migration	.210**	.184*	.133	.191*	.185*

Note: * p<.05. **p<.01. (two-tail test)

Changes in roles and responsibilities: high scores = increase, low scores = decrease. Maintenance of occupational status: low scores = better, high scores = worse. Work consistency with qualification: yes = 1, no = 2. Marital relationship: low scores = better, high scores = worse. Self-esteem: higher score = lower self-esteem. Emotional well-being: higher score = lower well-being. Other variables, high scores indicate the high levels on the variable.

Table 5.12.11 - Correlation Matrices Between Adaptation Variables (C) and Psychological Outcome Variables (D)

variables	GHQ	Chronic symptoms	Tension symptoms	Self-esteem	Emotional well-being
Family role performance	.219**	.228**	.148*	.282**	.231**
Identification with Australia	-.112	-.097	-.191**	-.141*	-.154*
Work satisfaction in Australia	.067	-.031	.085	.077	.047
Life satisfaction in Australia	-.258**	-.200**	-.182**	-.245**	-.229**
Problem Index	.280**	.340**	.337**	.354**	.400**
Problems of adaptation		.217**	.250**	.232**	.257**

Note: * $p<.05$.   **$p<.01$. (two-tail test)

Family role performance: higher score = lower satisfaction. Identification with Australia: higher scores = stronger identification. Work satisfaction: higher score = lower satisfaction. Self-esteem: higher score = lower self-esteem. Emotional well-being: higher score = lower well-being. Other variables, high scores indicate the high levels on the variable.

5.13   Regression analysis: Predictors of Psychological Outcomes

In order to assess the possibility of more complex relationships between the control variables and Adjustment and Adaptation Variables and Psychological Well-being, further analyses needed to be under taken. Although correlations suggested a number of important predictor variables, their relative importance in predicting Psychological Outcomes is not clear. The predictor variables are correlated with each other and overlap to some degree. Multiple regression/correlation analysis (MRC) (Cohen & Cohen 1983) is a statistical technique that can be used to remove the effects of other variables to determine the variance accounted for by the variable uniquely, relative to what is accounted for by other factors.

Multiple regression analysis was used here to identify multiple predictor variables. Tables 5.13.1 – 5.13.3 summarize results of all four sets of predicted variables (composite study model) encountered in this study of Persian women migrants to Australia.

5.13.1   Psychological Outcomes

On the regression analysis predicting psychological well-being, self-esteem was significantly predicted by the Problem Index variable. Thus the greater the adjustment problems, the poorer the self-esteem and the greater the psychological distress. Tension symptoms significantly correlated with Problems of Adaptation and changes in responsibilities. Thus the more problems encountered upon arrival increased the chance of having tension symptoms which consequently led to poorer emotional well-being. There were no significant predicted variables for GHQ and Chronic symptoms. Table 5.13.1 summarizes the multiple regression analysis for each of the five continuous dependent variables.

Table 5.13.1   Multiple regression analysis predicting self-esteem, tension symptoms, recent symptoms (GHQ), chronic symptoms and emotional well-being,

	B-value	Standardized Beta	t-value
Self-esteem [a]			
• Not working	.55	.08	.97
• Problem Index	.12	.29	3.16**
• Life satisfaction in Australia	-7.07	-.08	-.95
• Relationship with husband after migration	.51	.10	1.18
• Family role performance	2.64	.05	.54
• Identification with Australia	1.53	.01	.12
• Problems of adaptation	.16	.07	.90
Tension symptoms [b]			
▪ Problems of adaptation	.39	.15	2.7**
▪ Changes in responsibilities	-.39	-.20	-2.84**
▪ Problem Index	8.18	.16	1.96
▪ Life satisfaction in Australia	-3.85	-.04	-.48
▪ Family role performance	4.78	.08	1.03
▪ Identification with Australia	-.12	-.07	-.89
▪ Change roles	.31	.11	1.59
▪ Working	-2.29	-.00	-.02
▪ Not working	-2.29	-.00	-.02
▪ Health status before migration	-.79	-.11	-1.63
Recent symptoms (GHQ) [c]			
• Problem index	3.67	.09	.93
• Life satisfaction in Australia	-9.98	-.11	-1.30
• Problems of adaptation	.23	.10	1.15
• Family role performance	9.40	.16	1.70
• Number of children	.40	.12	1.38
• Change roles	.18	.08	.94
• Change responsibilities	-9.60	-.06	-.70
• Relationship with husband after migration	.28	.05	.60

Chronic symptoms [d]

• Problem index	8.6	.16	1.72
• Life satisfaction in Australia	8.44	.01	.09
• Problems of adaptation	.25	.10	1.13
• Family role performance	8.75	.13	1.40
• Change roles	.34	.13	1.54
• Relationship with husband after migration	.30	.05	.54
• Tertiary education	-.38	-.04	-.25
• Baha'i	1.23	.12	1.52
• High school	.83	.09	.53
• Working	-.25	-.03	-.09
• Not working	1.02	.12	.36

Emotional well-being [e]

• Problem index	.22	.18	1.90
• Life satisfaction in Australia	-3.08	-.01	-.14
• Problems of adaptation	.62	.09	1.16
• Family role performance	.21	.13	1.42
• Change roles	.94	.15	1.78
• Change responsibilities	-.77	-.16	-1.94
• Health status before migration	-.85	-.05	-.61
• Relationship with husband after migration	.69	.04	.53
• Tertiary education	-.11	-.00	-.03
• Identification with Australia	-.27	-.06	-.72
• High school	2.25	.10	.62
• Working	.99	.05	.18
• Not working	2.16	.11	.39

[a] $R^2 = .18$, $F(7,138) = 4.28**$, $p<.001$ [b] $R^2 = .22$, $F(10,174) = 4.93**$, $p<.001$, [c] $R^2 = .15$, $F(8,124) = 2.82$, [d] $R^2 = .22$, $F(11,133) = 3.46$, [e] $R^2 = .25$, $F(13,129) = 3.27$

5.13.2   Adaptation

Maintenance of former occupational status was associated with four of six adaptation measures. Better occupational status after migration was associated with higher work satisfaction, higher life satisfaction, less adjustment problems, and higher identification with Australia. Family role performance was significantly predicted by change of roles and marital relationship after migration. Women who had better marital relationships after migration had more satisfaction with their family role performance. Consistency of occupation with qualification significantly predicted work satisfaction. Higher occupational status and working in the same profession resulting in higher work satisfaction.

The second most important variable associated with Adaptation measures was marital relationship after migration. Women with a better marital relationship after migration were more likely to have less adjustment problems and more satisfaction with their family role performance. The Problem index was significantly predicted by change of roles and marital relationship after migration. Problems of adaptation was significantly predicted by maintenance of former occupation. Table 5.13.2 summarizes the multiple regression analysis for each of the six continuous adaptation variables.

Table 5.13.2   Multiple regression analysis predicting family role performance, identification with Australia, work satisfaction, life satisfaction, life satisfaction in Australia, problem index (problems of adjustment) and problems of adaptation.

	B-value	Standardized Beta	t-value
Family role performance [a]			
• Changes roles	.64	.16	2.18**
• Marital Relationship after migration	3.38	.36	4.72**
• Age	7.62	.01	.16
• Married	-1.85	-.10	-1.30
Identification with Australia [b]			
• Length of residence in Australia	-2.26	-.05	-.41
• Tertiary education	-1.66	.00	-.00
• Maintenance of former occupation	-.59	-.30	-2.80**
• Working	-1.02	-.19	-.62
• Not working	-1.84	-.34	-1.04
• Change responsibilities	.12	.10	.85
Work satisfaction [c]			
• Maintenance of former occupation	1.36	.75	15.85**
• Single	-.94	-.06	-1.20
• Age	1.24	.04	.86
• Consistency of occupation with qualification	1.34	.34	7.51**
• Working	.23	.03	.32
• Not working	.82	.11	1.05
Life satisfaction in Australia [d]			
▪ Maintenance of former occupation	-.94	-.29	-2.69
▪ Age	-3.91	-.08	-.77
▪ Not working	-5.08	-.60	-1.83
▪ Working	-3.54	-.43	-1.35
▪ Tertiary education	.77	.09	.76
▪ Health status before migration	-9.19	.00	-.00
▪ Change responsibilities	.18	.09	.80
▪ Change roles	-.23	-.10	-.88
Problem index [e]			
▪ Not working	2.49	.15	1.97
▪ Health status before migration	-2.08	-.15	-1.93
▪ Change roles	1.27	.25	3.15**
▪ Relationship with husband after migration	2.03	.17	2.15**
Problems of adaptation [f]			
▪ Change roles	.16	.16	1.52
▪ Maintenance of former occupation	.38	.29	2.70**

[a] $R^2 = .21$, $F(4,147) = 9.66$, $p<.001$, [b] $R^2 = .14$, $F(6,77) = 2.09$, $p<.001$, [c] $R^2 = .89$, $F(6,61) = 80.10$, $p<.001$, [d] $R^2 = .23$, $F(8,72) = 2.71$, [e] $R^2 = .15$, $F(4,143) = 6.25$, $p<.001$, [f] $R^2 = .11$, $F(2,80) = 4.69$, $p<.001$

5.13.3   Structural Adjustment

Employment and unemployment were significantly predicted by the length of residence in Australia, and high school education. Women who were in Australia for a shorter time and their highest education was high school level, were less likely to have a job. Changes in responsibilities was significantly predicted by being married and number of children. Women who were married and had more children were significantly more likely to increase their responsibilities after migration. Maintenance of former occupation of status was significantly predicted by health status before migration. Consistency of occupation with qualification was significantly predicted by high school education. Women whose highest education was at high school level were more likely not to work in the area consistent with their qualifications. Table 5.13.3 summarizes the regression analysis for the Structural Adjustment Measures.

Table 5.13.3   Multiple regression analysis predicting not working, working, changes responsibilities, maintenance of former occupational status, consistency of work with qualification and relationship with husband after migration.

	B-value	Standardized Beta	t-value
Not working [a]			
• Length of residence in Australia	-2.60	-.25	-3.43**
• Primary education	.24	.13	1.61
• High school education	.20	.18	2.35**
• Number of children	6.98	.14	1.83
Working [b]			
▪ Length of residence in Australia	2.63	.26	3.55**
▪ Married	.12	.10	1.33
▪ Number of children	-5.83	-.12	-1.56
▪ High school education	-.20	-.19	-2.42**
▪ Primary education	-.33	-.178	-2.26
Change in responsibilities [c]			
▪ Length of residence in Australia	5.56	.13	1.65
▪ Married	.93	.17	2.22*
▪ Number of children	-.38	-.18	-2.36*
Maintenance of former occupational status [d]			
▪ Health status before migration	-.46	-.24	-2.19**
Consistency of work with qualification [e]			
▪ High school education	.30	.23	2.28**
Relationship with husband after migration [f]			
▪ High school education	.19	.13	1.70

[a] $R^2 = .17$, $F_{(4,163)} = 8.58$, $p<.001$, [b] $R^2 = .21$, $F_{(5,162)} = 8.62$, $p<.001$, [c] $R^2 = .84$, $F_{(3,162)} = 4.97$, $p<.05$, [d] $R^2 = .06$, $F_{(1,81)} = 4.79$, $p<.001$ [e] $R^2 = ..05$, $F_{(1,95)} = 5.18$, $p<.001$, [f] $R^2 = .10$, $F_{(2,151)} = 8.62$, $p<.001$

Table 5.13.4 summarizes the regression analysis predicting Psychological Outcomes, Adaptation, and the Structural Adjustment Measures presented in the composite study model.

Table 5.13.4 – Summary of the regression analysis for the composite study model

Composite	Predictor	Outcome
Psychological Outcomes		
Self-esteem		
	• Problem index	More adjustment problems experienced leads to a lower self-esteem
Tension symptoms		
	• Problems of adaptation	More problems on arrival predict more tension experienced after migration.
	• Changes in responsibilities	Increased responsibility after migration predict less tension after migration
Adaptation		
Family role performance		
	• Change roles	More changing roles predict less satisfaction in family role performance.
	• Marital relationship	Better marital relationship after migration result better satisfaction in family role performance in the new environment.
Identification with Australia		
	• Maintenance of former occupation	The maintenance of former occupation predicts more identification with Australia.
Work satisfaction		
	• Maintenance of former occupation	Maintenance of former occupational status leads to higher work satisfaction.
	• Consistency of occupation with qualification	Work consistency with qualification predicts higher work satisfaction.
Problem index (problems of adjustment)		
	• Changes roles	More changes in roles after migration lead to more problems of adjustment.
	• Marital relationship after migration	Better marital relationship after migration leads to less problems and a better adjustment in the new society.
Problems of adaptation		
	• Maintenance of former occupation	Less problems upon arrival results in a higher chance of maintaining the occupational status before migration.

Table 5.13.4 – cont'd

Composite	Predictor	outcome
Structural adjustment		
Not working		
	• Length of residence in Australia	Less spent time in Australia predicts unemployment.
	• High school education	High school qualification predicts more chance of unemployment.
Working		
	• Length of residence in Australia	more spent time in Australia predicts employment.
	• High school education	High school qualification predicts less chance of employment.
Changes in responsibilities		
	• Married	For married women there is more chance of responsibilities to be increased after migration.
	• Number of children	More children predicts a decrease in changes in responsibilities. After migration.
Maintenance of former occupation		
	• Health status before migration	Better health status before migration leads to a better chance of the maintenance of occupational status.
Consistency of work with qualification		
	• High school education	High school qualification predicts less chance of finding a job consistent with qualification.

5.14   Conclusions

The age range of participants was quite diverse (18-79) years, but a great number of them were predominantly in the prime working age group. This corresponded well with the age group membership of the Persian women population in Australia. Persian women Christians were under represented, whereas, Muslims were over represented in the study group. Baha'is were reasonably representative of the Persian women population living in Australia using 1996 Census data.

The educational level of participants was quite high as almost two thirds of the sample had received tertiary education, either completed or were half way through university. The majority of the sample was married (72 %) and had children (80.9 %). The vast majority of the women's spouses were from Iran (97.5 %). The sample reported a mean length of residence in Australia of 8.84 years at the time the research was conducted (SD=4.81 years).

The employment rate of the sample was remarkably low (35.8 %). The rate of unemployment was 37.7 %. The employment pattern of participants two years prior to migration was different, as half of the participants were either employed or self-employed. Just over one quarter of the participants maintained the same occupational status after migration (28.2 %). The remaining rated their occupation as either worse (40 %) or better (32 %).

Participants reported that they had at least one problem upon their arrival. Language proficiency was the major common problem (76.3 %) followed by employment. Accommodation was least problematic.

A vast majority of participants (94.3 %) were quite or completely satisfied with educational opportunities provided to them in the new society. This result suggests that Australian society has completely fulfilled this expectation of the participants. Conversely, half of the sample was either not satisfied or a little satisfied with the job opportunities available in their area of qualification. The participants tended not to be satisfied with the way children are reared in Australia as only 15.5 % were completely satisfied with this aspect of their lives. Opportunities to practice religion in Australia were favoured by 87 % of the sample.

Overall, participants had the highest satisfaction for educational opportunities in Australia for them and their family members and the lowest satisfaction were in the area of child raising and work opportunities in Australia. Moreover, Australia's 'free' society brought a high satisfaction from participants for allowing them to practice their religion. Young participants (18-26 years) had the highest and older participants (50+ years) had the lowest life satisfaction rate.

The participants' Persian national identity was very strong as a majority of the participants (86 %) had positive feelings about their Persian national identity. Conversely, Australian national identity was not highly rated by participants as only 41 % had no feelings and 17 % had negative feelings over being considered Australian. It appears from the results that the youngest group (18-26 years) had the highest and the oldest group (50+ years) the lowest identification with Australia.

The survey results indicated that the level of participants' responsibilities has increased in the area of financial matters and family decisions, whereas in the area of children's welfare and social engagements it had stayed almost the same (*cf* figure 5.6.1). The vast majority of participants (92.5 %) perceived gender roles, parent-child roles, and the moral and ethical environment of the Persian community to be different compared with pre-migration.

Just over half of the Persian women in the study group (51 %) showed overall high self-esteem and the other half (47 %) indicated a relatively low self-esteem. However, it appears from the results that participants had different levels of self-esteem in different composite indices of the scale (table 5.7.1).

The survey results indicated that half of the participants (55.1 %) had high satisfaction with the way their role and their family performed (*cf* Table 5.8). However, over a quarter of the sample (28.5 %) had low satisfaction with their family role performance. The young age group (18-26) had the highest level of satisfaction with their family role performance. Conversely, participants in the 37-49 age bracket were the least satisfied with their family role performance.

Survey results indicated that overall, 36.9 % of the sample (mean = 3.02, SD = 3.44) had an above threshold score (cut-off score ≥3) and met GHQ criteria for 'caseness'. Participants

who ranked high in the GHQ scores had high chronic and tension symptoms and more emotional problems as well as lower self-esteem.

Self-esteem was significantly predicted by the problem index variable. Thus the more adjustment problems, the poorer the self-esteem and the greater the psychological distress. Tension symptoms significantly correlated with problems of adaptation and changes in responsibilities. Thus the more problems encountered upon arrival increased the chance of having tension symptoms and consequently led to poorer emotional well-being.

The study group reported adjustment problems in several areas. Problems of separation from family members, English language, problems in raising children, lack of close friends, not having enough money, and conflict between Persian groups received major emphasis as the majority of the sample rated them either as very serious or somewhat serious problems.

Demographic variables were clearly correlated with employment variables. Six demographic variables showed one or more significant correlations with the mental health measures. These were, in order of importance: health status before migration, education (high school, tertiary), marital status (single, married), and being Baha'i. Women whose highest education was at high school level were more likely not to work in the area consistent with their qualifications.

Overall, problems of adaptation (problems encountered upon arrival), and the problem index (adjustment problems) showed fairly consistent associations with mental health measures. Self-esteem was negatively correlated with life satisfaction in Australia and positively correlated with the problem index.

The vast majority of respondents (93.5 %) were physically either always very healthy or reasonably healthy five years prior to migration. Health status was negatively correlated with the maintenance of former occupation a status. Better health before migration predicted a better chance of maintaining the former occupation. A small negative yet significant correlation was found between life satisfaction in Australia with family role performance and problems of adaptation and a medium positive correlation was found between life satisfaction and identification with Australia.

Women who had better marital relationships after migration had more satisfaction with their family role performance. Women who were married and had more children were significantly more likely to decrease their responsibilities after migration.

These results and the extent to which they are consistent with expectations and with the findings of previous research will be discussed in detail in chapter seven. Before this discussion, consideration of the qualitative data will be presented in the following chapter.
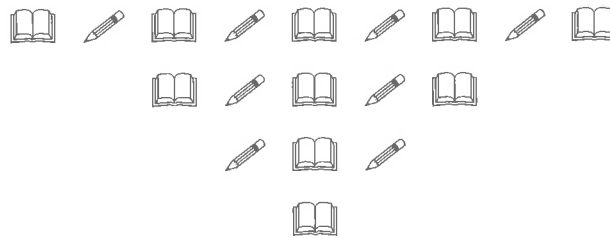
CHAPTER 6

FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

The following chapter reports the results of the focus group interviews as they pertain to the participants' attitudes and experiences of living in Australian society and the tensions and pressures that were generated for them in the new environment. Specifically, section one describes the background of each focus group conducted in this research. Section two presents characteristics of each focus group. Section three explains the framework of the focus group results. Section four explores the positive and negative changes and their impact in participants' lives due to migration. Section five deals specifically with the impact of migration on male domination in participants' families and measures the degree of changes in the family structure and the level of family support after migration. Section six examines the impact of migration on housework duties in the participants' households. Section seven relates to participants' level of life satisfaction while in Australia. Section eight considers participants' evaluation of migration. Section nine deals specifically with the types of coping strategies that participants adopted to overcome their adjustment problems.

6.1   Focus groups conducted in series

Each focus group has been labeled differently for the identification of participants' responses. The following is the labeling and summary background of each focus group:

6.1.1 Focus Groups in Victoria

- **Focus group A -** This group was the first focus group, which took place in Melbourne and consisted of 11 participants. It was a mixed age group (18-49 years), and was the largest focus group conducted for this research. The advantage of this group was the diversity of perceptions due to the size of the group. Nevertheless, the size did not afford as many opportunities to share ideas outside the key questions, because there was not sufficient time.

- **Focus group B -** This group was the second focus group conducted in Melbourne and consisted of 10 women. It was a mixed age group (35-60 years). One of the women was of English background and her husband was Persian. By definition she did not fit the criteria but she was interested in participating as she considered herself

as 'half Persian' because of her interest and familiarity with Persian culture and because her children self-categorize as Persian-Australian.

6.1.2. Focus Groups in South Australia

- **Focus group C -** This group was the first focus group, which took place in South Australia and consisted of six participants. This group consisted primarily of young women (Youngest 20 - oldest 25 years).

- **Focus group D -** This group was the second focus group conducted in South Australia and consisted of eight participants. This consisted of a mixed age group (youngest 28 - oldest 70 years).

6.1.3. Focus Groups in New South Wales

- **Focus group E -** This group was the first focus group, which took place in Sydney and consisted of four participants. This group was specified as a young age group, but only two women who were in the age range group attended and two others were of mature ages (youngest = 23 - oldest = 56 years). Nine women of the young age group had registered with this session, but due to the death of a prominent Persian community member who died in an accident the night before, this was a poorly attended session as the whole community was in shock and grieving.

- **Focus group F -** This group was the second focus group conducted in Sydney and consisted of four women of a mature age group (youngest 39 - oldest 46 years).

- This session also was influenced by the loss of the above mentioned community member. Eight women had registered with this session but only four attended.

- **Focus group G -** This group was the third focus group ran in Sydney and consisted of seven participants. This group was specified as a mixed age group (youngest = 36 - oldest = 56 years).

- **Focus group H -** This group was the last focus group ran in Sydney and consisted of eight participants. This group was specified as a mixed age group (youngest = 37 - oldest = 68 years).

The intention was to run the specific age group sessions (two of each age group), but due to the participants' requests most of the sessions were held as mixed age groups. Some women were not able to attend the specified age group sessions due to time and distance restrictions (e.g.: some elderly women wanted to participate with their daughters or vice versa).

6.2   Description of the focus groups

Each focus group has been labeled differently for the identification of participants' responses. Section 4.5.2 in the method chapter (Table 4.2) gives detail characteristics of each focus group.

The focus group discussions took between two to two and half hours for each group. The focus groups were held in an Iranian Community Center in each state, which belonged to Iranian organizations.

Each focus group varied in numbers from 4 to 11 people. The size was determined by the age of participants as young age groups were held with smaller numbers and mixed age groups comprised up to 11 people. The size of the focus groups was in the recommended range by Krueger. According to Krueger (1994, p.17), "focus groups are typically composed of 6 to 10 people, but the size can range from as few as 4 to as many as 12". The smaller groups of four to six participants afforded more opportunity to share ideas and insights. In the larger groups participants wanted to discuss other issues but there was not sufficient time. Nevertheless, the larger groups provided more diversity of opinions and attitudes.

Homogeneity of the focus groups was broadly defined, as participants were Persian-Australian migrant women who reside in target states. However, characteristics of participants in each group varied in age, number of children, marital status, length of residence in Australia and social economic status. According to de Lain (1997, p. 193), "homogeneity on a variety of characteristics is considered favourable to the operation of group dynamics in focus groups". Background information for each participant such as age, marital status, etc. was obtained through registration forms prior to focus group discussions.

The focus group interview was semi-structured. The 11 key questions for stimulating the discussion (Appendix D) were carefully designed to elicit the maximum amount of

information. The key questions stimulated the discussion, focused the interview and formed the heart of the group discussion.

6.3   The Framework for the Focus Group Results

The framework for the focus group results is composed of the key questions and the themes that emerged from the discussion. Two sets of problems were identified in the discussion: (1) common problems that were created by the new society such as employment issues, language issues and non recognition of their qualifications; (2) individual problems that were related to individual circumstances. Those women whose cultural beliefs were more different from the host culture had more individual problems. The following results emerged from all eight focus groups.

The first part of the discussion included questions about the positive and negative changes in the women's lives after migration and how these have impacted on participants' lives. These questions aimed to throw light on the stresses associated with migration and the psychological adjustment of the participants. The second part of the focus group discussion included questions about the participants' attitudes to the new environment and their migration. These questions measured the fulfillment of expectations and aspirations of the participants with the host culture. Data from these two sections overlapped considerably, therefore, both sections are analyzed and discussed together.

6.4   Positive and negative changes in participants' lives due to migration.

6.4.1 Positive changes

The following is a summary of the positive changes in participants' lives according to the focus group discussions:
- more equity and freedom for children and women
- opportunities for a better education for children
- mental growth, especially for women
- bigger vision of the world and life
- opportunity to know another culture and language
- looking at the Persian culture from another perspective

- Being able to be selective about different aspects of Persian culture (transform positive aspects and ignore negative aspects).

- More opportunities for women to know themselves, to see who they are, and to know their rights as equal to men.

6.4.1.1   Freedom

The most commonly mentioned positive aspect of migration was freedom. A few respondents mentioned similar aspects - peace, political and religious freedom, privacy as the most attractive things about life in Australia.

The majority of the participants in all the focus group discussions strongly nominated freedom as the greatest benefit of life in Australia and this was interpreted in a number of ways. Several participants mentioned personal freedom as well as social freedom and the opportunity to develop interpersonal skills (no 3, Group C; no 5, Group A; no 3, Group A; no 6, Group D; no 6, Group C). In many instances, freedom was understood as 'individual' freedom, as people can choose their course in life, to study, work and play in their preferred way (no 4, Group G; no 2, Group A; no.1, Group C; no 3, Group A). Freedom also was interpreted as freedom of speech (no 1, Group E; no 1, Group D). Since the Iranian revolution (1979) criticisms or complaints about the government resulted in almost certain punishment (prosecution or execution). Personal social liberties in Australia were also positively valued by a number of participants (no 6, Group D). This was of special value where it was compared with Iran where behavior was circumscribed by stricter social mores:

> Freedom in many aspects of my life is something that I appreciate living in Australia. I can go out without fear of what I need to wear and what I need to follow. I can watch any program that I want or to hear the world news without the censorship (no 4, Group G).

> I feel I am more counted here. In Iran if I wanted to wear a dress which was short with no sleeves I needed to get my husband's permission for that, as here I am the one who decides what to wear and what not to. Nevertheless, this freedom of choice makes me confused from time to time. For example, I love to wear shorts, but when I see myself as a person who has passed the young age I do not feel comfortable to wear what I like to and this makes me confused (no 2, Group A).

> Freedom of speech and freedom of choice is the biggest change in my life and this is the best gain of migration for me in Australia. (no 1, Group E).

I have the freedom of choice here. You put your own limits by yourself as in Iran the limit is set for you and this makes life hard for you (no 3, Group C).

I have a lot of freedom here, which I did not have if I was in Iran. I had not gone to the university and yet been able to practice my Bahaei's religion. I do have a lot of social freedom, which I did not have in Iran (no.1, Group C).

Having personal freedom and independence is the best change in my life after migration. In Iran, I was not given the opportunity to grow and fulfil my personal interest. My mum chose my school; my father chose my university and the course, which I took. Here, I can decide whatever I want to do. I think this has been a very positive step for me. (no 5, Group A).

In Iran we did not have a happy life because we had political problems... We live peacefully in Australia, we have the financial support and we can fulfil our children's demands (no 1, Group D).

Now, I can decide much more easily and live more freely and happily. For example, when I am deciding on something that it seems right to me I do not need to consider whether I am allowed by the society to do it or not. It is me who makes the decision and this makes life much easier for me (no 3, Group A).

The biggest advantage for me is the opportunity to experience some of the things that we were not allowed to experience in Iran. I feel that I am out of the cage and this allows me to learn what is going on around the world (no 6, Group D).

I believe I have become more mature with respect to how to utilize the freedom and choices to my own advantage (no 6, Group C).

Of the 42 participants who expressed freedom as one of the greatest benefits in Australia after migration, some tended to be more conservative in their perceptions and expressed doubts about its positive impact on their behavior. Such concern is perhaps indicative of the difficulty which some participants experienced in coming to terms with the effect of freedom on their everyday lives. This is particularly evident in the statement of participant no. 1, Group C:

Freedom is a positive aspect of migration but we, as Persian young women need to be very careful of not abusing it. Sometimes freedom is ruling us and we get confused about the context of freedom. We need self-control by limiting ourselves over excessive freedom especially in terms of sexual freedom. We should set our own boundaries for not being trapped in immoral situations because we might feel that as long as it is a free country we are allowed to do whatever we wish and that is wrong (no 1, Group C).

The following group of participants highlighted specifically the freedom of choice and ways of living in Australia as the great benefit of migration. According to some participants (no 2 Group A, no 7, Group A, no1, Group F, no 6, Group C) cultural attitudes towards some jobs

in the Persian society and some obligations for women in the Persian society put restrictions on women and their families. These restrictions prevented them from having a happy life. They highly valued the freedom of choice in Australia where they can choose the life style that they desire.

> I had much preferred not to work in Iran due to the obligations that I had for what to wear. I could see the work environment as a prison for me and as a place that I could not develop my skills. I decided to work from home but that was not an easy job. I was a fashion designer and my husband was not happy for me to work from home due to the cultural attitudes towards women in the fashion industry. In Australia I am able to work from home without having major problems (no 2, Group A).

> The only positive change in life after migration for me is that of my children having the freedom of choice for their future. They can get any job that they like; yet to be happy and feel happy with whom they are. In Australia you can be a cleaner during the day and in the evening you go home and you can be as happy as everyone can, as in Iran, you might be a doctor and yet not be happy when you go home because you might have chosen the field not because you like it but because it is a highly respected field in the society. I think this is the only advantage of migration for me (no 7, Group A).

> Although migration has caused me a lot of problems, I feel happy here despite all the hardships. I have lost my husband and I am taking care of my children. As a single parent I can decide freely and independently in Australia, whereas in Iran my brother in law needed to be consulted for any decisions concerning my children, considering that I do not believe in him. I think life is easier in Australia for a single woman (no1, Group F).

A significant number of participants were quite willing to discuss this aspect of migration and its advantages as long as the time allowed. Many were keen to cite specific examples from other family members or friends to support their views in respect to freedom and its value in life. Nonetheless most participants gave an example based on their past or present experience of having freedom now or the problems of not having it before migration. Many participants believed that having freedom after migration has had a positive impact on their quality of life.

6.4.1.2　Opportunities for a better education

Education has always been highly valued in Persian society. It is one of the stepping stones to attaining better opportunities and higher socioeconomic status in Persian society. It is also the best thing that parents believe they can give to their children to improve their chances for a better life. This goal reflects Persian values that family and children are first priorities.

The educational opportunities in Australia for women and/or their children was greatly valued by 46 (79.3 %) participants. This theme was strongly emphasized in most focus group discussions. In the young focus group (group C in SA, the only young focus group in the study) discussion, the greater possibilities of obtaining tertiary education in Australia was mentioned by all the participants as one of the great advantages of migration. Some participants mentioned this advantage as the chief reason and the single motivation for migrating to Australia (no 2, Group F). It was interesting to observe that for many parents rather than achieving any individual benefit, emigration was primarily for the benefit of the family. Many women viewed their children's education as an "investment" in their children's future. Some Persian women explained that there were limited chances for their children to obtain university education if they remained in Iran (no 1, Group A; no 3, Group D). Higher education for their children was the top priority and the objective of working hard so that their children's future could be secured. With such objectives in mind, they tolerated the stress and the problems of the new country (no 1, Group A).

According to participant no 3, Group D, despite the gender opportunities for higher education, parents need to be more careful of what their children are taught in the Australian education system and have more control over the type of education children are given, particularly in respect to sex education. For some participants (no 2, Group F; no 1, Group A) as well as the sacrifice involved in making the move and to pave the way for their children, there was a sense of dissatisfaction with their own life. This is evident in the extracts from participant no 2, Group F; and no 1, Group A below. These participants had managed to strike such a balance only because of the existence of love and a strong family bond:

> I do not see the migration for me as a positive step, because since my arrival I have had lots of problems. The only thing that prevents me going back is my daughter's future education. I am a Bahaei and my husband is a Muslim. His family for our marriage always has put him down. I want my children to have the highest education level just to prove it to my husband's family that our children have been successful in life. If it were not for my daughter, I would have gone home tomorrow (no 2, Group F).

> The most important thing is the opportunity for my children's education. If we were in Iran, there would be no guarantee for my children to have this much success. Migration has only been positive for my children not for us. My husband is nobody here and I am worse than he is (no 1, Group A).

> Better opportunities for our children's education, better nutrition and learning English are the positive changes in my life. We have the chance to learn the English language and introduce our culture to other people in English. I think this is very positive (no 2, Group D).

> In Iran we did not have a fair education system. If you are rich you can afford a better education for your children, if not, it is your bad luck. The education system is more equally available to people in Australia. One point that we to consider here, that is, we need to control in what our children are learning in Australian education system. For example, sex education is something that we need to control for our kids and choose whether we want our children to learn or not, or go camping (no 3, Group D).

There were striking similarities in the reasons given by a large number of participants for migration to Australia. Those who had children considered their children's education, the security and the future of their offspring as the main consideration for the decision to emigrate. The greater possibilities of obtaining tertiary education, and the fear that their children would have to grow under Islamic rules were the primary motivations for making the move. It was especially so for the families of those with a Baha'i background who had many restrictions for entering the higher education system in Iran. It was interesting to observe that young Persian women in this study held strong aspirations to advance professionally. This might be due to the ideological values held in the Persian culture which stress success and achievement and the young women have accepted and internalized these values. Education was so important that it can be regarded as a core value for this group of respondents. Tertiary education was regarded as one of the most important factors that can bring about this success. " A better education means a better future". This again can be related to the high social value associated with education and learning in Persian culture.

6.4.1.3   Mental growth

Mental growth was one of the positive changes after migration that was emphasized strongly in almost every focus group. Some participants valued mental growth as a result of negative changes due to migration. They believed these negative changes had a negative impact on their lives but they valued the mental growth that resulted from this (no 10, Group B; no 3, Group A). Some participants (no 5, Group C; no 2 Group C; no 2, Group G; no 7, Group A) had independence and more responsibility in Australia and this gave them maturity that they valued very highly. However, the loss of family was especially difficult for young adult migrants who lacked family support in the new environment. The lack of parental guidance in

the new environment made some women feel overwhelmed (no 3, group A), especially for those women who needed to take full responsibility for the family without receiving any extended family support (no 2, Group G).

> One of the positive changes for me, I think I mentally grew so quickly. I was seventeen when I came out of Iran. I was by my own and I needed to start from zero and plan everything by myself. I think this helped me to grow quicker and in my teenage years I needed to be mature. Nevertheless, this maturity has had a negative effect on me, I believe. It has made me a self-centered and ego-involved person and now I can see its impact on my family (no 3, group A).

> I think Persian youth in Australia are more mature and responsible than their country fellows who live in Iran. They do not need and do not want to take any responsibility till they are married (no 2, Group C).

> In Iran, although I was financially independent, I was emotionally and socially very dependent on my family, as after migration, I feel that, I do exist somehow and I can contribute to my family's decision and my vote is counted. This is very important. In Iran I did not dare to object because I could see other relatives and friends are the same and have the same problems, as in here I can have my say (no 7, Group A).

> Changes after migration have resulted in my better self-image. I am more confident in myself and more independent. I see my future to be brighter. I am more open-minded and a happier person (no 5, Group C).

> I am here to support the situation. I have become much stronger to keep the family together. You can accept that life here is not the same with life in Iran or Europe. You become quiet but you need to fight for your rights here (no 10, Group B).

> I have become more open minded. There are a lot of opportunities here, negative and positive. If you want to be more positive, the opportunity is there and you just need to take it. In Iran you need to rely on others but here you can be by your own and yet be successful. This might be due to our loneliness. We have no other choice. Migration has forced me to be more independent. In fact, I have no one to help me and my responsibility has increased overall. I need to reply to many letters that I receive from different organizations and this encourages me to become more socially active and be more responsible (no 2, Group G).

> Coming to Australia has given me the opportunity to know myself and to feel myself as a person and as a woman. In Iran I could not see myself as someone who has a lot of potential and abilities (no 2, Group A).

> In Australia I am looking at life from a much larger perspective. I have been exposed to more cultures and civilization and my cultural knowledge has improved (no 10, Group A).

> Migration has given me the opportunity to develop my mental ability. If I was in Iran I do not think that I could have had that much growth. I am a bilingual person now as if I was in Iran it had not happened (no 3, Group A).

Some participants expressed that the hardships they have been through as a result of migration have made them strong, responsible and independent. They felt that although migration has had negative consequences, it has also had positive outcomes, as they are stronger persons. For example, participant no 8, Group D explained that this hardship has enriched her quality of life after migration. For participant no 6, Group D her loneliness and the lack of support from her husband put extra pressure on her to the extent that it made her a very tough and strong person. This led her to develop interpersonal skills that she valued highly.

> Migration has had a lot of negative impacts on me mentally and physically. I was in a foreign country and knew nobody. My husband was the only one who could support me and he did not and this was very hard. I needed to be very strong to go through all the hardships by my own and yet to be a good mother for my daughter. I think all of that made me a very tough and strong person, which I give a lot of credit to myself. If I was in Iran I would not have had the chance to develop my strength to this extent (no 6, Group D).

> I think the migration hardships have given more meaning to my life. Now I see my life differently. I value the quality of my life more than anything else does. Consequently my personal and family life is much better than before (no 8, Group D).

6.4.1.4   Living close to the children

After migration many Persian women have experienced a process of cultural separation, especially the loss of social supports, such as friends, peers, family, as well as the loss of recreational and vocational opportunities. On the one hand, the loss of familiar environmental and social support networks made life more difficult for some Persian women who were working and had a very active role in their society before migration. On the other hand, family is a very important form of social support in the Persian culture and provides a framework of mutual inter-dependence through mutual support of family members. In the Persian culture interpersonal relationships are very strong and family members are mutually close both physically and emotionally. "For the sake of the children we came here" was a common statement that was mentioned by many of the participants who were in the mature or old age group (no 6, Group B; no 4, Group E; no 7, Group B). The excess of sexual freedom and different norms in the new environment made participants no 1, Group H; no 4, Group E;

and no 4, Group E, feel frustrated and annoyed when going out from the home environment to the social environment. The following are some examples of how women valued the company of their children and 'tolerated' the unpleasant situation for the sake of being close to them:

> The only positive change for me was to join my children after a few years. This was very valuable and gave me peace of mind. By coming to Australia I lost my job and I should say, I lost my identity and this was very hard for a person who was very active, respected and counted in her own country. This was a high cost for me to lose all of my friends, my job, financial independence, and other benefits that I was getting from my own society. Considering all of that I am still very happy because I live close to my children (no 6, Group B).

> Compared with my situation in Iran I feel happy now because my children are living here. I am not happy with the society here, because I am a religious person and many things are against my beliefs but I can bear them as long as I am with my children (no 1, Group H).

> The only advantage of migration for me is to live close to my children. Otherwise the rest of it is negative. Especially seeing Australian youth behavior and excess freedom here is very annoying. I hate going out and seeing some of their sexual behavior in the street, which is shameful. This has made me very isolated from the society because I do not like to go out. This has made me emotionally sick and I am on medication for my depression. If it was not for my children I could not stay here for a minute (no 4, Group E).

> In my view Australian society is very much different from Iran to the extent that most of the time I feel I can not tolerate the society anymore. I do not know whether it is because of my age or there is any other reason or it might be due to my granddaughters' behaviors with their mum and this is very upsetting. The only positive point for me is that I live close to my children (no 4, Group E).

> The only reason that we migrated to Australia was for the sake of our children. It was hard for me and my husband to be dependent on our children due to the language problem but we were able to overcome this problem and now we are somehow independent. It is very pleasing to see my children having a happy and successful life here and this makes it easy for me to tolerate the isolation and loneliness (no 7, Group B).

These examples draw the attention to the inter-dependence and sense of isolation of many Persian families in Australia which undoubtedly fosters an ecology conducive of family values and cultural maintenance. Nonetheless the personality of the individual, the religious status, and their interpersonal relationships with family members also play major factors in maintaining family values.

6.4.1.5   Closer relationships with family members

Some participants emphasized collectivist family values and the concept of the extended family. The absence of the extended family in Australia was evident for participants no.10 Group A; no 3, Group E, and led them to have closer relationships as a nuclear family to fill the gap of the lack of extended family support. Nevertheless, the new generation may question the benefit of having extended family relationships and rate it negatively in respect to the benefits of the nuclear family. Respondent no 1, Group C, best expressed this concern. Participants' no 4, Group C and no 6, Group C comments are good examples of strong ties of family solidarity. The family was able to get closer and 'face life as a united group' during the hardship period caused by migration. Respondent no 3, Group C, felt an obligation to her family and followed what her parents wanted her to do despite what she believed. This affected her relationship with her family but never affected her family bond and did not nurture her desire for independence. She kept her loyalty and association with the family till her family gave up some of the traditional values and made the situation easier for her. Participant no. 1 Group C stressed that her Persian identity was reinforced and strengthened when she got the opportunity to revisit and evaluate different aspects of Persian culture and consequently was more selective of cultural values. She positively valued her culture and the family as the milieu through which traditions are transmitted across generations. Her feeling of being Persian was strongest when surrounded by her family as a unit. Her expression symbolized her cultural values and pride in her family. Participant no 4, Group C developed her independence by making decisions while living with her parents but at the same time maintained her unity with the family by holding collectivist values. This resulted in her having a closer relationship with her family. The decision to migrate involved a big sacrifice by some parents for the sake of their children. Some children were aware of this sacrifice and highly appreciated their parents for doing that for them. Participant no 5, Group C is a classic example as this led her to a closer relationship with her parents, even though, her loyalty to her parents' ideological values also posed challenges.

> I have a much closer relationship with my husband after migration mainly because we do not have any relatives here and this made us more close (no 10, Group A).

> Overall, I feel closer to my parents because we have been through so many tough times together (no 4, group C).

> Sometimes we have had arguments because they were not happy with certain things that I did, most importantly it has made me realize that how much my

parents, especially my dad, loves us because he gave up his job, house and everything else, just because of his children. This has made me feel as though I owe everything I have to him. Perhaps for this reason, I always listen to everything he says, even if this ends up hurting me very much (no 5, Group C).

We have become much closer as a family as we have gone through very similar experiences (no 6, Group C).

I have a much closer relationship with my family. I think if we were in Iran, my parents were too busy with other relatives and did not have enough time to spend with us, as here we have not many relatives and spend more time together. When I compare my parents with my aunt or uncle who live in Iran, I realize that my parents are much closer to their children than my uncle and aunt (no 1, Group C).

In the first few years after migration my relations with my parents was not so great mainly because they wanted me to do certain things which I did not want to. Although I did what I was told to do, I was not happy with the way my relationship was going with my parents. Gradually they became more open-minded and this made us very close and I am very close to my parents now especially to my mum (no 3, Group C).

Migration has made me more independent, more conscious in making decisions, and free to feel that I can achieve anything if I set my mind on it. These changes have also brought me closer to my family members (no 4, Group C).

When we came here I was fifteen. Soon after I became very confused about my culture, because when you see a new culture and many different things you do not know which one to choose and follow. I realized that now I can see my culture much better and clearer and see which aspects are positive and which are not. This made me closer to my parents as I needed their support. My parents also were concerned about me because there were many negative things in Australian culture that they did not want me to follow and they were trying hard to get closer to me and make me feel happy also. As a result I felt that I am much closer to my parents than before and this is wonderful (no 1, Group C).

Positive and negative changes in my life after migration caused me to be more close to my husband and our two sons. I think because of this close relationship I have more responsibility now than before. I have occupied most of my time with work and study which is very good (no 9, Group A).

Since we migrated to Australia my husband has become very kind and caring. He knows that I came here and left my family behind just because of him. He understands and wants to be very close to me. I should say, migration has had a positive impact on our relationship and has made us very close (no 3, Group E).

Collectivist family values was a common thread in the comments of some participants. The influence of the home was dominant for the intergenerational transmission of Persian culture. The home was the domain for establishing and internalizing Persian cultural values. The family was the domain in which individuals internalized a pride in their culture and its values

fostering a confident sense of identity. Younger participants also depended on the family for the maintenance of collectivist values.

6.4.1.6   Parents become more protective

One of the effects of migration on family relationships which was discussed in the young age focus group, was the protective attitude of parents on children. The participants saw this as both positive and negative. In Iran parents feel that because children are raised within the Persian culture which is fully accepted and respected by them, there is no hostility towards the norms of the society as there is no cultural conflict between the family and the society. Consequently, children are more free and less questioned by their parents as to where they go and what they do when they want to participate in social activities and or socialize with their friends. In contrast, many Persian parents who live in Australia have negative attitudes towards Australian culture and are concerned that the society has a negative impact on their children. This attitude makes them more protective and more conscious of what their children are doing while socializing with other friends. Furthermore, because most Persian families migrated to Australia for their children's future, they see migration as an 'investment' in their children for a better future and this makes them even more attached to their children. Some feel that they are disconnected and deprived from all of the happiness and the joy that they had in the past, and the only thing that now they are connected with, is their children. Parents try hard to maintain this connection, because they think if they lose this connection they feel they have lost everything with no positive outcome in their investments. As a result they become more protective.

Participant no 1, Group C rated this protection positively and participants no 5, Group C and no 4, Group C rated this protection negatively. Participant no1, Group C revealed a deep understanding of her parents' perspective and was able to see the reasons behind their protection. She felt a close affinity with her parents as she had internalized Persian cultural values in maintaining her ethnic culture in Australia. Participant no 5, Group C could not accept the Persian value of collectivism. Participant no 4, Group C had assimilationist attitudes whereas her parents wanted her to maintain her Persian cultural values. She preferred to be a member of the dominant group but her parents wanted her to stay as a member of their cultural group. Her statement was a good illustration of the feelings and problems she was facing in her situation.

> Parents become very sensitive to their teenage children's behavior and feel more responsible to protect them from danger. I do not blame them because they love their children, they become over protective (no 1, Group C).

> The older generation playing such an important role in your life and controlling your life so much. This does not give me as much freedom as I want and will always stop me from being the person that I want to be (no 5, Group C).

> It is very disturbing that not knowing exactly where I stand i.e. am I allowed to do things other Australian girls do? Will I always be different from them? (No 4, Group C).

Those young Persian women whose values were consistent with those of their parents' cultural values viewed their parents control positively. In contrast, those who held assimilationist and individualist values rated their parents' protection negatively and felt it interfered with their personal development.

6.4.1.7   Being bicultural

The questionnaire utilized in the quantitative survey attempted to investigate whether participants identified themselves as 'minority ethnic', 'Australians' or 'ethnic-Australians'. The identity of the respondents in the focus group discussion was investigated through a few related questions which were designed to explore participants' sense of identity. However, this was not dealt with in great depth during discussions.

Only a few participants gave a brief description of their sense of self-identity. There were cases when participants identified themselves as of dual identity. Participant no 3, Group D, who was a mature age woman identified herself as a 'bicultural person' and rated her plural identity as a positive change in her life. For participant no 1, Group E, who was from a mature age group, exposure to both cultures did not have a positive outcome. She was very confused about where she stands in the new society. She felt she had lost her sense of belonging to her ethnic origin as well as not being able to locate herself in the world of a new culture. Before her first visit to Iran she clearly identified herself with her ethnic homeland but when she visited Iran after six years, she recognized that her own sense of identity was rather different from the way her friends and relatives identified her. This left a gap between her and her people with whom she loved to be associated.

One of the positive changes for me is the opportunity of questioning my culture and being a bicultural person. I have been able to select the positive aspects of my culture and not to practice the negative aspects of my culture. This opportunity does not exist when you are living in Iran. You need to accept all aspects of your culture and put them in practice whereas in Australia you can be selective (no 3, Group D).

I think living in two cultures is a bad thing. Sometimes I feel I belong nowhere. When we migrated to Australia, I was getting homesick very often and used to miss my country, friends and relatives. I was prepared to go back to Iran to live and wear the hijab. When I visited Iran after six years of migration I found out that I do not belong there anymore because my friends and relatives were not the same and we could not understand each other. This was very hard for me, as I could not communicate very well with them. I felt that I can not live in Iran anymore and Australia is a better place for me. When we returned to Australia I had a very good feeling but now very often I do feel that I do not belong in Australian society and I am not Australian and this is very depressing (no 1, Group E).

The experiences of participant no 1, Group E, have been referred to by Burger Prins as "uprooting depression" (Verdonk, 1979) which is the result of role confusion and psychosocial disorientation. Being uprooted from one's culture and having difficulty establishing roots in the new culture are central to this experience. The experience of this participant reveals that a regular visit to the mother country has an important influence on the migrant's identity. These visits can be considered a determinant factor in the development of social identity for migrants.

6.4.1.8   Financial improvement

There was little discussion in the focus groups relating to the financial benefits of migration as not many participants talked about this aspect of migration. Only two participants experienced financial improvement in their life after migration. The benefits of the Australian social welfare system was seen as an advantage of migration by participant no 5, Group D. The Australian welfare system was rated positively by participant no 5, Group G because she compared her financial stability after migration with her hard life before migration due to the loss of possessions caused by the Iranian revolution.

There are more financial advantages in the new society. More people are in the middle class. There is more social welfare for people here (no 5, Group D).

We have better financial stability after migration because we almost lost everything before we migrated (no 5, Group G).

The lack of spontaneous positive comments for this aspect of migration might be due to the fact that participants may have not reached the same socio-economic status that they had attained prior to migration. Alternatively, it is possible that materialistic attainments were of least importance when participants decided to migrate. Perhaps participants valued mainly the non monetary aspects of migration.

6.4.2 Negative changes and their impact on participants' lives

The following include the negative consequences of migration on participants' lives according to the focus group discussions:

- Loneliness
- Unemployment and its consequences
- Financial hardships
- Impact on children
- Development of mental health problems
- Women's role and their quality of life after migration
- Impact on family relationships

6.4.2.1 Loneliness

Loneliness, a feeling of being cut off or separated from others, has been defined as a subjective state reflecting the person's assessment of the quality and quantity of relationships (Jones et.al 1984) or, an unpleasant feeling resulting from a discrepancy between actual and desired social contact. At the opposite pole are feelings of belonging such as feeling loved and being wanted.

Loneliness (missing family members and their own culture) was one of the negative consequences of migration that respondents emphasized strongly in all the focus group discussions. Close family ties can be regarded as the most important aspect of social relations in Persian culture. It is vitally important for a Persian woman to be considered as part of her family. Separations from the family had placed enormous emotional stress on some of the participants. Coping with an unfamiliar environment and the difficulties of adjustment were compounded by the absence of extended family and relatives. For some Persian women, coming to Australia meant the loss of a support network as well as moving into a foreign

culture with an alien language and religious beliefs. This was the case for participant no 5, Group H, for whom separation from family and friends, not knowing the culture, the language and other aspects of the new society made her depressed. She found her situation difficult to tolerate when she compared her life in Australia with her situation in Iran.

There is a common belief in Persian culture that the family should resolve family problems privately, without outside interference. The elderly play a major role in resolving family conflicts in Persian culture. Many Persian women do not have extended family support in Australia and therefore are deprived of this source of support in a family conflict situation. Respondents no 1, Group B, and no 6, Group D are clear examples of this kind. The lack of extended family support in participant's no 1, Group B, life has increased her family conflict, leaving her with dissatisfaction with life after migration. Participant no 9, Group A, who had the full respect and support from the society in her homeland due to her father's political situation found life rather difficult in the new society. She expressed her strong feeling and pride of being Persian and her disappointment and frustration with not being able to gain the same level of social standing after migration. She blamed migration for not allowing her to develop her social skills in her teenage years, the time when she migrated. Participant no.1, Group A, suffered greatly from the lack of extended family support and the loneliness which caused her a lot of emotional problems in the new milieu. She indicated how the mainstream culture has influenced her activities and attitudes. Nonetheless, she identified herself strongly with her Persian ethnic group as she preferred to identify with her own cultural heritage so much so that she wished she had never migrated to Australia and experienced the new culture. She felt it was too late to decide to return home. However, her children were happy with the transition and welcomed the exposure to the mainstream dominant culture. This example describes the differences existing between two different generations with respect to the perceived influence which the mainstream culture has on their everyday actions and attitudes. Participant no. 4, Group A not only missed the extended family support at an individual level, but also the fact that her children were also deprived of this support. However, her positive approach to the problem prevented this from impacting on her and her everyday life negatively.

In some instances the pressure which came from family members living in Iran was seen as an extra burden on a migrant woman that does not permit a smooth transition. This was one of the issues that made the situation even more difficult for participant no 2, Group H, to adjust

to the new environment as she expressed that she was 'like a ball to be pulled in many different directions'.

> The single biggest problem for me after migration is the loneliness. Being lonely in a foreign country is much more painful than being lonely in your own country because at least you are familiar with the society and the culture. Here everything is strange to me, people, culture, country, custom, language and any other things that you can think of (no 5, Group H)

> A respected elderly in your family plays a major role in your life and can reduce your family problems. One of the major difficulties that I have faced after migration is my loneliness and lack of a respected elder person in my life to rely on when I have family problems. I need to discuss my family issues with some one who can help me and talk to my husband about our family issues. Due to this lack, I have had no other option but to argue with my husband and this has caused some further damage to our relationship. My biggest problem is my loneliness and lack of family support. Very often I feel that I have had everything in Iran and do not have anything here (no 1, Group B).

> One of the most negative changes for me is being away from my family and relatives. Especially when I have problems with my husband makes it even harder because I do not have anyone to talk to. My husband is only thinking about him and his parents (no 6, Group D).

> One of the biggest problems for me after migration is being lonely. In Iran because of my father's political situation I was the center of attention and I was very pleased with it and this made me a dependent child to my family and my society. After migration I am nobody and very lonely here. I feel I have walked from childhood to adulthood overnight and there has not been any smooth transition for me (no 9, Group A).

> I do not have my mum, my sister and any other relatives here. This has been very hard and has caused a lot of emotional problems for me as a woman who has no one here. Even this loneliness has affected my marital relationship. Very often I wish we had not come to Australia. It was much better if we hadn't, we had not experienced Australian lifestyle. This is like when have you not eaten a new food you do not know the taste of it, but when you try it, it is difficult to stick to your own food even though yours is very delicious. Now it is too late to go back and repeat those good memories, because children are happy here and it is only me and my husband who are not (no 1, Group A).

> Being away from my family is very hard for me. I love my kids to be able to see my family but it is not possible. Although this is a problem but I try not to see it as a problem to reduce my tension in the family. I try to reduce my sorrow by controlling my emotions (no 4, Group A).

> One of the migration issues is that the person is like a ball to be pulled in many different directions and this makes it more difficult for a migrant to cope. For example, in my case, my brothers and sisters keep calling me and asking me to go back to Iran because they miss me a lot and this makes me more sad and vulnerable (no 2, Group H).

Lack of trust within the Persian community in Australia due to some political, social and in particular migration related issues is of major concern. This issue seemed to have a great impact on participants' personal primary social system. Some participants had their extended family in Australia and yet felt lonely. Participant no. 6, Group A, was a clear example of this kind. This impact was so great that it prevented her from maintaining the intimate relationship with her sister as well as establishing a close relationship with other members of her cultural group. Participant no. 1, Group A, had an interesting approach to overcoming her loneliness. She saw herself as her own intimate friend. For some participants, irrespective of their social interactions with the mainstream group and despite being educated in the Australian education system, their only close friends were of Persian cultural background. As participant no.3, Group C, pointed out, as a young Persian woman living eleven years in Australia, she felt more close and comfortable with her Persian friends than Australian friends despite the fact that there were very few Persian girls of her age. Indeed, the experience of growing up in communities where Persian-speakers are few appears to have not affected the pattern of ethno-specific friendships of this Persian young woman in her primary social systems. Nonetheless, cultural issues such as parental attitudes and cultural identity can be considered as important deciding factors in her choice of friends.

Participant no 8, Group G, who viewed her cultural identity as only Persian elaborated on the level of frustration she experienced in her life after migration. On the one hand, she did not want to acculturate after thirteen years due to the love of her homeland and different cultural values. On the other hand, she was not able to associate with relatives and friends in Iran, due to different points of view. Her comments exhibited the strongest attachment to Persian cultural values, as her desire was so great that she advocated limited socialization with Australian culture. Her approach to the host culture indicate that she is experiencing a high level of emotional problems caused by rejecting the host culture totally and not getting the full support from the group that she belongs to.

> Loneliness is one of the problems that I believe all Persian women have it regardless of having their mothers and sisters here or not. For example, I have my sister living here in Australia but I still feel lonely to the extent in which sometimes I prefer talking to a bird rather than to my sister. Lack of trust is the major cause of our loneliness. Iranian Association of Victoria had a survey last year to see to what extent Persian families make friends with Australians. They could not find more than a handful of them to have two or three Australian friends. We can not accept them as our close friends and so do them, therefore, we need to find close friends among our community and this is also hard (no 6, Group A).

> One of the methods that I use for overcoming my loneliness is that is talking to myself with a loud voice as I am talking to someone. In fact I am friend with myself and it helps. Sometimes when I am talking to myself with a loud voice my husband thinks that I am talking to someone and becomes suspicious. When you get a friend and trust her, she revenges you. Then it is better to be with yourself. What I do to release my tension caused by loneliness is that I either write my problems down and then tear it or I drive till I reach a very quite spot and then scream as much as I can and talk with a very loud voice and then cry. After doing that I feel much better and relieved (no 1, Group A).

> I can not be happy and comfortable with my Australian friends. I mean, on the one hand I can not be close to them as I am with my Iranian friends because my Iranian friends can better understand my feelings, on the other, there are not many Iranian girls of my age to allow me to select many good friends. I feel I am very much different from my Australian friends. I think Persian as well as Australian as they think only Australian and this makes our gap widen and not having the same point of views. Therefore I do not feel comfortable with them. This is my major problem. Please do not get me wrong. I have lived in Australia for 11 years and I have been able to accommodate both cultures in my heart. I am a bicultural person and I am proud of my Persian identity. I feel very happy to be bicultural (no3, Group C).

> I think that I am Persian and I belong to my home country. The only thing that keeps me going here is living with my memories that I have from Iran. I have lived here for thirteen years but I do not feel that I belong here. Unfortunately the gap between me and my relatives who live in Iran is much wider now. I feel I am on the air and do not belong here nor accepted there. That is my situation a lonely person who does not know what to do (no 8, Group G).

Loneliness has had an impact on other family members who may not have been suffering from loneliness themselves. For example, children might act as an emotional support agent for their mothers and this was particularly so for participant no 1, Group E.

> My mum's mental and physical health is a major problem. I have a lot of family responsibilities because she is depressed and this has been caused by migration. I need to take care of her as if I am her mum. She has some problems with her friends and I need to act as a mediator between them. I feel I am more helping her than she should do for me. I know that the source of her problem is our migration. After migration she became very lonely and homesick and now she is suffering from the depression. If my father had supported her, she would not have felt lonely and definitely her case was different. I feel sorry for myself too, because she can not fulfill her role as a mother but at the moment her depression and her loneliness is my main problem. I do my best to take care of myself too. I have seen a psychologist and I am doing psychotherapy. I feel a bit better now (no 1, Group E).

These statements would indicate that some women among the present group of participants have a strong sense of identification with their Persian cultural heritage. The difficulty these migrant women were facing was not the loss of material belongings but mainly the loss of

connections with the homeland and in the loss of relationships, in particular, the nuclear and extended family. For these women extra energies and coping strategies were needed to cope with family separation and loneliness. However, with their internal strengths, and resources, some women were coping with their loneliness quite well. Some tolerated their loneliness by rationalizing that, by staying in Australia they provided better opportunities for their children.

6.4.2.2 Unemployment and its impact

Persian migrants mainly left their country of origin because of a lack of freedom, the desire for better life chances and in general to have a happier life. Unemployment was the most severe negative impact of migration experienced by some participants. The impact of migration on professional working women was quite different. Their role shifted from being a working woman to a homemaker. Previous opportunities to express abilities and talents in work did not exist in Australia and this posed a threat to their self-esteem. In Persian culture employment is a major part of a person's life regardless of age. Persian people experience great enjoyment from work as they believe work is like blood in the body *'johare badan'*. Being a 'workaholic' is very common among Persian people especially for men. The comments supplied by participant no 2, Group H, who worked for 30 years and participant no 4, Group H, who worked for 22 years below clearly show the lack of social activities planned for, after their retirement.

Unemployment has not only had a major impact on financial independence for some Persian women, but it has had a severe effect on their mental health due to not getting the chance to use their skills and expertise. These women felt that their professional aspirations were not satisfied in the new country. Some of these women who were highly qualified and had high aspirations were shocked when they found that their expertise was not valued or recognised in Australia. Their struggle with professional, economic and social barriers led some to be depressed and to experience mental health problems. Participants no 2, Group H; no 5, Group H; no 7, Group A; and no 4, Group H, were some examples in this study group.

One of the major problems that educated migrants face is that often the receiving country does not provide them with sufficient opportunities to use their skills and expertise. Lack of opportunities for highly educated and skilled migrants can be considered a major concern. One of the concerning issues in the new system is an assumption that migrants are not keen to

adjust themselves to the new system. It does not change the fact that migrants in many cases need assistance as they would be disadvantaged in comparison with English native speakers, Australian born and the locally experienced workers. This issue was one of the key points of the discussion in some focus groups. Some participants such as no 2, Group H; no 7, Group A; and no 4, Group H, who had personal experience, highlighted the severity of the issue for skilled Persian women in the study group.

By being the founder of two private schools and having had teaching experience for many years, if I am interested in teaching I should not be expected and offered to start from scratch. The system does not consider my experiences what so ever. I do not say that I do not need to update or upgrade my skills to fit the new system. I think it is very fair if they help me to familiarize myself with the new system and integrate my skills with the new environment (no 2, Group H).

I think unemployment is the major source of stress after migration. If migrants are in the workforce they do not have enough time to think about other issues in their life. I do not mean key positions. They need to feel useful for the new society, and therefore they get enjoyment out of it (no 5, Group H).

Unemployment is our biggest problem after migration because we can not use our skills and expertise. This has affected my family to a great extent. Although I have tried so hard to minimize its affect, it is disturbing me so much. I was working for 22 years and was very active and now I should stay at home. This is like a torture for me and has made me vulnerable and depressed and I have nothing else to fulfill. Of course, I can control my emotions but its affects are there (no 4, Group H).

I am a clinical nurse and have worked in Iran for twelve years. Before migration I was told because I am a nurse I should not have any problem finding a job in my field. I am here for five years, and still unemployed. I have passed the test and I am a qualified nurse (no 7, Group A).

I think we need to learn how to enjoy our life if we are not working. For example, I do not know what I can do to occupy my time while I am unemployed. I think this is deeply rooted in our cultural background. If I do not work what else can I do? Which music class should I attend? Where should I go to enjoy myself? What sort of enjoyment do I mean? I think the type of enjoyment in Australian culture is very much different to ours. We have been taught in Iran to work very hard from the day you can work till the day you die, unlike here that leisure and enjoyment is a major part of your life... Migration changes people's life completely specially those who have had higher status in their own country by holding managerial positions. By not getting a job in your field and at your level, there is no opportunity for you to use your skills and potentials in the new environment. This has been the case for me and this is my biggest problem. No one knows me for who I am as I do not have much contact with many people. In fact, all of the experiences and skills that I have gained in my entire life are useless and wasted here and this is very painful for me. In Iran I was the most respected woman in the family and among friends but sadly I am nobody here. This is not a joke. This has made me very depressed. In Iran I was a very successful director, innovator, and the founder and the

principal of two big high schools. And now I can say, I have no opportunity to work and I have no social standing. All of these put a lot of pressure on me. I am under medical treatment because I am diagnosed with severe depression. I know this has been caused by loss of my status and not working...In many cases, the society puts a lot of pressure on you by ignoring your skills and expertise. For example, I have worked for 30 years and have been the school principal for sixteen years, but here I have been asked to go and work as a teacher's assistant. You can see that thirty years experience is not counted at all. Why? Because they do not know your culture and the quality of your experience. As long as you are from the Middle East, your expertise and skills are not counted. This is very painful and disturbing. (no 2, Group H).

Participant no 2, Group H claimed that the key solution to her problem was finding a job and using her skills in the new society. Providing fulfilling employment opportunities is therefore one solution to improving the mental health status of Persian women and migrant women in general. The satisfaction and the enjoyment that these professional women receive out of being useful and being valued in the new society can be seen as one of the healing strategies for migrant women who have many psychological problems due to migration. The significance of employment on Persian women's mental health status was reinforced in the comments offered by participant no 2, Group H below.

Finding a job in my field is the key to my problem. If I can have some sort of responsibility in the society then I feel positive. This is my inside demand and I need to fulfill this demand to feel happy and be satisfied because I feel I am useful and I am needed in this society. Feeling positive is very important for me, otherwise filling the time is easy. I can go shopping everyday and kill my time, but this is not a good feeling because I have not gained anything (no 2, Group H).

As Richmond (1967) pointed out, a migrants' lower social status in the new country can easily precipitate psychological symptoms (Richmond, 1967). In Persian culture, women are also sensitive to the employment status of their husbands to such a degree that their own employment does not protect them from psychological problems caused by their partner's unemployment. This is mainly because Persian women see the wife's employment as secondary and only 'contributing' to the family income as a matter of choice, whereas husbands' employment is an essential part of the financial security of the family. This was evident from participant no 5, Group A who did not declare her unemployment after migration as an unfortunate event but as an advantage to her children's care giving. Participant no 10, Group B who was of English background and identified herself as English-Persian because of her exposure to Persian culture through her marriage to a Persian man, was able to highlight with great poignancy the impact of her husband's job dissatisfaction on her

family life. Furthermore, as in the case of participant no 8, Group B, unemployment and its financial pressure caused more psychological problems when it was combined with the unfamiliarity of new cultural norms and the social values of the host society. Her situation carried more socio-psychological consequences for her than other Persian women who had positive attitudes towards the host society.

> For me, personally, my husband had a good job in Iran. He had to leave because his wife was a foreigner and also for our kids' education. He comes here but he is under achieving and that is a major problem, because he does not have the same job and the same status, and that has been very hard. He has been wasted here. He comes home and he is unhappy and frustrated. It affects the whole family. If your husband is not working and not happy, and if the kids are not as academic as you want them to be, then you do not have a happy life (no 10, Group B).

> My personal problem after migration is my husband's unemployment, and this is our biggest family issue. Although my husband and I both have high education, none of us have a job. Both of us were very successful in Iran. We voluntarily migrated to Australia, but never thought we might have unemployment problems because we do not have language problems and my husband studied and worked in the USA. I also updated my degree here and attended a qualifying course. I am not that much concerned about not having a job because it is probably better for my children because I can keep an eye on them, what they do after school, but the major problem is his unemployment. This has made him very sad and has had a big negative impact on our family (no 5, Group A).

> My husband's unemployment is the biggest problem in our family after migration. My husband was the manager of a very big company in Iran and many people were working under his power. After migration he is unemployed and needs to be dependent on his children and this is very distressing. Our children are so nice and understanding but it is very difficult for us to live this way. After migration we needed to start our life financially from zero and this was extremely hard for us. All of this caused me to be a depressed person. Now I feel a bit better but still I am under pressure, especially since I do not like this culture and do not enjoy my life here. In Iran I was not working but socially I was very active and here I do not get any pleasure out of the society, and this is disturbing (no 8, Group B).

Participants' comments in this study addressed how Persian women immigrants could face certain disadvantages both economically and culturally in the host society because of unemployment, loss of socio-economic status and loss of credentials. Because of a combination of these factors, Persian women immigrants can easily face psychological problems that could have a major impact on their mental health status.

6.4.2.3 Financial hardships

It was evident from the focus group discussions that a good number of Persian Australian migrants came from a middle-income household in their home societies (refugees may be excluded). It was noteworthy to observe that Persian migrants lose their socio-economic status by coming to Australia whilst many other migrants better theirs. Participants no 2, Group D; no 4, Group G; no2, Group F; and no 3, Group G; were a few examples of the former as they had difficulty reaching the level of living that they had obtained before migration. This hardship became even more difficult to tolerate when participants saw their life in the new country as temporary, as participant no 4, Group G, perceived her life in Australia.

Elderly Persian women in Australia are less assimilated than the rest of their families and are more prone to experiencing financial difficulty as they are heavily dependent on their younger family members for social, psychological and financial support. Many of them have poor English skills, are very isolated and are more vulnerable. Moreover, adjustment problems create more psychological stress for them. Participant no 3, Group G, was a good example. The degree of psychological distress she was experiencing was common among this age group of participants.

Some Persian women were forced to leave Iran suddenly due to religious or political reasons. Most of these women were not given a chance to transfer their assets to Australia. These women had experienced more financial hardship than other Persian migrant women, because they needed to establish their life after migration without financial resources. Participant no 6, Group G, was one such example.

> After migration I have had serious financial problems because the cost of living is too high here and for Persians like us who want to maintain the same living standard as we had in Iran is very costly. That is probably the main reason that we are in financial difficulties. People here are not helping each other financially whereas in Iran people care for each other and if you have financial problems you get help from others (no 2, Group D).

> I am a refugee and I have been forced to migrate, therefore there are many financial issues attached to it. When I have financial difficulties here I can not go back home freely and get access to my assets. This force migration has caused me a lot of tension and frustration (no 6, Group G).

I had a very big house living very comfortably but I do not have any of those comforts here. This is disturbing me and I see it as a negative change because adapting myself with the new way of life is very stressful. The cost of living here is less than Iran, but we have left our established household in Iran and we do not have any intentions of buying many things here as we see life here as temporary (no 4, Group G).

By coming to Australia I have lost everything. I have been here for eighteen months and I have suffered a lot during this period. My daughter-in-law is Australian and I need to live with my son for two years because he has sponsored me. I do not live in a good situation at the moment. My son has become heartless and has forgotten me as his mum and treats me badly. This has made my life miserable. I feel worthless. I hate myself for having such a life. I can not stand it anymore. I cannot speak English, no independence, no place to live, no money, nobody and I am getting crazy (no 3, Group G).

Although in Iran I was jailed and this caused me a lot of physical and emotional problems, and I was humiliated by my husband's family as well as some members of the community due to my bahaei's faith, I still prefer living in Iran than here. I think one of the reasons that I prefer to live in Iran rather than here is that I have no welfare here. I do not even have a car yet to drive. My son is blaming me for this decision to come to Australia as we were very wealthy and had everything living in a very big house and here I live in an apartment with virtually nothing. Please do not get me wrong. I am not materialistic and not dependent on the luxurious life style, but I mean my quality of life has changed dramatically (no2, Group F).

Coping with an unfamiliar environment is a difficult task. The stress of adjustment is increased when migration is associated with financial difficulties and the loss of social status. This was particularly so for elderly women who participated in the study. Extra energies, social support and coping strategies were needed to cope with this aspect of migration.

6.4.2.4 Negative impact on children

Young Persian women living in Australian society, are confronted with many new tensions stemming from conflicts between the host culture and their original culture. Although they live in the traditional culture of their parents at home, they are exposed to a strongly contrasting one in their social environment. They are bombarded with messages from their peers, the society and the mass media representing Western values. Therefore their world is neither purely traditional nor purely modern, but rather a combination of both.

According to a few participants, the new society has had quite a negative impact on children and their behavior. It seemed this impact became greater when the family had its own crisis and the relationship within the family was not very close and supportive. This was succinctly

put by participant no 3, Group E. Behavior exhibited by certain sections of Australian society was considered to be gross and unseemly. Many young Persian youths have become seduced by the freedoms possible in Australia and families are racked with dissension as youths defy parents and follow what is thought to be the "Australian way". According to participants no 1, Group D, and no 2, Group D, some social norms in the Australian society made difficult the transmission of traditional Persian cultural values to their children. This made them depressed for bringing their children to an environment that they claimed was 'immoral'.

> Migration has not had a positive impact on our life. Unfortunately, when we came here, my children were at a sensitive age and my husband came a few years after us. This caused a lot of tension between my husband and I. Children took advantage of the situation and got influenced by school and did not go in a right direction. This society is giving children some freedoms that are very harmful for the family's unity. They support children unnecessarily and after some little arguments with the parents, which may be solved very easily, a disaster is created. For example, I have three daughters, the older one who is eighteen is living by herself and my second daughter, who is fourteen, is creating a lot of problems. Nevertheless, I admit that when you have problems with your husband these types of problems become worse (no 3, Group E).

> I am suffering a lot from the Australian social environment. I am especially concerned for my children's future and what will happen to them. This society is very open and has lots of norms that are not ethical and if my kids learn these norms, we will not achieve our goals. This is really worrying me everyday and makes me a very sad person. I know this society does not affect me or people like me but it has its negative affect on our children. For example; I do not like my daughter to get a boyfriend when she is twelve or my son to drink when he is ten. I think this is a cultural clash and I am thinking everyday that I wish we had tolerated the problems we were faced with in Iran and not come here to put our kids at risk. This is the pain that I am going through everyday and my mind is occupied with it all the time and it has caused me severe headaches (no 1, Group D).

> One of the major problems for me is my children and the way they are trained in this society. The Australian education system is teaching our kids many things that we can not accept, and this is painful for us as Iranians even if we stay here for twenty years we will still suffer because we have been raised in another society and can not accept it. Our culture is full of kindness and we care about each other and even for people who need help, no matter you know them or not, whereas here it is quite different... These cultural differences are disturbing especially when they can affect your children's education. Since we have been in Australia, we have not had a happy day because of these cultural conflicts (no 2, Group D).

While many participants appreciated the freedoms available in Australia, it was perceived that many dangers were inherent in them. Many parents felt lonely, isolated and useless, as their traditional roles were usurped by their children and they had become the dependents. Cultural

differences had left parents feeling more insecure than their children. Traditional child rearing practices were called into question, as many youth flouted parental rules and insisted they could do what they like in Australia. Participants no 3, Group E, and no 1, Group G, portrayed a clear picture of what they were going through due to the differences between their cultural belief system and that of the host society.

> Youth have a lot of freedom in this society and this excess freedom is not good for them. For example; my daughter who is eighteen has left home. If we were in Iran it would be impossible for this to happen. Here the society supports them to be independent no matter what will happen to them. I am sure if the government had not given them social and financial support, families would have less problems as well as teenagers. As soon as they leave home, they are more prone to crime and immoral activities. In my own case, I think our marital problems contributed to my daughter's situation. Nevertheless my marriage break down was also a consequence of migration.
>
> I can not accept my daughter getting a boyfriend and this is very hard. Sexual freedom is too much here and this is painful for me (no 1, Group G).

It was very interesting to observe that the younger participants were also concerned about the possible negative impact of Australian culture on them. Persian parents commonly think that the younger generation adapts so quickly to the new society and enjoys the new life style and forgets about the original culture. This was not the case with most young women participants in this study. They were deeply concerned about their future and their children's future as participants no 2, Group C, and no 3, Group C, explained. Participant no1, Group C, who had lived in Australia for many years and had maintained friendships with Anglo-Australians, described both the conflict of values she experienced with her friendship group which made her feel different from her friends and her confusion about her personal national identity. This made her feel less happy than her Anglo-Australian friends. Participant no1, Group C's comments typified the lives of many of the young Persian women participating in the study.

> One of my major concerns is having good friends from my own culture. It will be very important for my children in the future. If I marry someone from the dominant culture, my children will be a hundred percent Australian and we will have a lot of problems. In my case, my parents are both Persian and I still feel I am half-Persian and half-Australian. Therefore, I will be right to say if I have mixed marriage my children will not be Persian and I do not like this to happen. I think the biggest change after migration is changing morals amongst the young generation. For example, my friend who is Australian comes to our place and does not communicate with my mum or even say hello to her, and this is not right in our culture. I may gradually become influenced by her attitudes and change my behavior. If I allow that to happen it is too bad as I like to preserve my cultural

values but the pressure from the society is too much, and unfortunately these pressures may affect me over time (no 2, Group C).

Although I have been here for a long time, there are times that I feel I don't belong here. For example; Australian youth know what they are after for their enjoyment, but in our case no matter how much we pretend that we are one of them and there is no difference between us, there are still lots of things that are different. Obviously, we can not get the same enjoyment as they get. That is one of the major reasons that we can never get very close to them and this is disturbing. I mean, I become very confused and ask myself "who am I"? Even if I know what I am looking for and who I am that sense of not belonging is very much disturbing me (no 1, Group C).

I think as Persian young adults we have much more responsibility here compared with the young generation in Iran. For example; in Iran if you want to decide to have a child you are not thinking about the social environment your child is going to be raised in as here I need to consider where and how am I going to raise my child. For any step that we take we need to think very carefully and to consider many factors (no 3, Group C).

In the Persian culture parents attempt to maintain strict controls over their daughters' behavior. Girls are discouraged from engaging in an active social life and mixing with boys. Boys are granted much greater liberty than girls. From early childhood, boys and girls are socialized according to very different moral and sexual standards. Consequently, the possible negative impact of migration on boys is different from girls. Some parents may also have different reactions to these negative changes caused by the host culture. They may accept their son's non traditional behaviour more easily than their daughter's. Among the sensitive areas where there is an obvious contrast between Western values and traditional Persian values is in attitudes towards sexual relationships and not living with parents before marriage. This contrast is more evident for young Persian females than for young Persian males. This was reflected in participant no 2, Group D's comments whose son had left home before marriage. She described her different approach to this issue if her daughter had disrespected the same cultural values and norms of conduct.

In my case, if my son was a girl and had left home at the age of nineteen I would have killed myself by now. I can not bear such a situation. For example if my girl who is a teenager gets pregnant and wants to abort, I will kill her with my own hands (no 2, Group D).

6.4.2.5 Development of mental health problems

Migration issues sometimes intensify or create mental health problems for migrants. These problems might have long term or short term effects on migrants. Pressure on Persian migrant women is much more than other family members as women play a much more sensitive role in the family. Women are usually the center of the family and are fulcrum for other family members. After migration women are usually the sole caregivers rarely receiving any support themselves, as many of them have no extended families, relatives or close friends in the new society. If they experience problems with their family members they need to deal with it with no outside support. Migration issues caused a lot of emotional problems for Participants no 2, Group H, no 5, Group D, and no 3, Group A. The discrepancy between the migrant's social status in Iran and in Australia may cause emotional problems, particularly for middle aged women. Migrant women's lower social status in the new country can easily precipitate psychological symptoms. Participant no 6, Group B's experience was a clear example of this emotional disturbance.

> Migration has weakened my weaknesses. For example, I had problems finding friends and this problem has become worsened here. I am very quiet and I hardly got a friend in Australia (no 2, Group H).

> I think migration has made me a shy person. I do not trust people and this made me an isolated person. I do not feel that I am a Persian woman, because a Persian woman usually is a social and an active person (no 3, Group A).

> After migration I feel very angry and moody most of the time but in Iran I was a very calm person and rarely I used to get angry (no 5, Group D).

> Of course, all of the hardships that I have been through after migration have changed me as a woman. For example, I was a very active person with a lot of energy and now I am not. I try to convince myself that my life has changed and I need to accept it but from the inside I am restless. I try to regain my social status but it is very hard. In Iran I had my extended family with lots of social activities, I had good friends, teaching at the university, and most importantly I had social respect and I should say, I had everything. It is difficult for me to accept that I have non of them here and yet I try to be happy. I should admit my children have helped me a lot to get settled here and now after six years I feel a bit better but from time to time I feel very down (no 6, Group B).

Participants' comments reinforced the view that psychological problems may result as they attempt to adjust to a new and foreign society.

Most of the younger participants in this study gave evidence of their parents' efforts to maintain distinctively Persian traditions of family life. These young immigrants were caught between the two cultures of their parents and their peers at university or the wider society. Consequently certain social norms that were a major part of the culture at home caused conflicts for Persian immigrant families in the new milieu. Some emotional problems inevitably emerged for these young women. Participant no 1, Group C, stressed the benefits of being exposed to Western culture but she also acknowledged the emotional problems she was facing accommodating to both cultures :

> My family environment is very much different from this society. I need to select positive points from both environments and this is very hard for me. This has made me an introspective person. This can be seen as positive as this has made me to be more mature and more selective compared with my friends who live in Iran. They do not have much option and choices. Of course it is more easy way of life there but I think I know myself much better than they do. I know what I like and what I don't. I have become an extravert as well as an introspective person. Nevertheless, this has caused me anxiety and extra tension and sometimes I can feel its affect on my life. I need to cope with two different environments at the same time and this is not easy (no 1, Group C).

This participant described her feelings of being 'caught' in two cultures:

> Sometimes I feel that I am like a small child who is lost in a big free market and does not know what to buy and who to ask for advice. That child needs to be very wise and very careful to approach the right person and not be cheated (no 1, Group C).

For participant no 1, Group C, conflict was an adaptive solution in itself. This participant's conflicts in the home and the society were not just challenges, they were also opportunities for her to acquire the complex skills needed for living in a multicultural society such as Australia.

A few mature age participants expressed that, constant conflict with their children about respecting family and cultural values have affected their mental health and have made them less confident of their actions and their beleifs. Participant no 2, Group A, was very confused about implementing her cultural and strict moral values in the family environment. She was not sure whether being traditional and wanting her children to maintain her cultural heritage was helping the family. Although she identified herself as Persian and held the cultural and social values of her origin, she was confused and felt pulled from the opposite direction by her

children's reactions in response to the maintenance of her cultural values. This conflict created tensions for her as she was trying to integrate the family but she was not succeeding.

> I let my children have a lot of freedom that I know it will be harmful for them, but they are not prepared to compromise and have some respect for our culture. Therefore we argue all the time. Sometime I become very much confused and feel that I do not let them do unethical things because it is not respected in my culture. If I had allowed them to do I would have made life much easier with less pressure for us as parents and them as kids too. The problem is, when I let them mix with Australians and act in whichever way they want, they become more demanding and ask for unlimited freedom. Consequently, I suffer a lot and this makes me very sad. I keep asking myself what have I done to myself? Did I let them because I felt I am a fanatical person or I gave up my idea to get rid of the hassle? Have I lost my identity? Who am I? This is a terrible feeling and destroys me from inside (no 2, Group A).

Some mature age women in the study felt disturbed, confused, lost and torn between their traditional cultural values and the mainstream culture when dealing with their children's social behavior. This confusion seemed to be more evident for those who decided for themselves to maintain the morals of their own culture but allowed their children to practice the morals of the Australian culture.

Migration brought a sense of grief and even guilt for some participants,. especially for those women who had adolescent children. Uncertainty about her children's future and what they lost in the process of migration was painful for participant no 5, Group A, to the extent that she deeply regrets the sacrifices she made and the high prices that she paid for migration. This participant's statement revealed that she had maintained her cultural identity as purely Persian and desired to retain this in Australia. She was especially concerned about the influence of the dominant culture on her children's cultural identity. This participant had internalized her cultural values and had not allowed them to be influenced or replaced by the new society's cultural values. Participant no 7, Group A, is another example where single national identification as Persian was maintained. She was one of the migrants who moved for better opportunities for her children. She had a strong feeling of security and confidence in her Persian identity. As an individual, her ethnic identity was very important and positively evaluated. Acceptance and accommodation to some Australian values such as individual autonomy and self-reliance enabled her to allow her children to behave differently from her personal beliefs. At the same time, however, because she was sensitive to cultural differences,

she could not accept that her children were implementing dominant cultural norms. Her children's adoption of such values consequently made her feel guilty.

> The most disturbing thing for me is that, whether what my children and I have gained after migration is equivalent to what we have lost. I am afraid to say that we have lost much more than we gained. This heavy price makes me really sick. I am not sure what the future of my children will be and where they are leading to (no 5, Group A).

> The major trauma for me is my everyday guilt feelings and this is very disturbing. When I see Australian youth and their issues I fear for the day that my children follow them and become one of them. That is the time that I do regret and feel what a big mistake it was in bringing them to this society. I blame myself that why I migrated. I was the one who made the decision and brought my children here. I convince myself that I should not be selfish and deprive them of doing things that are not accepted in my culture. Then I let them do what their Australian friends do and after that I feel bad and blame myself for their behavior (no 7, Group A).

Overall, despite the many influences of Western cultural values these participants showed a determination to maintain their Persian cultural identity and transmit their cultural heritage to their children.

6.4.2.6   Women's role and the quality of life after migration

Migrants' exposure to the host culture may gradually change their attitudes to life and their roles in relation to other family members. This change becomes evident when a migrant woman visits her original country and finds that her relatives and friends do not confirm her behavior. These changes were valued both positively and negatively in the eyes of participants. It was considered positive because they experienced the opportunity to see both cultures alongside. This comparison allowed them to question some of their existing values, and to be more critical of the original culture. Consequently, this made them more selective of some of their original cultural values and the values of the host society. This attitudinal change resulted in a big gap between migrants and their friends and relatives in Iran. These women were not fully accepted by their own people as they were more identifiable by their 'Australian' characteristics by their Persian friends and relatives and, conversely, were more identifiable by their 'Persian' characteristics in the eyes of Anglo-Australians. This rejection by the original culture as well as not being included in the host culture left some Persian women with the sense of not belonging any way. This feeling made them emotionally depressed. In some instances when a participant was questioning her own cultural values, she

became doubtful of her own choices and became very confused about which direction to take, and whether a certain action that she was taking was appropriate or not. This doubt was evident in participant no 3, Group D's comments below.

> I think our generation, as parents are the victims of this migration. We have made a lot of sacrifices for our children. One of the issues that concerns me very much is that I do not feel happy to make my children behave in a certain way which is recommended by our culture. To be honest with you, I am not sure that what I am making my children do is good for them. I do not know that what I am teaching them is practical in the Australian society. I am not sure what they learn is going to make them fortunate in this society. I am not certain that the direction I am guiding them in is good for their future and this uncertainty is very much disturbing me. It seems to me that migration has changed a lot of my values and its stability in my mind. I can not say that I have lost my identity. I still believe in what I believe. The problem is that I am in doubt about what I believe is good for my children and their future. This is what I am most concerned about and it has made me depressed (no 3, Group D).

A few participants explained how difficult their roles were as women in the new society. Participant no 2, Group D, experienced a lack of support in her efforts to preserve her Persian cultural heritage and for the transmission of Persian culture to her children. This increased her responsibility and made her role more challenging and difficult after migration. The lack of support in preserving Persian cultural heritage and for the transmission of Persian culture to children created extra pressure on single women who lacked the support of a spouse. Participant no 7, Group A, who was a divorced woman experienced more difficulty in raising her children in a foreign culture without family support and struggling with other problems such as unemployment. It seemed that her cultural background was an integral part of her identity, but it was a big challenge for her to maintain her cultural values and transmit them to her children without outside support. The lack of trust within the Persian community itself made her social interaction with her own community limited. Although the host society offered her material support the lack of moral and social support from the host culture was evident in her comments. It seemed that her emotional problems were due both to the lack of social contact with her own community as well as being away from her extended family and friends. Consequently, her situation caused her somatic symptoms developed by depression.

Persian women after migration take a more active role in the family without extended family help and this extra burden on women adds further to other adjustment problems. Participant no 2, Group G, found that the extra family responsibility after migration as well as the loss of her extended family help was too much pressure in her life after migration.

I think my role, as a woman has become more difficult as I carry more responsibilities for my children in the new society. I feel that I am building a bridge between Iran and Australia for them. I want to transfer the positive aspects of my culture to my children but unfortunately I do not have much support outside of my home environment and I think this is not enough. I can feel the difficulties that I am going through to carry out this duty, as I do not have the system support (no 2, Group D).

Because I am a single and divorced mother, my role as a mother here is much more difficult than it was in Iran. I am a lonely person without my extended family and I have no job. I feel very down now, because since I have migrated I have a lot of pressure on me from things such as; loneliness, financial difficulties and psychological problems. I feel I have nothing here. I can not trust the Persian community either and this is very painful. I have no job, no relatives, no friends, no social life and no financial satisfaction... Unfortunately I can not go back home but staying here is a stressful life as well. I have a few physical problems such as diabetes and arthritis and I am told that all of this is caused by stress. Therefore, I have lost my heath here in addition to other losses. The only hope that I have is my children's good education. If I lose that, I have lost everything... Nevertheless, I should admit that women and single women in particular have social support in Australia but the emotional support that you, as a single woman, can get from your own family is very much different (no 7, Group A).

In Iran, I did not need to do many things as here I should do every thing and be every where by my own. I need to do all of my housework as well as working and raising children and this is too much pressure for a woman (no 2, Group G).

Participants' comments revealed that women's role within the family changed and broadened after migration. Consequently, the quality of life was changed to a great extent for some Persian women as they had more responsibility in the family with less emotional and physical support from the outside. For single women who needed to fulfill both father and mother roles for their children and did not receive the extended family support in addition to the lack of the spouse support, the situation became more stressful and difficult to cope which caused some of them emotional and physical illness.

6.4.2.7   The negative impact of migration on family relationships

Persian families who migrated to Australia are exposed to social values that are perceived to be different from the values held and practiced at home. As a result, women and children, in particular, may experience conflict within themselves as well as within the family. Evident from the respondents' comments is that migration has had a major impact on the family relationships of the study group. In some instances it has caused break-ups and separations in

the marriage. Participant no 3, Group H blamed her migration for her divorce as she believed her husband's unemployment and her obligation to work as a breadwinner of the family affected her marriage to such an extent that it resulted in divorce. Participant no 2, Group F who seemed very depressed, stressed that migration adjustment issues did not allow her husband to stay in Australia and forced him to move back to Iran. This made her feel that her life was destroyed as she found her life empty due to her loneliness caused by missing her homeland as well as the lack of support from her husband and her extended family.

Exposure to western culture and its influence on a Persian immigrant family can create some new problems for its members who lived in harmony before migration. Some Persian women experience freedom in the new country from the extreme restrictions and suppression experienced at home. This freedom can be manifested in dress and physical appearance. This may cause family conflict if the husband wants to hold his traditional cultural values. This may result in a myriad of emotional problems for that couple such as oversensitivity, irritability, and a tendency towards aggression. In addition, some social values such as women's equal rights to men may be very attractive to Persian immigrant women as they may be willing to adapt and practice these values in the new society soon after their arrival. That is so for Persian girls who want to be treated equally to boys by their parents in respect to their social activities. Persian men who want to maintain a patrilineal family structure for the family and want to have the authority in the household may find themselves very confused in the new environment. They may not be at ease with the situation, and most importantly, they may experience a sense of guilt for allowing their wives and daughters to be very different from other family members who live in Iran. Consequently, the new atmosphere may create a lot of tension and conflict within the family. This was found to be a common issue among many migrant Persian families, in particular, for those families whose family members had less familiarity with Western culture, had different assimilation rates and had children of both sexes. These families seemed to be more prone to family problems after migration. This issue was stressed by participant no 5, Group A, who was one of the key women in the Persian community in Victoria and was in contact with many Persian families. Participant no 1, Group A, found migration very distressing in that it prevented her from maintaining her managerial position in the household after migration. She was not happy for her role change and did not want to see her husband around the house during the day. This was evident from her statement that she did not value the loving and caring atmosphere created after migration by her husband's attention through helping her in the household duties. She felt that during

the day the house should be in her control and under her authority as it was a major duty for a woman in her culture and a social norm in her home country. She had internalized this, accepted and respected this cultural value. She felt that by her husband being at home during the day, due to his unemployment caused by migration, her role was taken away from her. This forced role change left her feeling unhappy and depressed. The unemployment problem caused by migration for participant's no 4, group A, family had quite a different impact on her family relationship. In her case, because her husband did not want to accept this changed role he was less helpful and supportive around the house. He wanted to maintain his authority and his role in the mind of his children and his wife.

> I got divorced four years ago after being married for twenty years. I blame the migration for that due to the situation created by migration. We migrated to Australia 13 years ago. We were a working class family and did not have any financial problems in Iran. I needed to migrate due to the political reasons.... After migration my husband could not find a job in his profession and he also was not willing to get a job other than his profession. I made the sacrifices and worked as a laborer to run the family. After a few years of hard work we were able to buy a take away shop and this kept me very busy. My husband had plenty of time to enjoy himself but I was very busy with the business. One day I found out that he was in a love relationship with one of our shop assistants. After four years of challenging this I finally got divorced and this affected my health severely. I was depressed for couple of years and now I feel much better as I have engaged myself with many activities and live happily with my children (no 3, Group H).

> After migration, my life has been destroyed. I am living here with my two children. My husband could not stay here and left to Iran. I feel empty here. I feel that my husband is enjoying his time in Iran and I am left here with all of these problems that have made me emotionally depressed to the extent to which I am under medical treatment (no 2, Group F).

> Persian men want to rule women and behave as a Persian man around the house and at the same time, they want their wives to be Australian outside and to be Persian inside the house. This is not possible and creates a lot of tension around the house. Even in such an environment children will be affected. I know many girls who have problems with their fathers because they can not stand the situation. Fathers want them to hold Persian values in regards to their social activities and give more freedom to their sons. In such a situation the woman wants to defend her daughter and this creates fights between the parents. I think if all children were of the same sex the problem was less but when we have mixed sexes it makes it more difficult as we treat them differently. For example, in our culture, if our son wants to go out we tell him enjoy your time, but when our daughter wants to go out we do not let her go or we make a fuss about it (no 5, Group A).

> The greatest negative impact of migration on our relationship is that my husband and I are spending too much time together. He is not working and he is at home all the time and this is not natural for me. I feel that I am not in my role anymore. In

Iran I was a housewife and the manager of the house. I think the kitchen is a woman's office and I feel that after migration I have been kicked out of my office. In my view, when a man and woman are together all day and night, they get sick of each other. This is like having a good food in front of you all the time. Don't you get sick of it? This togetherness all the time has created some distance between us. I am not even happy with my womanhood and myself. I am also sorry for my husband who has become very much isolated from the society. Although, he is very happy that he is at home, It is painful for me to see him being isolated from the outside world. He is around the house all the time and his only enjoyment is to be with me and to express his love to me. To be quite frank with you I am sick of this expression. When you hear the word "I love you" all the time you get tired. Don't you? He tries to attract my attention by doing all the housework. He wants to prove it to me that he loves me very much and I do not want him to be around the house during the day. That is my problem because I have lost my role as a woman. I feel my position has been taken away from me. I am not the manager of the house anymore. This situation has caused a lot of tension and has made me very depressed and sad (no 1, Group A).

When my husband was out of job, my case was exactly the opposite from participant no 1. I was working and he had to stay at home. He was trying not to do any housework around the house and before that he was very much helping me. When I asked him the reason he told me that 'I do not want our children to think that we have changed our roles and you as a mother are the breadwinner and I am as a father the housekeeper (no 4, Group A).

In Persian culture, the family unit traditionally meets the social, financial, emotional needs of its members at all stages of life, from birth to death. Children are fully dependent on their parents till they grow-up and then they are emotionally dependent, as the Persian culture is a very family centered culture. In Australia, Persian parents who are not working are likely to have a shift in power and responsibilities between them and the children. This might be more so in families with adolescent or adult children who can manage the language more competently. In such cases, they handle family matters on behalf of their parents. This dependency on the children was a distressing experience for parents which was against their traditional cultural values. Participant no 2, Group H, and participant no 3, Group H, expressed their disappointment and the pain they were going through due to the reversed role situation.

Although my situation has improved emotionally after migration, because my children give me more attention as they know I am lonely, I liked my life in Iran much better than here. In Iran I was very well off, and here, although, I am financially independent from my children and live by myself, when I need some extra money for unexpected expenses due to the lack of financial resources I must ask my children and this is painful for a Persian parent. I left all of my belongings in Iran and now I have virtually nothing. I was driving my own car in Iran and here I need to get a lift from my children and this is painful for me too (no 2, Group H).

My role as a mother has been changed after migration and this has affected my relationship with my children. In the past I was the one who was ruling them and now they are ruling me. You can imagine how hard it is for me to accept it. A few of my children are still in Iran. I need to wait till they send me the ticket and invite me to go there and visit them and this is very depressing for me, because I would have liked to send them tickets and invite them to come over. I think unemployment, lack of language proficiency and other problems caused me to be powerless and this makes me feel sick. I wish for no Persian parents to be in my position (no 3, Group H).

Migration entailed enormous changes in employment status, living, socio-cultural environment and financial status of the study group. Therefore, difficulties were associated not only in the loss of material belongings but also in the loss or change of family role relationships – particularly roles within the nuclear family.

6.5   The impact of migration on male domination in Persian families

The fifth part of the focus group discussion was designed to assess the degree of change in the family structure and the level of family support after migration. Abyaneh (1989) found that Iranian immigrant families are more male dominated in the United States than they were prior to migration and that males have been more helpful domestically in Iran than they now are in the United States. This finding raised an interesting challenge to commonly held beliefs that male dominance has been broken down significantly in industrial and western societies. The question that remained to be answered was "what factors have influenced a Persian family to be more male dominated after migration?" I was interested in finding out whether this finding was applicable in Australia. This part of the focus group discussion was designed to find some answers to this issue.

The participants' views regarding male domination after migration were summarized in the following categories:

- Migration had a positive impact on male domination of the family
- Migration had a negative impact on male domination of the family
- Migration did not change the family relationships in respect to male domination.

6.5.1 Migration had a positive impact on male domination of the family

A few participants in the present study expressed that migration had a positive impact on their family relationships as men were less domineering in their family after migration. Participants no 1, Group C, no 2, Group C, and no 1, Group E, claimed that migration, its hardships and the dominant cultural influence have made their fathers less authoritarian and this change enhanced the family relationship in a more liberal way. Participants no 10, Group B, no 10, Group A, and no 7, Group B, highlighted the positive impact of migration on the man's attitudes which led the family members to have their say and contribute to family decisions. For participants no 11, Group A, no 7, Group B, and no 10, Group A, migration issues lessened male authority within their family but they still lived in a male dominated environment. They were happy with the improvement but were not totally satisfied with the residue of male authority in the family environment. However, participant no 2, Group D, stressed that male domination was good for her family decisions as she believed her husband had more knowledge and it was better for the family if he made all the decisions. Participant no 2, Group G, believed that the financial considerations after migration forced her husband to be more cooperative and less dominant by doing domestic jobs around the house that he was not interested in before migration.

> We are five children and my mum is a housewife. In the past most important decisions were made by dad but after migration I feel they are much closer and they share their views. I think migration and their loneliness have made them more close (no 1, Group C).

> We both make decisions. Before migration it was more male dominated and now the situation has improved. Maturity probably plays a role. In relation to the housework, we both do it together (no 10, Group B).

> I think male domination has been in all cultures not only in the Persian culture and in recent years it has improved. When we were in Iran my mum used to do all the housework because my dad was very busy and mum was a housewife but here my dad is not working and they do most of the work together (no 2, Group C).

> Most of the time my husband makes the family decisions. Nevertheless, he asks my opinion as well. I think after migration we are closer and we are both the decision-makers (no 10, Group A).

> In our little family my husband is the boss. He asks my opinion and I am sure he takes it into account but he is the decision-maker. I think migration has changed him a little bit and he feels less bossy and superior (no 11, Group A).

The big decisions are always my husband's. It is not because he is bossy; it is because he knows more than I do (no 2, Group D).

Male authority in Persian families is unavoidable especially in the old generation that I belong to. It is fair to admit that migration has had a positive impact on my husband as I feel that he is less authoritarian. For example; in Iran he was very stubborn about implementing his decision and here he is a bit gentler and I think western society has changed his views. It is obvious that migration has affected my husband and my son in this respect. My son was not helping my daughter in law in doing the housework, but after migration he even cooks dinner if he comes home before his wife. This is a big change (no 7, Group B).

In my family my parents are equally the decision-makers and I can assure you that there is no male domination in my family. I should say, it was not the case when we were in Iran. Most of the time my father was the one who made the family decisions and here he is very cooperative and soft and this is definitely a positive outcome of our migration to Australia (no 1, Group E).

Migration definitely has affected Persian men's attitude. They did not do many things around the house in Iran, but here, because the labor cost is very high they need to do it themselves. As a result men are more active around the house and this is very positive as men and women work harder around the house (no 2, Group G).

After migration my family is not male dominated any more. This is mainly due to being away from my husband's family. In Iran he was very much influenced by them and they made him very bossy. After migration he knows that I have no one here and this has made him more considerate and helpful (no 3, Group E).

My family is a male dominated family and this is not due to migration. This is mainly due to the way men are brought up in the Persian culture. I think some men become less male dominated after migration and some stay the same and my husband is of the first category (no 11, Group A).

In general male domination is in Persian men's blood. My family is a bit male dominated but I think migration has lessened this domination (no 10, Group A).

A good number of participants claimed that male authority decreased in their family. Interestingly some comments revealed that the man's behavioral change was not necessarily due to attitude changes but to the special circumstances caused by the family's migration adjustment problems such as loneliness, unemployment and financial problems.

6.5.2 Migration had a negative impact on male domination of the family.

In Australia, Persian women may no longer assume a position of submission towards husbands because of financial dependency due to the financial social support system in Australian society. They may obey their husbands voluntarily, however Persian women in Australia are apt to speak out on what they previously were restrained from saying. These factors may lead Persian immigrant men to feel that their decision-making power has become less secure in the new environment as they try to hold onto this power as much as they can. This situation was evident in the comment of participant no 9, Group B. Although she was not happy with the male domination, there was no great change in marital power since she still permitted her husband to make the decisions in family matters. It was noticed with older women such as her that a change in the status quo was less likely. Rather, they regarded their husbands' resistance to equality in the family environment to be due to the way they were taught and raised in the culture. Therefore, these women believed that it was not easy for their husbands to change themselves and therefore, they accepted the gender inequality. In some cases marital conflict increased when women increasingly expressed their opinions. Sometimes the women's increasing challenges to their partners domination led to separation and divorce. Participant no 4, Group E, and no 6, Group D, were clear examples of this kind. Participant no 4, Group E, who had a sense of being worthy which allowed her to express herself actively could not bear the male domination and separated from her husband. Participant no 6, Group D, felt competent and equal to her husband. These feelings of equality led to considerable marital conflict until she could no longer tolerate the situation.

> My family is a hundred percent male dominated family. As you know a Persian man likes to order and everyone in the family needs to accept it. In my family I am doing the housework without his help and he is doing the outside jobs. Since we have migrated he is worse, because he thinks this gives him more power (no 9, Group B).

> Before and after migration my husband has been the one who makes the decisions, but after migration this has become worse. He came here five years before us and now whatever I want to do he is the one who knows everything and he feels is the expert and he should make all the decisions. This was one of the major issues that we got separated (no 4, Group E).

> I am divorced mainly because my husband was very much a dominating person....
> He wanted to make all the decisions and this was unbearable for me. I am so glad
> that now I am making my own decisions (no 6, Group D).

Participants' comments suggested that Persian immigrant women were aware of gender inequality at home and some attempted to make a change to their husband's dominance at home and challenged the unequal division of family work. However, in some cases where a woman insisted on equality within the home and in the family's decision-making, the man was not prepared to give up his authority. Such situations sometimes led to separation and divorce.

6.5.2.1   The impact of migration on housework duties

The question " who does the housework and shopping in your family and why?" attempted to identify the impact of migration on housework duties. It was interesting to observe that most of the participants commented that they are responsible for cooking and housework and only in two cases either children or husbands helped with cooking or housework. The majority of the participants did the shopping on their own. Participant no 6, Group D, who was a divorcee was the only participant who stressed that her husband did all the shopping to fulfill his full authority.

> I am separated now but when I was married all the housework was done by me but
> my ex-husband was doing all the shopping because he wanted to have full control
> of the family expenses (no 6, Group D).

Going through the responses in this section it was noteworthy that Persian women had accepted this aspect of the Persian culture; that women have the responsibility to cook and do the housework and they did not have any objections to this expectation,. even though in Iran many men did the shopping and women did the housework. In Australia, most of the participants were responsible for both the shopping and housework duties.

6.5.3 Migration did not affect family relationships in respect to male domination

Persian women who had a good family relationship after migration usually shared the decision-making with their husbands. This was evident from participants' no 6, Group C, no 8, Group A, no 8, Group B's comments which highlighted the family relationship pattern in

these families, confirming that, family members had close relations and were co-operative. There were changes in the power relationship and roles in the marital system especially when migrant women went out to work. Participant no 5, Group G, who was working in Australia claimed that her earning power enabled her to challenge gender inequality at home through her participation in the paid labor force. Nonetheless, this was not the case with a few other participants who were working. Patriarchal gender norms and beliefs constrained these women from maximizing their power by working and contributing to the family income. Some women's resignation to the unequal division of family work and the acceptance of male domination in the family was due to the presence and or influence of mothers or mothers in-law at home. These women believed that men lose face and self-respect if they help their daughter or daughter in-law. They believe that it is the woman's responsibility to obey the husband and to take care of the housework. This view was clearly reflected in participant no 6, Group D's comments as she believed that male domination in her family was mainly due to the way her husband was raised and supported by his parents.

> In our family the father is the final decision-maker but he consults every member of the family. This has been his strategy before and after migration (no 8, Group D).

> No one in my family represents a "boss". We always make our decisions together as a family and this has been within our family no matter what country we have been living in (no 6, Group C).

> We as a family make the decisions and there is no boss in our family. This is mainly because we do everything with full cooperation (no 8, Group A).

> There is no male domination in our family. My husband makes most of the decisions and I am happy with most of them. If I have different views he takes it into consideration but the final decision is his. I can say 90% we are equal and 10% he is superior (no 8, Group B).

> We do not have a boss in our family. My parents both make the decisions and that have been the case even before migration I guess, as I was a child when we moved to Australia. I think it is the woman's fault if the man is bossing her around. I have seen some women who like to be passive. They allow their husbands make family decisions and they are happy with it. Especially in Iran women are not encouraged by the society to be the decision-makers. They see their role as women who need to feed the family and take care of other family members without thinking about themselves. I know some girls in Iran who were university students and as soon as they got married they did not even bother to finish their courses. These women do not give any value to themselves and this is very bad (no 3, Group C).

> There is no male domination in my family. This might be because I am working and I have equal financial input in my family. I think woman's financial

independence is very important and makes the family environment less male dominated (no 5, Group G).

My family is male dominated but this is not related to migration. He was very authoritarian in Iran. In fact my father and mother in-laws encouraged him that, as he is a man and the breadwinner he needs to rule the house (no 6, Group D).

There were only three participants who stressed that their family was a female dominated family. Participant no 3, Group H, who was a director of a big educational body in Iran before migration, claimed that she had a lot of authority and control over her family decisions and was the head of her family before migration. She blamed migration for not being able to maintain her power at home due to unemployment. The situation was reversed for participant no 4, Group G, due to increased responsibility and control over the family decisions after migration. Her husband lost confidence and competence to keep up with increased family demands in the new environment. Therefore the woman took over his authority and dominated the family.

After migration I have lost a lot of my control and power in my family. Of course, my family is still female dominated and I am the boss of the family but after migration I have lost a fair bit of power in my authority because I am not working here my power has diminished (no 3, Group H).

Most of the time I am the decision-maker of the family. After migration my responsibility has increased because my husband is a bit scared of taking some actions in the new environment and I need to push him and encourage him (no 4, Group G).

Participants' comments revealed that the ideology and structures of patriarchy are still powerful enough to hinder possible changes in the status quo of gender relations, as many Persian women have not yet succeeded in bringing about gender equality at home. Persian women's strong attachment to the high level of patriarchal tradition may constrain women from challenging gender inequality at home. Nevertheless, it was evident that some changes had occurred. Since husbands' outright resistance to sharing family work was no longer taken for granted as it used to be in many families in Iran, resistant husbands were perceived as selfish and a sense of unfairness developed when women felt their lives were relatively more burdened than their husbands. With a sense of injustice, some women challenged the male dominated environment and were successful in bringing about changes. However, some failed to change the situation and also could not tolerate inequality in the family which caused marital conflict, separation and divorce.

6.6   Participants' life satisfaction after migration

The sixth part of the focus group discussion covered different questions concerning personal aspects of the participants' life satisfaction while in Australia. In this section participants' responses were categorized in the following sections:

- Participants who were satisfied with their life after migration.
- Participants who were not satisfied with their life after migration.

6.6.1 Participants who were satisfied with their life after migration

While the majority of participants in the present study discussed many problems caused by migration, overall, they expressed satisfaction with their life after migration mainly because of their increased sense of freedom in the new environment. Participants no 3, Group C; no 5, Group C, no 4, Group C, no 1, Group H, no 10, Group A, and no 9, Group A, highlighted that the main reason of being satisfied in Australia was to do with having freedom and social justice after migration, things they were deprived of while living in Iran. Participant no 1, Group C, who was of a young age group and loved her country and had much pride in her cultural identity found life in Australia much easier than Iran. She was satisfied with her life in Australia because she could achieve her goals, but she wanted to help her people to 'overcome their social and political problems'. As for Participant no 8, Group D her life satisfaction after migration was due to her family reunion and the joy she received from being with her children. Clearly, for participant no 10, Group A, women's equal rights in the new society gave her much more life satisfaction compared with other advantages that her own country offered her.

> Life in Australia is much better for me because I have more freedom here and I think freedom is the most important thing in your life. I feel life is much easier for a woman here than in Iran. Education is very important for me and if I was in Iran I could not enter the course that I am studying here (no 3, Group C).

> Overall living in Australia is much better for me because my future is more secure and I have more freedom than I would have if I were in Iran (no 5, Group C).

> Living in Australia is better because I would not have been allowed to go to university (as a Bahaei) if I were living in Iran (no 4, Group C).

I would have much preferred to live in Iran before my husband's death and before my children were jailed and tortured in Iran, but now I am happy with my new life (no 1, Group H).

Life in Australia is definitely much easier than in Iran for just a single reason. Women are freer in Australia. I can decide what I need to decide and Choose my life in the way I want it to be. The only thing that I need to do is to work hard towards my goal and I will achieve that goal. In Iran if I set a goal I was not sure whether I would be successful or not. That is a big difference. Otherwise, I love my country and I feel responsible to help my people overcome their social and political problems. I am happy that I am here because I have the opportunity to develop my skills and to become a professional woman and later on to give benefit to my country and my people. I feel my life is not only mine and I need to think how I can set my life to be helpful to my own people. The more I gain knowledge, the more I can be helpful. That is the only reason that makes me happy to live in Australia for the time being (no 1, Group C).

Overall, I enjoy my life in Australia because I have been able to join my children after fourteen years. Being with my children brings a lot of happiness and joy to my life (no 8, Group D).

Some aspects of my life were much easier in Iran but overall, I prefer living in Australia because in this society, women are more counted and have more rights and this is a big advantage (no 10, Group A).

Since my migration, which happened before the revolution I have not been able to visit Iran, but from what I hear from other Persian women who have been back, I think living in Australia is much better because of its freedom and better social justice (no 9, Group A).

6.6.2 Participants who were not satisfied with their life after migration

Those participants who lived in a close-knit family in Iran, and who came to Australia only to join the family found living in Australia less satisfactory, especially if family members were busy with their own lives and had little time to accommodate their special needs. At home they had no one to talk with, and were unable to gain access to resources within the community due to the lack of English language skills. Consequently, they felt bereft of support. Participant no 5, Group D, who portrayed her situation in this way, concluded that although she is not happy here, her life is less stressful in Australia compared with Iran. For some Persian women who had teenage children, life was not very satisfactory in Australia, as they were concerned about their children's future. They were worried that their children did things in the 'Australian way', and did not live up to their expectations. For example, It was very distressing for participant no 1, Group D, if her children lost their cultural heritage. For

participant no 2, Group D, who faced many social and psychological problems after migration, found she did not have life satisfaction when living in Australia nor in her own country. She was not satisfied living in Australia due to the importance of preserving her cultural values as distinct from those of the dominant cultural values. She concluded that she will not be satisfied if she returns home as she already has developed her critical view about some aspects of Persian culture that she would not like to see maintained. Life for participant no 6, Group G, was not satisfactory as she had lost her social and financial status after migration and felt that life could have been more joyful if she had tolerated the consequences of inequalities between men and women in her home country and did not migrate.

> I think life in Iran was much easier for me because knowing the language and the society gives you a lot of independence, which I am deprived of after migration, but overall I have less stress here than when I lived in Iran (no 5, Group D).

> In Australia we have more freedom and a better social welfare. This is only one side of the coin. The other side which is more important is your children and their future. I am not happy for this part. I do not know whether my children will stay with our culture or not and what will happen to them if not. This uncertainty concerns me most and makes me worried all the time (no 1, Group D).

> Overall, problems after migration are more than the advantages in the new society. From the first moment of my arrival I have had problems all the way through. It does not matter how long I stay here, my problems are still there. If I go back to Iran I would create more problems for myself as now I am used to this way of living and it would be more difficult to get back to the previous lifestyle. This makes me to not be happy here nor there (no 2, Group D).

> Of course, life in Iran was much better than in Australia. Although the situations were limited and not pleasant for women, I was much better off and did not have all of these emotional and financial problems. I would be living in my beautiful house and perhaps married with children (no 6, Group G).

Participant no 2, Group C who was of a young age commented on the level of joy and happiness that she and her other friends receive from the Australian society. Middle aged participants commonly mentioned this but it was particularly interesting to hear this from a young participant:

> We have a lot of freedom and better weather here but I think girls in Iran are much happier than we are here. First of all they do not have the responsibility that we have, and secondly, their happiness is much deeper over there. In Australia the youth have a lot of opportunities to enjoy themselves. I believe the enjoyment that we get here is not the one that we are after. Perhaps we get seventy percent of what we want from the society and from our parents but we still do not feel happy.

> Young women are deprived of many things in Iran but what they achieve makes them deeply happy (no 2, Group C).

This view stimulated the discussion as participant no 1, Group C, reflected more on the happiness of youth in Australia:

> I think no 2 is quite right. For example, Persian New Year in Iran gives much more joy and happiness to people than what we have here. Or if we go to a wedding or a party in Iran we have much more fun than if we go here. All the joy that we get in the whole year is not even near to what they get in going to only one party. I think it is because of the society and its people. Iranians who live in Iran feel that they belong to the society and the country. This gives them a lot of joy and happiness. This sense of belonging does not allow us to enjoy our life deeply here. Our parents think that we as the younger generation are very happy in Australia because we do not have language problems, we study here and we have Australian friends and get along very well with Australian culture and society. I do not deny that for them it is more difficult because they have more connections with their past than us, but it is difficult for us too. I feel that my parents' generation is a wandering generation and my generation is a confused generation (no 1, Group C).

This definition of her generation is very interesting. The discussion in the young focus group revealed that some young participants were confused and were not satisfied in the quality of their lives. This discussion was very similar to the discussion in the mixed age groups. In almost all of the focus groups, loss of identity or confusion of identity was mentioned by some of the participants. This problem was illustrated by participant no 2. Group H, who believed that her resistance to change and adaptation to the Australian way of life has resulted in her being isolated in the new environment and disadvantaged in terms of her social skills and ability to interact with others. She claimed her attachment to her culture did not allow her to gain acceptance in the wider Australian community and to consider her new environment as a new home. At the same time however, she also found that both her attitudes and her behavior had been influenced by Australian cultural values so that when she visited her home country she noticed the significant difference between herself and Persian people living in Iran. This rejection from her own culture and non acceptance by the host culture gave her an ambivalent ethnic identity and a sense of not belonging that caused her some identity diffusion that consequently made her depressed.

> I feel that I do not belong to any of these two societies. I feel I am not wanted here and I can not live there. This is my situation, and after five years I do not know what I am going to do and where I am going to live. When I go to Iran I feel that I can not bear and follow the rules and regulations that I do not believe in. When I come back to Australia I miss my family and other migration issues disturb me a

lot. I feel I am lost in between. When I am in Iran I look forward to get out of the situation and when I am here I feel that I do not belong to this society and here is not my home (no 2. Group H).

6.7   Participants' assessment of their migration

The last question in the group discussion was about participants' feelings towards their migration to evaluate migration from the participants' eyes. Participants no 6, Group D, no 4, Group D, no 5, Group G, and no 1, Group C,'s comments are examples of women who evaluated migration as a positive step in their life whereas participants no 2, Group D, and no 2, Group H evaluated migration negatively, regretting their decision.

> I feel that migration has given me the opportunity to develop my mental abilities and strength by going through hardships. This is a good outcome by itself and I am happy that I have migrated (no 6, Group D).

> Yes, I am happy that I have migrated but loneliness is disturbing me a lot. Living in Iran is hard at the moment because of political and social issues on one hand and living in Australia also is not ideal for us, on the other. Therefore, I am not happy with the way my life is going but I am happy about my move (no 4, Group D).

> I am very happy about my migration. I never think that I will be able to go back to Iran to live because I left Iran with very bad memories (no 5, Group G).

> I feel very happy about my migration because, it has given me the opportunity to grow. I can have the outsider perspective about my culture and be more selective of positive aspects of my culture and not transmit the negative aspects of my culture to my children (no 1, Group C).

> Australia's social and banking system is more disciplined but there are many other aspects of my life after migration that are disturbing me and I regret why I made the move. For example; cultural differences and being away from the relatives make my life less joyful (no 2, Group D).

> I am not happy with my migration because my life in Iran was much easier and better than here. In Iran I was dealing with all the banking and financial business of my family and here I am very much dependent on my children and this is painful for me (no 2, Group H).

It was interesting to see that the majority of participants were positive about their migration. Nevertheless, some participants were not satisfied with their life after migration but all points considered they felt happy about the move. This is in support of Minas, et al.'s (1993b) study that investigated the adaptation of Turkish immigrants in Victoria that found that despite

Turkish immigrants' dissatisfaction with some aspects of life in Australia, "they changed their intention from remaining temporary to permanent residence" (p. 22).

6.8   Patterns of Participants' Coping Strategies:

Participants responded differently to adapting themselves to the new society, adopting a number of different coping strategies. Some strategies were positive and some negative. Responses were grouped into three types: 1) participants who adjusted themselves to the new environment by accepting their adjustment problems as an inevitable part of migration; 2) participants who had planned and implemented a problem focused strategy with a positive approach to change their situation by detaching themselves from a problem and minimising the significance of a problematic situation; 3) participants who used less confrontive coping mechanism to their adjustment problems and employed optimism techniques by accepting their situation with grace ("ghesmat" or "taghdir") and by being patient and tolerant ("sabor"). The following examples are the types of coping strategies that were employed by participants.

6.8.1 Type one - Acceptance

One of the coping strategies that participants used in adapting to life in Australia was the acceptance of their problems associated with migration and trying not to see them as problems. Participant no 2, Group H who lost her social status after migration and consequently was facing some emotional issues attached to the loss, found the only way to reduce her emotional problems was to accept the reality and live with her problem. Her acceptance of the discrepancy between her social status held in Iran and in Australia was a key factor in the improvement of her emotional problems. This coping mechanism was also employed by participant no 6, Group B, whose emotional well-being was affected by not achieving her expectations in the new environment. Her negative reaction to living in a new society with a different culture was overcome by this coping strategy.

Participants had different motivations for choosing this coping mechanism. For participants no 10, Group A, and no 2, Group E, the prime motivation was to sacrifice their own desire and self-satisfaction for the sake of their family despite all the difficulties they encountered in the new environment. The acceptance coping pattern became part of participant no 11, Group

A,'s life-long pattern of adaptation. This coping mechanism gave her a feeling of being in full control of situations in the new environment and helped her to a smooth social adjustment.

The acceptance of adaptation problems as an inevitable part of migration, was a useful coping strategy for participants no 7, Group H, and no 6, Group H, which enabled them to manage their migration issues successfully. For them the difficulties in resettling in a new country was not a major concern when they decided to cope with any situation and make sacrifices in their life. Participant no 7, Group H, made her adjustment easier by separating her new life from the past and 'built a wall between them'. The way participant no 4, Group A approached her adjustment problems was very interesting. Migration related problems existed for her but she did not necessarily see them as 'problems'.

> I was very active and respected in Iran and I was very happy with my life. I want to have the same life quality and have the same enjoyment in Australia also, and because it is not possible I suffer a lot. Nevertheless, I do my best to cope with the situation and get used to my situation so that it would not bother me anymore (no 2, Group H).

> When we migrated to Australia I was hoping my situation would improve and we will not have as many problems as we had before migration. After a short while I realized that my problems are of different kinds but more painful. This made me emotionally sick. Then I thought over my life more carefully and I concluded that by making myself sick I am not going anywhere. This was the time that I realized, I need to accept my situation and my problems. From then on I feel much better and I think I have much less stress now (no 6, Group B).

> At the beginning I was feeling useless with low self-steam and disinclination. Gradually I convinced myself that; the most important thing for me is my family that I need to take care of. If I get sick, who is going to look after my children and my husband? I need to be strong to give them courage and joy. I am trying to keep everything inside to make my family happy and keep them together (no 10, Group A).

> We came to Australia with many expectations, which is now very much different from reality. After a while I decided that if we want to live here, we need to accept the reality and cope with it. Of course it is painful to act different to what your heart says, but because it is to my children's benefit I am prepared to sacrifice my own wishes for the sake of my children. They can have less pressure and be more successful in their studies (no 2, Group E).

> Since I have migrated I have done my best to accept my situation and believe that I have made the decision consciously and I need to bear the consequences and try to overcome the unexpected issues. I think with God's help I do not have many major problems and I feel our family life is the continuation of the life that we had before migration (no 11, Group A).

I believe in fate and I do not complain about my situation.... I think if we accept that there is a lot of problem associated with migration, we can cope much better with our situations and this makes settlement process much easier...When we decided to migrate I made a commitment to put a wall between the past and the future. I did that to allow myself to accept the situation that I am in, and I think this made the situation much easier for me to cope with. I decided to make this decision to get along with my new life and not seeing migration problems as very big. This is like being married by force and you do not have any choice but to live with the man that you are married to. If you convince yourself that, that is it and you have to live with him regardless, you try to make your life smoother and not to make a big deal out of every problem. I think my migration has been like this marriage. That is one of the main reasons that migration is not bothering me and I am happy with my new life after migration (no 7, Group H).

I have a lot of compatibility and can cope with any situation. I see the world as a piece of a white paper. I think you can write good and bad things on white paper. I feel I have served my own country for many years and now it is the time to rest and enjoy myself. The best thing at my age is to be with my children and their families. I have all the problems that these women mentioned but I try not to see them because they make me upset. I am an easygoing person and I am not harsh on myself. This might go back to the way my husband treated me in our relationship. I had a lot of problems and he never took notice of them and I was the only one who could care about his problems as well as mine. This made me a tough person. I have only one principle and that is to cope with any problems and make sacrifices in your life (no 6, Group H).

When we accept migration we need to accept its consequences as well. We should not forget that problems in our own country caused us to decide to migrate. Usually, after migration we tend to forget about our problems in the past and the only things that we see are the problems caused by migration. When we migrated here I knew that I would have some problems. Therefore, I prepared myself for them and now I feel that, I do not have any problems (no 4, Group A).

Participants' comments revealed that, one's attitude to adjustment is very important in problem solving. In fact, the key to solving a problem was perceived to be in the hands of a migrant and the way the problem is approached. If the person is fully prepared for migration and expects some inevitable problems after migration then she can cope much easier with the new environment. For example, participant no 4, Group A, mentioned that she does not have any migration problems but during her talk she stressed that she misses her family and prefers her children to grow up in Iran and receive the joy from their grandparents' support. In fact this participant had the same sort of problems that other migrants had but due to her positive approach she did not see them as problems, she felt that she was quite capable of overcoming these hardships.

6.8.2 Type two – positive thinking

Positive thinking as a coping mechanism was another effective method that a few participants employed to successfully adjust to the new environment. Participant no 7, Group B, who was an elderly woman selected this method in order to cope with life in Australia. She seemed very happy and influential as one of the participants who knew her stressed that *'whenever I am very down I give this lady a call and discuss my issues with her. The way she sees the problem changes my view and I feel much better after talking to her'*. Her high satisfaction with her new life was an outcome of her positive approach to her settlement:

> Basically I am a positive person and I see everything positively. When I see myself and my husband as an old couple who were able to come to a foreign country and live independently of our children, it gives me a lot of energy and a very good feeling. This makes life more enjoyable. Nevertheless, on arrival we had a few problems such as not knowing the language and being dependent on our children due to our language problem. The first six to eight years of our migration was very hard and we were regretting our migration. Since we are not dependent on children, life has changed for us. I enjoy my life here when I see that at this age there has been a situation where I have been able to get new friends, a new house, a new environment and a new way of communicating with others. I see all of these are very positive and have brought a lot of happiness in our lives. It is good to be innovative and start new things when you are old, mainly when you feel that life is not repetitive. I was retired from teaching before migration and consequently, as a retiree, I did not have many social activities. I used to spend most of my time at home or go to art and craft classes to keep myself busy and this is exactly what I am doing here. I do not feel that I have changed my country of living, but I feel that I have changed my home from one street to another. I have the same sort of amusement that I had in Iran. This might be because I love staying at home and working around the house... Of course in Iran I was much better off financially but I feel that, I have less stress and easier life in Australia. Even not having my relatives around me is not a bad thing because I do not have specific problems that they were creating sometimes (no 7, Group B).

This participant's approach was very unique. Her way of thinking had given her many hopes at her age. Everyone in the group was impressed with the level of her happiness after migration. This participant perceived her life after migration differently even though many migrants had a similar lifestyle after migration but complained of their situation. She was asked to express her view on why she was different to others and she explained:

> This is the reality of my life. It might be because I am a very optimistic person or it may be because I am relaxed. I do not feel upset what so ever that I have packed my belongings in Iran. In fact, I feel very happy here and I never ask why I am here

and not there. When I see many new things in my life it makes me happy and I feel good (no 7, Group B).

This participant's post-migration satisfaction seemed related to several factors: low attachment to her extended family, her life circumstances, her self-confidence, the high level of her social assimilation and most importantly, her positive thinking. This participant was asked about her connections with her homeland and the level of her dependency:

> When I see a beautiful sight that is similar to the one in Iran I do not regret that I am not there to see it, instead I feel very happy that I am refreshing my memory and am able to see a similar place in Australia (no 7, Group B).

The high degree of connection to the homeland and yet enjoying life in the new land for this participant may suggest that, a high dependency to the homeland does not necessarily cause adaptive problems such as homesickness.

Positive thinking as a coping mechanism for participant no 3, Group H allowed her to fit in to the new society with the absence of adaptive problems. This resulted in her enjoyment of life after migration and in maintaining a good level of emotional well-being. For participant no 6, Group H, this coping mechanism increased her likelihood of successful adjustment to Australian society. Reading books and doing voluntary work fulfilled her desire of social interaction with her own ethnic group.

> I do not suffer from the new environment because I am used to it and I am enjoying my new life. I live only for the present time. I do not think about the past or about the future. What is very important for me is the present that I need to enjoy. This attitude has helped me to think positively and enjoy my life (no 3, Group H).

> I have adapted myself to the new environment. I never see myself as a lonely person and I do my best not to be alone. I make myself busy all the time. For example; I love reading books and this occupies a lot of my time and I think this is a very good method for coping with my problems. I do a lot of voluntary jobs and this gives me good self-satisfaction. I attend different classes and all of these make me a happy person (no 6, Group H).

The participants' coping strategies revealed that looking at a specific migration problem from a different angle can make a big difference. Not only can a positive approach solve a problem but it may also transform it to a pleasant experience. A positive approach avoids in the first place, conceptualizing new situations as 'problems'. So what these women are doing is 're appraising' situations from 'problems' to challenges, and new experiences. This coping

strategy was exceptionally positive and it can be a very useful coping method not only for Persian women but for other migrant groups as well.

6.8.3 Type three –Optimism and religious coping

One participant's (no 4, Group A) approach was quite different from the others. She looked at her migration and its issues from a different perspective. As evident from the statement below, she seemed very religious, spiritual and relaxed.

> We have all a common problem and that is, we see only our own personal problems and try to forget that others have many problems too. If you look at life more deeply you will see that there is more to life than the surface. I try to see life more spiritually not materialistically. I feel we are all examined by God to go through different hardships. I think if we look at life under spiritual light the meaning of life and its problems will be very much different. If we accept that hardship in life gives meaning to our existence and the purpose of life, the way we would handle a problem would be very much different. I try to face my problem spiritually rather than materialistically (no 4, Group A).

This participant's approach was praised by some of the other participants. For example participant no 6, Group A:

> It is very interesting to see that you look at your migration issues very optimistically and this is very good. One of the best outcomes of today's discussion for me is, to not see my problems in a negative way. If I am able to see my problems positively or as less serious, I think I will have a much easier life here (no 6, Group A).

Participant no 7, Group B, had a very similar approach and made a similar impression on her group. She explained how she has overcome her emotional problems caused by migration:

> Financial issues have been the most difficult problems I have faced after migration. When we migrated to Australia we almost lost everything and this was very distressing. When I look at my financial issues from a positive perspective I come to terms with the fact, that there is a cost for everything. If I think that I must have everything that I had in Iran financially, plus the advantages of the new society, it is very unrealistic. I needed to lose something in Iran to gain something here and that was the cost that I paid for gaining freedom. When I think that, we had five houses in Iran but I was not living happily. I needed those houses for my children and for their future. If my children are happy and have a good future in Australia, why should I be upset for the financial loss? Changing my attitudes and perspectives have helped me to have less stress now and I see the improvement

everyday. I know all Iranians have suffered to some extent for this migration and I am not an exception (no 7, Group B).

One may note that this participant valued her children and their future, and freedom in the new milieu more than her possessions. The focus group was also impressed with her positive approach. Participant no 6, Group B, who knew her expressed her feelings:

> I need to admit that I believe in her. She has been a very good role model for me. I see my life under a different light since I became friends with her (no 6, Group B).

Those participants who had positive and optimistic approaches to their problems not only helped themselves to overcome their adjustment problems to a great extent, but they also influenced their other friends by transferring these positive feelings to them.

6.9   Conclusion

The majority of the participants in this study nominated freedom as the greatest benefit of life in Australia and this was interpreted in a number of ways. Several participants mentioned personal freedom as well as social freedom and the opportunity to develop interpersonal skills. In many instances, freedom was understood as freedom of actions, as people can choose their course in life, to study, work and play if and in the way they desire. Freedom also was interpreted as freedom of speech. Personal social liberties in Australia were also positively valued by a number of participants. This was of special value compared with Iran where behavior was circumscribed by stricter social mores.

Education is highly valued in Persian culture. The increased educational opportunities for women and/or their children were another positive change in women's lives after migration that was greatly valued by 46 (79.3 %) participants. It was evident from their comments that this aspect of Persian culture was transmitted by parents as young respondents in the sample had high aspirations for their professional development.

The participants of this study gave higher priority to the family as the most important aspect of Persian culture. The family system of participants were found to be not significantly influenced by Western culture as traditional values, beliefs, and customs persisted within the family. Only a relatively small number of families in the study adopted Western values and attitudes of the Australian culture. The home was the domain for establishing and

internalizing Persian cultural values. It was crucial for participants to be exposed to their core values in the home as the primary set of values. The family was the domain in which individuals internalized a pride in their culture and its values which helped them develop a confident sense of identity. Younger participants depended on the family as the domain for the maintenance of collectivist values.

Persian women who were of mature age enjoyed the interaction and warmth of the extended family when living in Iran. This was notably absent and surely missed in the new environment. The lack of extended family support was a problem that was referred to commonly by participants.

A significant number of women among the present group of participants had a strong sense of identification with their Persian cultural heritage. The difficulty these migrant women were facing was not the loss of material belongings but mainly the loss of connections with the homeland and in the loss of relationships, in particular, the nuclear and extended family. For these women, extra energies and coping strategies were needed to cope with family separation and loneliness. However, with their internal strengths, and resources, some women were coping with their loneliness quite well. Some tolerated their loneliness because they believed that by staying in Australia they provided better opportunities for their children.

Some participants discussed how visits from relatives in Iran strengthened and revitalized heritage and traditions transmitted in the home.

Some participants discussed the suffering caused by unemployment in the new environment. This was intensified by the feeling of social isolation and alienation that accompany the migration experience. Some participants were especially vulnerable in the new society as they were highly dependent on family members to negotiate contacts with the outside world. This was mainly a common issue among elderly women who lacked English language skills and were financially dependent on their children.

Emotional difficulties commonly reported included feelings of separation, isolation and loneliness. Loneliness was the most commonly reported problem and was manifested in a number of ways. Some reported having trouble in finding good friends within the dominant group as well as within their own cultural group. This was an issue common to all age groups

in the study. The second type of experience most frequently mentioned was related to more practical aspects of life - employment, finance, future security, and the quality of life in Australia. Eight respondents claimed that there was nothing about life in Australia that they found attractive.

There were striking similarities in the reasons given by a significant number of participants for migrating to Australia. Those who had children considered their children's education, the security and the future of their offspring as the main consideration for the decision to emigrate. This finding was very much in line with the commonly held belief that responsibilities transcend an individual's personal interests in Persian families.

Younger participants were conscious that their personal cultural systems had been transformed by growing up in a different culture rather than in their homeland. Older participants had clear recollections of the homeland. Persia (Iran) remained the source of cultural roots but Australia was perceived as the new country on a permanent or temporary basis. For some participants, return rather than travel to Persia was felt to be needed for their sense of personal well-being.

Participants in this study revealed that difficulties in adaptation may result in a myriad of emotional problems. There may be a feeling of not being at ease with themselves, confusion in the new environment, loneliness and a strong sense of guilt for having left their homeland while other members of their families remained behind.

Some mature age women in the study expressed distress, confusion, loss and being torn between their traditional cultural values and the mainstream culture when dealing with their children's social behavior. This confusion seemed to be more evident for those who decided for themselves to maintain the morals of their own culture but allowing their children to practice Australian cultural values.

Participants' comments revealed that migration changed and broadened women's role within the family after migration. Some Persian women had more responsibility in the family with less emotional and physical support from the outside. For single women who needed to fulfill both father and mother roles for their children and who also did not receive extended family

support ,the situation became more stressful and difficult to cope with. This caused some of them emotional and physical illness.

Participants' comments revealed that migration has had a major impact on family relationships. In some instances it has caused break-ups and separations in the marriage. It was interesting to observe that migration issues such as unemployment had a different impact on Persian families depending on their cultural assimilation and the individual characteristics of family members.

Some participants had positive attitudes towards migration and they were implementing problem-solving approaches in coping with their situations. Some participants' comments illustrated that for Persian culture, migration over any distance does not cut off emotional links with the homeland. The coping strategies used by the participants in this study group have led to a sharper focus on the ways in which migration experience is shaped by the total circumstances of a person's life. While it is acknowledged that cultural categories confer specific meaning on migration problems, it is also recognized that adjustment meanings and the experience of migration in daily life are not static but are produced in ongoing social interaction.
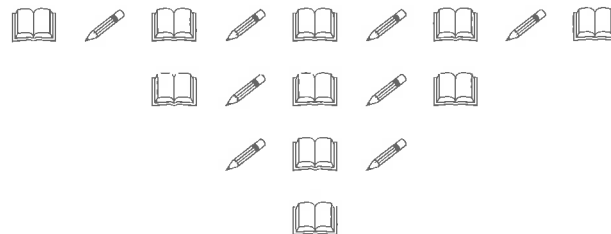
7.1 Methodological considerations

The findings in this research attest to many areas of adjustment difficulty reported by Persian immigrant women in Australia. The data provide evidence of the struggles of Persian women immigrants in their attempts to adapt to a new and radically different cultural environment and also contribute to an understanding of the possible origins of the psychological and adaptation problems of this population. Since most of the Persian immigrants (93%) were recent migrants of less than 15 years living in Australia, this sample was probably fairly representative of the total population concerned. Nevertheless, any generalizations from these results should be made with caution as only 209 Persian women participated in this research.

The use of both quantitative (questionnaire survey) and qualitative (group interviews) approaches for data gathering proved satisfactory and appropriate in terms of the stated aims of the present study. This approach combined a self-administered questionnaire survey and the collection of information through semi-structured focus group interviews. It was considered that data gathered through one method, would tend to complement the gathered information by the other.

Furthermore, it was believed that the survey method approach that requires selecting the most appropriate of a limited number of choices could not on its own reflect the values, attitudes and the experiences of participants. Thus focus group interviews in addition to the survey method, allowed participants to elaborate on issues and to give detailed explanations and insights into their life experiences after migration. This information can give deeper levels of understanding which complement and inform the data produced by survey questions. The advantage of focus group interviews is that respondents are relatively free to express their thoughts, feelings, aspirations and assessments of their situation. As Krueger (1994) points out, often feelings provide a depth of understanding of the social environment of the participant which cannot be achieved with a questionnaire survey. According to Bellaby (1991) the use of both qualitative and quantitative techniques would allow cross-checking and add to the validity of information gathered and consequently leads to more reliable results.

There was a concern that Persian women suffering from stress and dissatisfaction from migration will be more likely to participate in this study than those with less stress and more life satisfaction. If this were the case it would be expected that a trend in responses would be

observed. On the other hand, it was a concern that Persian women who had higher levels of stress and dissatisfaction about their migration, may be less inclined to participate in the study. Given the diversity of attitudes and experiences observed in the results it is reasonable to conclude that the responses given were likely to be representative of the overall Persian population. Based on the data collected, Persian women who participated in this study can be described as being relatively heterogeneous.

In terms of representativeness, it should be noted that the response rates to the questionnaire and focus group interviews were reasonably high (cf section 4.3.3.1; table 4.1). However, there was a decreased rate of participation in the second stage of the study. Loss of anonymity through having to provide a postal address may have reduced the response rate in the focus group interviews. Furthermore, the sample's age, length of residence (up to ten years) and educational level generally reflect the ABS (1996b) Census. Where the sample differed from census data was that more Muslim (64% vs. 32% in the census), less Christian (3.8% vs. 27.3% in the census), more married (72% vs. 63% in the census) and less single women (11% vs. 19.4% in the census) participated in the research. The over-representation of Muslim and married women in the sample may be related to the strategies employed for promoting the project in the Persian community (*see* section 4.3.1). For example, Persian newspapers and magazines and SBS Persian radio programs are more likely to be read and listened by married, Muslim and Bahae'is due to the topics covered. Persian Christians are also less involved and are less present in the Persian community and its activities.

The survey results indicate that the internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of each scale achieved alphas that were moderate (change in roles, alpha of 61) to high (GHQ-12, alpha of 90) (see Table 5.2).

7.2   Varieties of adaptive responses

Unlike most migrants, Persian immigrants have been pushed from their country of origin rather than pulled by the attractions of a particular resettlement country. Most of the participants in this research arrived in Australia after the hardship that they went through due to the Islamic revolution in 1979. Naturally they looked forward to living in a land of peace.

Adjustment to the new culture was one of the major sources of stress for many participants. These included inadequate skills in the English language, conflict between moral standards in Australia and those accepted in Iran, and the lack of one's own cultural life. The various health, social and welfare services in the host country were referred to by participants, particularly the social welfare system and educational opportunities. Some respondents felt that they had to either lower their expectations and accept their present circumstances, or else be unhappy forever.

As stressed by Lazarus and Launier (1978), the extent of perceived stress, the coping strategies and the consequences for individual well-being depend on two main classes of cognitive processes. One process refers to the way in which situational stressors are perceived and interpreted. Lazarus labels this process "primary appraisal". For instance, the more threatening a situation is perceived, the more stress an immigrant will experience. The second process is called "secondary appraisal" and is defined as a cognitive process referring to the individual's belief about one's own ability to cope, and the effectiveness of the coping strategies selected in a stress situation. Lazarus and his associate believe that the amount of acculturation stress experienced and the effectiveness of the acculturation strategies applied determines an immigrant's well-being. This was clearly observed among the Persian women participants in the focus groups, who selected different coping strategies (*see* section 6.9). When segregation was chosen, the relations with Australian society were negatively perceived and potential conflict between the needs of the Australian society and those of the women remained unresolved. This situation caused continuous stress for these women. When Persian women participants integrated, they were able to establish a relationship with the host culture as well as maintain their relationship with the Persian culture. In fact, some of them compromised between the host and their own ethnic group. It was evident that the women who segregated from the mainstream had more emotional problems than those who had integrated (*see* section 6.8).

The statistical analysis of the quantitative data in this research suggest that integration seems to be the most effective strategy for better mental health. Women who had less adjustment problems, had higher self-esteem and women who had problems of adaptation experienced more tension (*see* table 5.13.1). In the present study women's self-esteem, and tension symptoms were predicted by the problem index (adjustment problems) and problems of adaptation (problems on arrival) respectively. However, individual differences need to be

considered as relevant determinants which may have an influence on individual well-being and health. The findings of Berry et al. (1977, 1987), Sameyah-Amiri (1998) and Schmitz (1990) also demonstrate the marked superiority of integration. Sameyah-Amiri's finding indicates that biculturality is related to the best mental health outcome for Persian women in California. However, Berry in his model of acculturation stress suggests that in other societies other modes of acculturation may be more applicable and effective when they are able to match conceptions of the host society and those of the acculturating population (Berry et al., 1987).

This research reinforces the impression that satisfactory adjustment of migrants is heavily dependent on resolving interpersonal stressors associated with breaking-up social networks in the native nation and replacing those ties in the receiving nation. Perceiving a fundamental incompatibility between the Persian culture and Australian culture was also related to depression and in some cases among elderly women, indicated feelings of alienation (see section 6.4.2.1). Some of these women felt alienated by their inability to comprehend some social norms of the new culture. In the focus group discussions some women re-emerged the trauma of the emigratory experience with intense emotional distress. Some started thinking about Iran with excruciating nostalgia, and idealized it. They became afraid that their life had been wasted, they doubted their decision to emigrate, and started criticising everything that is different from the original culture. They felt that their roots had been lost, yet they also displayed insight by realising that it is impossible to go back to Iran because the world they have left has changed dramatically and they do not belong there any more. However, the perceived stress, the chosen reaction forms, and the pattern of acculturation chosen by participants were different even in the same objective situation (*see* section 6.8).

Problems of separation, as this investigation has pointed out, are significant issues in the adaptation process of Persian women immigrants. One ongoing source of stress mentioned by participants in the focus group discussions, was the grief they experienced by being separated from family members and losing their cultural ties with Iran. This is open to a variety of interpretations. Certainly many of these women felt guilty about having moved away from the families that they have left behind. This finding is in line with Nicassio and Pate's (1984) findings in their study of Indochinese refugees in the United States, that separation from family members was a distressing problem that was more serious than practical obstacles such as the inability to speak the language or poor financial status. The present study also confirms

Good, et al.'s (1985) findings. They found loss of family members and close friends were the most important losses experienced by leaving Iran among Jewish Iranian immigrants in the United States. Despite participants' permanent status in Australia, some participants were grieving the loss of their country as well as their family. This was also confirmed in Lipson (1992), and Kashani's (1988 cited in Lipson 1992) studies.

In the focus group interviews, there were also recently arrived migrants who experienced 'cultural shock'. They were not capable of understanding the differences in values and social conventions between Persian and Australian culture. They perceived the difficulties they encountered in their social relationships as their own personal fault, a subjective deficiency which is independent of the external environment, such as not knowing the English language. These women had lost their confidence in themselves. A few other Persian women tended to idealize the host country, without having any in-depth knowledge of it. Having emigrated, they convinced themselves that in a new environment they will be able to resolve their family conflicts. On the contrary, these conflicts were often aggravated and the divisions became wider than was expected, leading, for example, to separation and divorce.

7.3   Psychological Outcomes

The present study identified that there is an elevated level of psychological distress among the Persian-Australian women surveyed (36.9 %) compared with some other population based surveys where GHQ has been used (*see* Table 5.9.1).   In the only study which targeted a Persian-Australian population in Sydney (Khavarpour, 1997) a very similar proportion (36.5 %) of 'cases' on the basis of above-threshold GHQ-20 scores (scores ≥ 4) was revealed, although in Khavarpour's study, both males and females were targeted but there was no significant gender difference (males 37.8%, females 34.3%).

Length of residence had a positive significant correlation with age and tertiary education and negative significant correlations with high school education and being Bahai's. High school education was a predictor for employment status and consistency of work with qualifications. Women who had high school education had less chance of finding a job and less chance of finding a job consistent with their qualifications (*see* Table 5.13.3).

As various features of the new society serve to heighten or reduce stress on migrants, the results of this study suggest that the process of migration and adjustment to the new society has been stressful for Persian-Australian women. In general, due to the differences in the two cultures, social adjustment is difficult for Persian women. Statistical analysis of the data (Pearson correlation, multiple regression) indicated that problems of adjustment and adaptation problems were significant predictors for Psychological Outcome measures such as low self-esteem and tension symptoms (see Table 5.13.1). They were also closely correlated with all the mental health measures such as GHQ-12, chronic symptoms, tension symptoms, emotional well-being and self-esteem (see Table 5.12.1). Persian women who were experiencing adjustment problems had lower self-esteem and overall poorer mental health. The psychological impact of migration on professional women who have not been able to find a job in Australia is vast. Their role shifted from being a professional working woman to a homemaker. Previous opportunity to express abilities and talents in the work situation no longer exists and this poses a threat to their self-esteem

The emotional problems that follow the individual's loss of status and prestige are tremendous. In Persian culture, one's occupation not only represents one's status but also the merit of one's family (Davidian, 1973). In Australian culture, when one gets close to the retirement age he/she plans ahead, whereas in Iran there is nothing else planned except working in the profession. In other words, in the Persian culture, leisure and enjoyment has a different meaning. In Persian culture employment is a major part of a person's life regardless of age. Persian people experience great enjoyment from work as they believe work is like blood in the body *'johare badan'*. Being a 'work-aholic' is very common among Persians, especially among men.

The high GHQ score for women who are in the top prime working group (37-49) compared with the younger groups might be due to their authority increasing and decreasing flexibility in the social and family settings (*see* Table 5.9.1). 'Caseness' varied according to occupational class with higher rates in those unemployed and the lowest for students. Women who were unemployed have higher GHQ scores than the employed. This is in line with Boardman's (1987) finding with GHQ-28 that students had lower case rates than the employed but it is inconsistent with the Khavarpour (1997) and Winefield et al. (1989) findings of higher scores and higher case rates of students compared to other occupational groups. GHQ scores were higher for Persian women who had high school education

compared with women with tertiary education and primary education. This may be due to the unemployment rate among this group and also the non recognition of their high school certificate in Australia. As indicated before, high school education was a predictor for employment status and consistency of work with qualification. Women who had high school education had less chance of finding a job and less chance of finding a job consistent with their qualification (*see* Table 5.13.3). Furthermore, maintenance of former occupation status was a predictor for 'identification with Australia' and 'problems of adaptation' (see Table 5.13.4). Persian women who had not maintained their former occupational status had less identification with Australia and had more adaptation problems. This may be due to the host culture's non recognition and undervaluing of their education and skills.

Qualitative findings of this study indicated that the impact of migration was experienced very differently by working and non-working women since work had particularly strong repercussions in aligning marital relationships. For example women who were working had more cooperative roles with their husbands, sharing power and activities, as it allowed women to break with some traditional roles and patterns of dependence and assert a new found freedom. For these women, patriarchal roles in the household were transformed to some extent as their capacity to participate as equals in household decision-making was enhanced. Conversely, women who did not work were increasingly dependent on their husbands to help them interact with the host society. However, employment did not affect their primary identities as wives and mothers, rather it reinforced these identities as it allowed Persian working women to redefine them in a more satisfying manner than prior to their migration (*see* section 6.4.2.6).

There appears to be a pattern in the survey findings suggesting that higher education and a greater social standing in respect to employment are associated with better psychological well-being among Persian women. This is consistent with the Khavarpour finding (1997) among Persian immigrants in Sydney that reported being employed decreased the likelihood of having high GHQ scores. However, the study's finding is in contrast with the Westermeyer, et al. (1983) study who found in a sample of Hmong refugees that presence of employment, rather than lack of employment, was associated with greater psychopathology and depression. The survey results of the present study, is in partial support of Nicassio and Pate's (1984) study that reported that longer residence in the host country, meaningful employment, higher education and higher income produced less alienation. However,

statistical analysis of the data (Pearson correlations and multiple regression) supports the positive correlation between length of residence and working (r=.32**, p<.01) and tertiary education (r=.23**, p<.01), and length of residence as a predictor for employment (*see* Table 5.13.3), but it did not have any correlations with any of the Psychological Outcome measures (*see* Table 15.12.8).

Nicassio and Pate (1984) studied the effect of age on the mental health of migrants. The investigators found that advanced age was associated with greater alienation, leading to poorer mental health. No such direct relationship was evident in the survey results of the present study, as age did not correlate with any of the Psychological Outcome measures. However, age had a negative correlation (r=-.23**) with life satisfaction in Australia, indicating that older women had less satisfaction with their life in Australia. Life satisfaction also had significant negative correlations with all mental health (Psychological Outcome) measures, and problems of adaptation (*see* Table 5.12.1). The results indicate that women who have less life satisfaction in Australia and have problems of adaptation are experiencing psychological problems. This supports Bagheri's (1992) study which investigated psychiatric illness among Iranian immigrants in Canada. He found that 60 % of 111 Iranian patients who were referred for psychiatric treatment "met the diagnosis criteria for adjustment disorder with depressed or anxious mood – a maladaptive reaction to living in a new country with a different culture and language" (Bagheri 1992, p. 8). The present study's finding is also in line with Hojat and Herman's (1985) study that investigated the adjustment and psychological problems of Iranian and Filipino physicians in the U.S. He reported that adjustment problems were related closely to psychopathological measures such as loneliness, anxiety, depression, homesickness, and low self-esteem. He also found that the relationships between perceived adjustment problems and age and length of stay in the U.S. were not significant for Iranian physicians. The qualitative results of the present study do not support the independence of age and adjustment problems, as older women reported many problems such as language proficiency, transport problems, difficulty in understanding the Australian way of life, a downgrading of their socio-economic and social status after migration, and loneliness. But it does support the relationship of problems of adaptation with psychological distress, as older women reported more psychological disturbance caused by loneliness, homesickness, dependency on their children, and financial hardships, than other age groups.

In regard to the relationship between length of residence and mental health, Westermeyer et al. (1983) noted improvement in mental health, particularly depression, over increasing length of residence. This may be as a result of acquisition of cultural competence over time in the host culture. Weatermeyer and his associate's findings support Taft's (1985) view that, the exposure to the new culture not only provides an opportunity to learn, but it increases immigrants' cultural skills such as language and knowledge and thus, in turn, increases their competence for acquiring further skills. Taft (1985) states "Competence and satisfaction interact with each other and also with identity. A combination of satisfaction and competence enhances identification with the new culture since they increase its attractiveness and can provide a boost for an immigrant's self-esteem in relation to that culture" (p. 377). In the present study, the survey results indicated that there was no significant correlation between the length of residence and any of the Psychological Outcome measures, however length of residence had a small positive correlation with Identification with Australia (r=.21**, p<.01).

For the new immigrant, ethnic associations are the passport to a new life providing the resources and support necessary for success in the new environment. They are necessary, supportive and stress-reducing (Graves and Graves, 1977, 1985). In respect to Persian immigrants, social interrelationships are "as complex as the elaborately woven Iranian carpets with their colourful and intricate but harmonious designs" (Davidian, 1973, p. 537). Qualitative results revealed that lack of social support was another ongoing stressor among Persian women participants. This was noted in other studies of Iranian immigrants in the United States (Kuo & Tsai's, 1986; Lindholm & Shoaee, 1984; Lipson, 1992). They found better overall mental health and less depression among those migrants who had greater community support. However, these are in distinct contrast with observations provided by Hanna (1998), who found community involvement and ethnic networks were two potential psychological stressors. In her study of migration and acculturation stress among Samoans, she reported that migrant women who are most highly involved in community associations experienced stress at a greater level than those who are not. She suggested that the changes in women's roles after migration and the composition of migrant community associations are the sources of distress.

Similar findings have been provided by Brown et al. (1992) in their study of African-Americans. The major stressor was chronic economic strain due to low socioeconomic status. The level of stress was evaluated as depressive symptoms. Religious and community

involvement reduced distress, but the ethnic networks themselves appeared to be of little value. Brown et al.'s (1992) findings suggest temporal changes may have modified network adaptive value. There are clearly benefits from migrant ethnic associations, but stress reduction is not universally one of them as some established migrants choose to leave networks and strike out on their own, while many others may be reluctant to lose contact.

Evident from the survey results, some of the participants were worried about how their children were absorbing Australian norms and values (57%), where they did not have close social ties with Australian society themselves. This was more distressing when they could not find any cohesive social networks in the Persian community. This issue was well reflected in the Persian women's comments in the focus group discussions. Many participants indicated that values in Australian society that contrasted with Persian traditional values caused them to worry and feel sad for their children being raised in Australian society (*see* section 6.4.2.4).

The immigrant's ethnic group could be considered as an important source of support. Kuo and Tasi (1986) found that one's ethnic community is the most powerful influence in lowering stress and preventing development of psychological problems of a migrant. They also found that the refugees' whose families are intact tend to experience better mental health due to the greater family support. Based on these findings, it can be presumed that the larger ethnic groups such as Greeks and Italians in Australia are more advantaged in forming support networks than smaller groups such as Persians. Larger ethnic groups' organizations will be in a position to assist the ethnic group members with issues such as family reunification, employment referral, financial assistance, cultural orientations and crisis intervention. Kuo and Tasi (1986) suggest that strong social support is a crucial factor for good mental health of migrants. However, participants in the focus groups expressed their disappointment of being deprived from such a valuable resource. The Persian population in Australia has not been able to develop a large organized ethnic community that could socially support Persian immigrants, because it is characterized by factionalism and distrust based on political, religious, and social class differences. This issue was well reflected in the survey results as participants emphasised 'conflict between Persian groups' as the six important adjustment issues amongst 19 adjustment problems and over half of the participants (58.8%), reported this issue as either very serious or somewhat serious (Table 5.11.1).

7.4   Identification

The survey results indicated that Persian women were able to secure a distinct ethnic identity as indicated by their responses to the national self-identification questions (*see* section 5.5). Results revealed that the acquisition of Australian knowledge did not result in the replacement of Persian concepts, but provided an additional conceptual base. Persian national identity was very strong among the participants as the majority of the sample (86%) had either strong positive (58%) or a moderate positive feeling (28%) of their Persian nationality. However, 42% reported either a strong positive feeling (13%) and a moderately positive feeling (29%) of being considered Australian. Furthermore, almost half of the participants of the study group (49%) reported that they were happy to spend the rest of their life in Australia. Berry (1980) and his associates (Berry et al., 1987,1989) have called this a process of integration, wherein an individual retains a high degree of natal cultural integrity while acquiring the host culture knowledge. Cultural integration can be seen as a coping style resulting in lower stress during the acculturation process (Berry et al., 1987). The present finding also gains support from Pezeshki's (1993) study of the acculturation process of Iranian immigrants in the United States. Pezeshki found that those Iranians who attempt to learn from the host culture while maintaining their own cultural identity, increase their chance of benefiting from both cultures. This group feel more self-worth and have higher self-esteem compared with those who do not attempt to take advantage of the new culture and its benefits. The latter group suffer from a low self-esteem as well as those who make a large shift and assimilate to the new culture. Similar findings were reported by Marmot and Syme (1976), who found a retention of a traditional culture also reduced health problems. In their study of blood pressure variation among Japanese Americans, they found that men who maintained a traditional orientation in community interactions also showed lower blood pressure, similar to those observed in Japan. Taken with the present results, this supports a concept that maintaining a traditional cultural identification provides a framework for facilitating stress reduction during acculturation.

Young Persian women living in Australia are confronted with tensions stemming from conflicts between the host culture and their original culture as they have different pressures from the family as well as from the wider society. Issues relating to personal identity, social identity and cultural identity are important factors when looking at these conflicts. Although in Australia, Persian family structure and traditional roles of husband and wife are changing,

Persian girls still are not permitted the freedom that their Australian counterparts may experience. While freedom for boys is greater, parental authority with boys is not entirely lax. Boys are permitted more freedom but most conform to parents' wishes and ideals. There is often a generation gap between parents and their children. This gap seems greater, however, for Persian immigrants in Australia.

The focus group discussion indicated that some of the young Persian women in the present study seemed to feel confused, lost, and torn between their parents' culture and the mainstream culture to which they are constantly exposed. This was evident mostly for those who have not yet forged an identity for themselves within either culture. In contrast, those who have decided for themselves to adopt the morals of their parents or the morals of the dominant culture do not, at least on the surface, seem to suffer the same degree of cultural conflict. The degree of pressure for a young Persian woman depends on how much she self categorizes and identifies as Persian and how much she identifies as Australian. This also may depend on the age she migrated. Hanassab (1991) found in her study on Iranian women, a significant negative relationship existed between the age the individual left Iran and her acculturation level. The present study does not confirm Hanassab's finding as there was no relationship between the age of participants and identification with Australia (see Table 5.12.1). However results indicate that young Persian women have a higher Australian identification as well as more positive feelings for their Persian nationality compared with other age groups (See Figure, 5.5.1, and Figure 5.5.3). These findings reveal that young Persian women participants gave highest priority and appreciation to Persian culture and their Persian identity and the notion of contributing to a multicultural Australia. From these findings, it is clear that these young women are in favor of integration into the Australian society as opposed to assimilation or separation. Survey results appear to support qualitative findings indicating the high value these young Persian women assigned to the general notion of the maintenance and transmission of Persian culture and at the same time adopting a variety of strategies in dealing with their dual cultural environment.

The study findings share the features of a *Bicultural* type; one of the four ideal types of cultural adaptation in ethnically plural societies, a model developed by Smolicz (1979b, 1999) (see section 3.3.5). According to Smolicz (1979b), the network of groups, institutions and relationships in which people participate can be viewed in terms of social systems in which individuals constitute social values for one another. Individuals can be seen to construct two

sorts of personal social systems, - a *primary personal* system, made up of the people with whom they have established primary relationships (home), and a *secondary personal* system, consisting of those linked to the individual through secondary relationships (society). These two cultural systems act separately and the two components appear to retain their autonomy. According to Smolicz (1979b, 1999), the construction of a *Bicultural* personal value system will be the most favoured outcome where the prevailing societal value orientation is Internal Cultural Pluralism which permits interaction in a dual system; primary and secondary social relations.

Survey results reveal that overall, the young age group had higher life satisfaction in Australia compared with other age groups with significant satisfaction in social life and opportunities to work in a desirable job for which they might be qualified. Furthermore, they had lower GHQ scores compared with other age groups. Although they had more positive feelings about their Persian national identity, they had more positive feelings of being Australian as well, compared with other age groups. It was noteworthy to observe that young participants identified with Persian culture to the same extent, or even more so compared with other age groups. This finding indicates that young Persian women were able to resolve their cultural conflicts by identifying with their Persian ethnic group. This is especially important in the absence of a strong ethnic community, and extended family support that most participants lacked. It indicates that young Persian women were influenced by the home environment in which cultural ideals were protected and preserved. However unlike what was anticipated and hypothesized, cultural conflict was negligible for young Persian women. This finding reveals that young Persian women through the process of cultural contacts and social interactions, have been able to activate different cultural values in different social environments (home and the society) to form a dual national self identity for themselves. This finding supports earlier findings of the present author (Ziaian, 1994,1995). This dual identity has probably led them to have less adjustment problems and more life satisfaction which would contribute to better emotional well-being.

The qualitative data analysis confirmed that many young Persian women participants in the present study were well aware of the differences between Persian and Australian cultural values. Like their parents, some were concerned about the maintenance and the transformation of their cultural values to their future children. The findings of the present study receives full support from the findings of an ethnographic study of intercultural learning

among Iranian exiles and immigrants in California conducted by Hoffman (1990). She found that, although there were significant cultural conflicts between Iranian and Americans, the process of cultural adjustment for Iranians was mainly a positive learning experience. In her investigation, Iranians' adaptation to American culture was "eclectic", as they tended only to select the "positive" aspects of the host culture. Despite learning the positive aspects of American culture, many Iranian participants "did not feel that they were in any sense becoming a part of the American system" (Hoffman 1990, p. 285-287). Her findings were clearly observed in the present study. In particular, among young Persian women who held more favorable attitudes towards Australia compared with other age groups.

The present study's findings also finds support from Hojat et al.'s (1999) study that indicated Iranians both in Iran and U.S. gave a high value to the maternal role and to family loyalty but did not favor unrestricted freedom for youngsters. It also receives support from Chaichian's (1997) study which investigated Iranian immigrants' cultural identity living in Iowa. His findings indicate that while the majority of the respondents were bilingual and integrated to the host culture, they were confident in raising their children on Iranian cultural values.

Indeed, among Persian migrants, it is not accurate to assume that greater mainstream language proficiency is linked to "greater acculturation" to the host culture. This was evident in Barati-Marandi's (1981) study, which found that among Iranians surveyed in southern California, there were high levels of structural assimilation and behavioral receptional assimilation (i.e. lack of host society prejudice), but low levels of cultural and identification assimilation. In his study, Iranians most disapproved of identification with U.S. society and variables such as English proficiency and length of residence in the United States showed no significant correlation with levels of assimilation. In the present study, a significant positive correlation between length of residence and identification with Australia (r=.209**) and working (r=.324**) were found but did not have any significant correlations with any of the Psychological Outcome measures.

Certainly, one must distinguish between "instrumental integration" (Hoffman, 1989b) into Australian society (such as fluency in English language), and a deeper level of commitment to Australian values and ways of meaning. During my group interviews, I found that some women who seemed to attach little significance to the migration event, who declared that they had lost interest in Iran, and that they identify themselves as Australian, became very

emotional when others were sharing their migration experiences. Even though some of these women did not participate in the social life of the Persian community and readily adopted the Australian lifestyle, they became vulnerable and quite distressed when faced with their children leaving home before marriage. These women were not able to identify with the Australian culture at the deepest level. This finding supports Hoffman's (1990) claim in her study of cultural learning among Iranians in the United States who found: "instrumental and behavioral integration with American society, combined with lack of cultural identification, thus seemed to be a basic theme in Iranian adaptation" (1990, p. 288).

The effect of the exposure of an immigrant to a new society is mediated by the attitudes, norms and role requirements of the individual, the family and the community, and the society at large. In the case of Persian immigrants, there are some who see Australia as a new society which has a lot of educational opportunity and potential for children and young adults. However, anti-intellectual values within Australian culture conflict with the high regard Persian culture has for learning. This is a very common viewpoint among highly educated Persian immigrants. This attitude leads to conflict on the part of some Persian immigrants who become integrated economically but remain Persian at heart. These Persian migrants are resocialized (*see* Taft, 1985) only with respect to certain aspects of the Australian society. They develop certain social skills such as proficiency in English and the adoption of social roles connected with economic institutions, but they might not change their values regarding what is important in their private life.

Qualitative results revealed that although some of the participants felt that they had adjusted well to life in Australia, there were others for whom the experience was painful and far less positive. There were a few women who found themselves alienated completely from Australian culture, while attempting to maintain a single Persian identity. These women experienced conflict, anxiety, and disorientation with Australian culture and felt intense conflict between preserving their Persian identity and adjusting to the Australian lifestyle. These women tried rejecting most or all of Australian cultural values and behavior. They felt that they were obligated to resist behavioral and social adjustment as any compromise with Australian culture, posed a threat to their Persian identity. These finding are supported from Famili's (1997) study that found Iranian immigrants who resist learning American customs experience more adaptation problems in comparison to those who adopt certain American

customs. It was notable that in the present study there was only one participant who attempted to completely dismiss her Persian identity.

As noted by many researchers, most immigrants and refugees relocate to a new country to obtain a better quality of life or life opportunities. However, this seems to be a major and potentially stressful commitment when they leave their homeland to become part of a new country. It seems possible that although they might be understandably proud of their cultural heritage, it would also be important for them to be accepted as a member of their adopted country. As part of this process, they attempt to adopt the cultural norms of the host country. Consistent with this view, research on migrants' acculturation strategies has indicated that integration (maintenance of the native culture and adoption of new culture), is a preferred strategy by the majority of migrants, whereas the acculturation strategy that is preferred by the members of the host culture is assimilation (rejection of native culture and adoption of the host culture). The logical outcome here is that the more migrants intend to maintain their ethnic identity, the less they will be accepted and the more they will be the recipients of discrimination and stereotyping. The important consequence of this is that self-esteem deriving from their ethnic identification will be systematically undermined as this was clearly evident in the Nesdale et al., (1997) and Liebkind (1996) studies that found ethnic identity to be a significant predictor of migrant psychological distress. In the present study, there was a small negative, yet significant relationship between identification with Australia and tension symptoms, low self-esteem and emotional well-being (*see* Table 5.12.11). However, in the multiple regression analysis, identification with Australia was not a significant predictor for any of the Psychological Outcome measures.

7.5   Life satisfaction

Satisfaction, the foundation on which an immigrant's potential assimilation rests, is not a simple state to understand. Feelings of satisfaction depend on the degree to which current rewards or expected future rewards match the level of aspiration. However, levels of aspiration vary up or down in response to social pressures and reference group standards, and where escape is not possible, or not desired for different reasons, realism may also dictate a lowering of aspiration level. For example, in the present study, qualitative results revealed that some Persian women seemed to have adjusted their aspirations to a realistic level. One factor that appeared to play a role in Persian women's adaptation to Australian society was the

individual's acceptance of the unlikelihood of returning to Iran in the near future. Though most of the women in this study felt strong attachment to Iran and to an ideal to return, most also faced the reality that given the situation in Iran, such a return was highly unlikely. This acceptance helped them to reduce their tension and to adjust to their situation. This finding is in line with Kohob's (1997) study that reported that the unlikelihood of return to Iran made social integration possible for Iranian immigrants in California. This was clearly evident in the present participants' assessment of their migration (*see* section 6.8). Although, participants evaluated their migration differently in which some viewed migration as a positive step and others as a regretful step taken in their life, the majority of participants were happy about their migration despite their dissatisfaction. This finding receives support from Minas et al.'s (1993b) study that found despite Turkish immigrants' dissatisfaction with some aspects of life in Australia, "they changed their intention from remaining temporary to permanent residence" (p. 22).

Participants' responses in the survey results portrayed a similar pattern when they were asked 'whether they are happy to spend the rest of their life in Australia', 'whether they wished they were back in Iran with things the way they used to be' and 'whether they want to go back home if the situation changes'. Fifty-one percent reported they were either undecided or did not want to spend the rest of their life in Australia and the other half of the participants (49%) were quite happy to spend the rest of their life in Australia (*see* section 5.5 for detail). This was also found by Hoffman (1990) who explored the process of adaptation among Iranian immigrants in the United States. She found that the maintenance of an ideal of return along with the acceptance of the fact that return was unlikely was responsible for the particular pattern of behavioral and situational adjustment of Iranians, in the absence of the development of any deeper sense of identification with American culture.

The importance of socio-economic factors in the adjustment of Persian immigrants received considerable support form both qualitative and quantitative results of this research. Financial problems were the source of considerable stress among some Persian women, in particular, for those who had higher socioeconomic status in Iran and did not want to drop their standard of living significantly, and for highly skilled professionals who could not obtain jobs in their fields. Of special concern is that almost two thirds of the participants (66.2%) reported that lack of money was either a very serious or somewhat serious issue for them (*see* Table 5.11.1). As Nicassio and Pate (1984) point out, economic concerns may inhibit the

development of coping skills that are instrumental in social adjustment and in the acquisition of knowledge about the host culture. The importance of socio-economic status in facilitating adjustment to a new culture has been documented extensively in research on immigrant groups (Seeman 1975; Tomeh 1974; Wittkower and Dubreuil 1973: cited in Nicassio and Pate, 1984).

The survey results suggest that this group was highly educated as 65% had tertiary education of some sort. Irrespective of the high education level of the participants, the unemployment rate among them was over two times more than the national average. This should be of special concern for the Persian community. One may argue that cultural skills such as language proficiency and or age may be the cause of unemployment for this newly established group. As ABS data (1996b) indicates, Iranian immigrants have a relatively young age structure and there is a strong concentration in the prime working ages of 25-49 years (53.92% compared with 34.3% of Australian born). In the present study this rate was even higher as 75.5% of the sample was under 50 years old (*CF* section 5.2.1). In respect to the language issue, according to the ABS (1996b) Census, 78% of the Persian population speaks English very well/well (*see* Table 2.1). However, in the present study, 76% of participants reported language problems on arrival and 62% reported having either very serious or somewhat serious language problems (*see* Table 5.11.1). This inconsistency between the ABS data and the present study in respect to language proficiency may be due to gender as ABS data refers to the total Persian population, whereas, in the study group, only Persian women have been targeted. This may confirm Pezeshki's (1993) finding that Persian men experience a significantly greater cultural shift than Persian women, and also supports Ghaffaria's (1987) report that Persian men have been more exposed to the western world prior to their migration. This exposure undoubtedly impacts on English proficiency of men after migration, as well as the higher level of Persian men's social involvement in the new country as reflected in the 1996b ABS data. The present study's finding indicate that language problems seem a barrier for Persian women in finding satisfying work after migration.

Survey results indicated that job success and social acceptance by Australians without prejudice are important situational determinants for satisfaction or dissatisfaction of Persian women immigrants as a whole. Participants showed different levels of satisfaction for different aspects of their life in Australia. Work opportunities and child raising gave participants the least satisfaction whereas, educational opportunities and freedom to practice

their religion gave them the highest satisfaction in Australia (*see* Figure 5.4.2). Life satisfaction in Australia was negatively correlated with all Psychological Outcome measures and correlated positively with identification with Australia. These results reveal that those who identified with Australia have a high level of life satisfaction in Australia that leads to higher self-esteem and better emotional well being. However, in the multiple regression analysis, there were no significantly predicted variables for life satisfaction in Australia (*see* Table 5.13.2). This may suggest that irrespective of the determinants, a fairly high level of satisfaction is required before a Persian woman feels identification with Australia.

The multiple regression analysis predicting 'work satisfaction' indicated that 'maintenance of former occupation' and 'consistency of present job with qualification' were the determinants for work satisfaction. Furthermore, maintenance of former occupation was a predictor for identification with Australia (*see* Table 5.13.2). Survey results clearly indicate that those Persian women who worked in the same area as before migration and their job is in the area of their profession, are happy and satisfied with life in Australia, have a higher self-esteem and better psychological well-being. These results clearly indicate that being employed is important for professional Persian woman but does not necessarily bring her life satisfaction and high self-esteem if the work is not consistent with her qualifications and the level of occupational status before migration. The main source of dissatisfaction for these professional women might be in respect to the lack of professional opportunities that lead them not to meet their "*self-satisfaction needs*" (see Taft, 1973). The findings of the present study support what Taft (1966) in his study of Dutch immigrants found. He found that satisfaction was virtually independent of neuroticism and other measures of personal-social adjustment. Taft's finding indicated that immigrants with a professional status tended to be less satisfied with Australia than others, and were much less desirous of spending the rest of their lives in Australia, presumably because of shortcomings which they perceive in their job prospects and in the Australian way of life. The survey results also receive support from Krupinski's (1986) study that found the higher the level of education, and the higher the level of unemployment in the receiving community, the less satisfactory the adjustment reported by Indochinese refugees in Australia. This suggests that satisfaction is more a measure of morale arising from the immigrant's situation, than a manifestation of a person's personality.

In the present study, qualitative results revealed that the satisfied Persian immigrant women in Australia were those who had been resident in Australia for a number of years, had a job in

their own profession, and had established a circle of friends and acquaintances. They were satisfied because they felt that their standard of living had been maintained or improved since coming to Australia. However those who were satisfied were not necessarily integrated to the Australian way of life.

In the new country, the criterion of satisfaction is dependent on the individual. Some criteria refer to 'objective circumstances', such as the academic progress of their children. Some criteria might be mainly subjective, such as, satisfaction with one's life, job, family relationships and having close friends. In the focus group interviews, it was evident that some Persian women significantly adjusted to life in Australia, but were not satisfied and discouraged about their own achievement and stated that their migration was primarily "for the sake of the children" (*see* section 6.4.1.2). For some women a certain stability resulted after certain years but without full recovery of the status they had had in Iran (*see* section 6.4.2).

The changes that occur in individual immigrants in terms of their motivation, resources and competence is influenced by what they want to be and do, what they are capable of doing and how much opportunity is offered them by their social environment to attain their aspirations. As discussed earlier, Taft expresses it as an equation thus: B=f(P.E.) "Behavior is a function of Personality and Environment" (Taft, 1986, p. 340). In the present study, the focus group results revealed that frustration with establishing oneself and one's family in a new country, the anxiety of trying to find employment or starting a new business in an economically depressed market such as Australia, and of attempting to live frugally when one has been able to have a secure job in Iran in the past, became migration stressors and caused some participants depressive symptoms such as sadness, frustration and distress.

7.6   Family relationships

Male-female and parent-child relationships vary from one culture to another. Family structure in Persian culture is quite different from Western culture. Anglo-Celtic families rear their children with the aim of rendering them relatively autonomous and independent of family ties while Persian families, favor the maintenance of closer ties of dependence. In traditional Persian culture, family unity is a value of primary importance. In Persian culture if there is a family conflict situation, efforts may need to be made to preserve family unity as far as

possible. According to Behnam (1985), in the current century Iranian society underwent profound political, socioeconomic, and cultural changes. However, in spite of all the pronounced transformation of many institutions, the family system was not significantly altered by modernization and traditional values, beliefs, and customs persisted within the family. Only a small number of middle class or upper class Iranian families adopted Western values and attitudes in varying degrees (Hanassab & Tidwell, 1993).

Migration and its consequences have affected marital relationships of many Persian migrant families. Ghaffarian's (1987) study of acculturation of Persian immigrants to the United States, found that in spite of men's higher acculturation level, men maintained traditional values, whereas, women with lower acculturation levels, had adopted more modern values concerning their role. Men kept traditional values, including the idea that females are inferior to males in some respects; men wanted to keep their sense of superiority. But women, who were introduced to the equality of the sexes, held more modern views that would give them more freedom and equality. In the present study, Persian women immigrants wanted to promote a change in their roles, toward liberation and equality, whereas their husbands were reluctant to accept this change. This was a potential conflict in some families and some women reported that it led them to separate from their husbands (*see* section 6.4.2.7). This finding of the qualitative analysis was well confirmed by the quantitative results of the study. Family relationship was a predictor for problems of adjustment and family role performance. Women who had a better marital relationship after migration faced less adjustment problems, could perform better and had more satisfaction with their family role performance (*see* Table 5.13.4). This finding receives further support from Kohbod's (1997) study that found Iranian immigrants in the United States who received support from their spouses experienced less psychological depressive symptoms.

Qualitative results revealed that Persian women immigrants no longer took for granted their husbands' dominance at home and relief from family work. Many women became less obedient to their husbands by expressing their views or speaking out against them, consequently resulting in marital conflict and psychological distress. These findings suggest an ongoing struggle by women for greater gender equality. It was interesting to note that increases in women's negotiating power was not a result of economic power, as many of these women were housewives. Instead, psychological resources such as pride, competence and honor, which Persian women gain as they value more of their contribution to the family, were

more viable driving forces of women's challenges. Nonetheless, women's exposure to a new set of roles and opportunities in the new society, and protection of their rights in the host culture, played their parts in this challenge.

The qualitative findings of the present study indicate that male authority has been challenged by Persian women after migration and that this challenge has had either positive or negative impact on family relationships in most families. However, some women reported no effect on family relationships (*see* section 6.5). Since husbands' outright resistance to sharing family work was no longer taken for granted as it used to be in many families in Iran, resistant husbands were perceived as selfish and the sense of unfairness developed when women felt their lives were relatively more burdened than their husbands. With a sense of injustice, some women challenged the male dominated environment and were successful in bringing about changes. However, some who failed to change the situation could not bare inequality in the family which caused marital conflict, separation and divorce. However, qualitative results also indicated that in the process of challenging gender inequality at home, some Persian women still draw boundaries that are not to be crossed. The nature of women's challenge in this study seemed not to be to subvert the marital hierarchy itself. The Confucian patriarchal ideology, that women should submit to their husbands' authority and protect male morale as heads of families, restrains women from objecting against marital hierarchy itself. The patriarchal beliefs in women's unconditional endurance in a marriage and sacrifice for the family overwhelmed some traditional Persian women's perceived right to demand men's change in family work. Therefore the present study findings found some support for Abyaneh's (1989, p. 69) findings that "Iranian immigrant families are more male dominated in the United States than they were prior to migration".

The extended family is the basis of Persian life and society. It is an institution that has prevailed throughout the ages and remains inviolate today; the foundation of Persian culture and community. Traditional social values emphasizing respect for elders are still a living part of Persian daily life. In Persian culture the extended family (mainly maternal side) primarily contributes to the household duties of the family. Therefore a Persian woman has extra physical support and help from her extended family when taking care of the family and raising the children.

The qualitative results identified that lack of extended family support caused concerns for most Persian women participants and led some of them to loneliness and social isolation. The lack of extended family support was a problem that was referred to commonly by participants in all focus groups. Loneliness was found to be a major cause of stress in the middle age and elderly groups (see section, 6.4.2.1). This issue was supported by the quantitative results of the study, as separation from family members was the most problematic among other 19 adjustment problems. Over two thirds of participants reported this problem to be either very serious or somewhat serious (*see* Table 5.11.1). This finding is consistent with Nicassio and Pate's (1984) large study which found separation from family members to be the most serious adjustment problem for Indochinese refugees in the United States.

7.7 Role of women in the family

Qualitative results revealed that the contrasting values in Australian society caused many Persian women to worry and feel sad for their children being taught in the Australian education system and being raised in Australian society (*see* section 6.4.2). These concerns were well confirmed by the quantitative results. Changed roles predicted less satisfaction for women in respect to their family role performance. Women who perceived the relationship between themselves and their children to be different in Australia and rated this change unfavorably, were less satisfied with their role as parents. Furthermore, change in roles predicted problems of adjustment. Persian women who perceived their roles to have changed after migration, had more adjustment problems and this had a negative impact on their self-esteem. Moreover, women who had more children, had decreased levels of responsibility after migration (*CF* Table, 5.12.6). However, those who had decreased levels of responsibility after migration had increased levels of tension (*see* Table 5.13.1). This may be due to age as older women had more children with less responsibility, because their children were mainly married and were independent. This was also evident in the qualitative findings which indicated that older women's dependency on their children caused them psychological distress, because dependency on their children was against their traditional cultural values (*see* section 6.4.2.7). Therefore the findings of the present study supports the hypothesis that Persian women's roles after migration changes and that change has an impact on their mental health status.

7.8   Conclusion

What has been presented in this study is the nature of an ecology of Persian women's life after migration. The adjustment process of Persian women immigrants to a social milieu different from their country of origin is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Factors operating in this process are numerous. There were limitations such as time and resources that did not allow this investigation to take many equally important variables into consideration while studying the adjustment process of this group of immigrants. However, most attempts were made in this investigation to capture important migration factors that seem to have most impact on the psychological well-being of this group of women while adjusting to the new environment.

In summary, the present qualitative and quantitative research indicated the following findings:

Personal characteristics such as age, education, marital status, length of stay, and employment play significant roles in the adjustment process. Those who are younger have less adjustment problems with better mental health. Those with tertiary education, have a better chance of finding employment, have lower chronic symptoms and GHQ scores resulting in better emotional well being. Single women have higher self-esteem and have less adjustment problems.

Those who are employed have higher life satisfaction, increased responsibilities, have tertiary education and less children, and their husbands are also working. Those employed have low chronic symptoms, low tension symptoms and better emotional well-being, and lower scores on GHQ compared with women who do not work. Those who are working in the same area of qualification and in the same occupation as before migration, have higher self-esteem and better well-being.

Length of residence has a positive correlation with age, tertiary education, working, identification with Australia, and changes in responsibilities, and a negative correlation with high school education, and being Baha'is. Those who were in Australia longer, had a better chance of employment, increased responsibilities and identified more with Australia. However, identification with Australia did not equate with a deep sense of identification with

Australian culture, but it was mainly behavioural and situational. Length of residence did not correlate with any of the Psychological Outcome measures.

Life in Australia is stressful for professional working women who are not working or working in an area inconsistent with their qualifications.

Persian women's role within the family changes after migration and this change has an impact on their psychological well-being.

Persian women challenge male authority within their family after migration. This challenge brought family conflict in some instances and worsened the marital relationship after migration.

Older women decrease their role in the family after migration and this change has a negative impact on their mental well-being.

There is a relationship between the age of Persian women and their life satisfaction. Older women are least satisfied with their life and younger women are most satisfied with their life after migration.

Marital status and lack of extended family are important factors in the adjustment process, as single women and those with extended family support tend to be better adjusted and more satisfied with life after migration.

Younger Persian women identify with a Persian national identity as well as strong positive feelings of being considered Australian. Although they hold Persian cultural values they are also integrated into Australian society and have better psychological well-being.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION
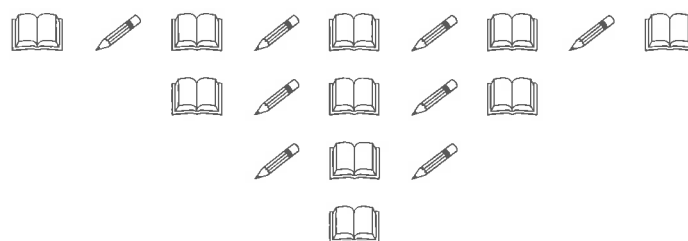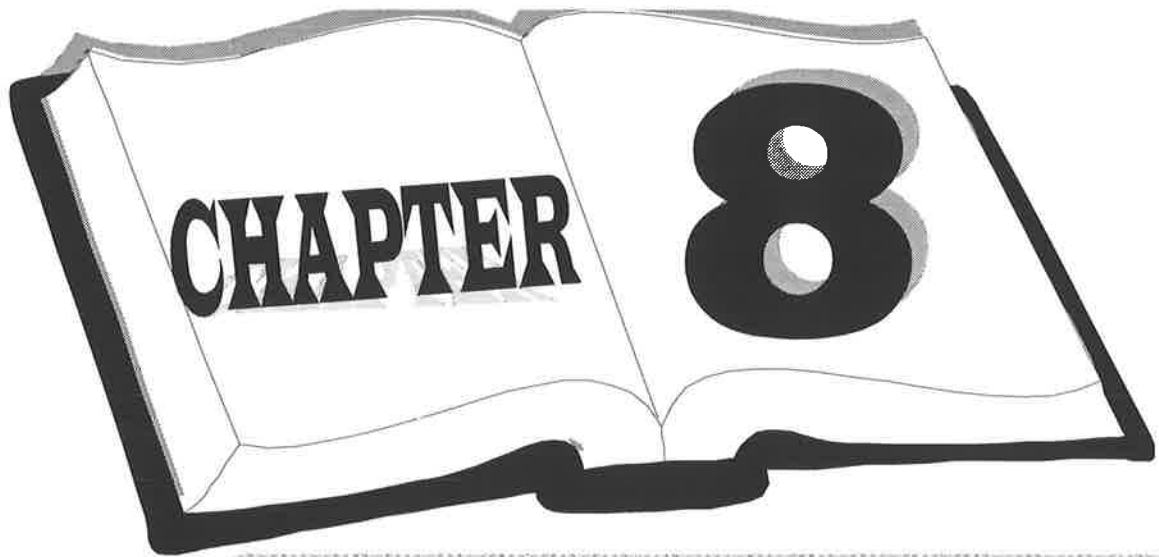
The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the key findings of this research, and also to consider their implications for intervention strategies and future research.

8.1   Summary

Migration involves varying degrees of change in the physical, cultural and linguistic environment, and in family, social and economic circumstances (Khoo and Renwick, 1989). The Persian immigrant women who participated in this study experienced a number of adjustment problems while settling in Australia, including occupational and financial difficulties, loss of status, reduced social support, differences in cultural values, interpersonal and child-rearing conflicts, and concerns about Iran and their family and friends who live there. Findings of this study indicate factors affecting various psychological outcomes for Persian women immigrants adjusting to Australian society.

If we regard the adjustment process as a process which occurs through interactional patterns and changes through time, then adjustment can be realized through a process of interaction between individual immigrants and other members of the new society. This process then, refers to the experiences that migrants acquire through changes in their social relationship patterns and their orientation toward the host culture. Therefore, adjustment involves a pattern of associations and social participation that protect immigrants from having life strains, stresses, and other conflicting situations caused by social isolation and loneliness. Adjustment, then, can be defined as the ability of immigrants to integrate into the host culture without losing their native identity and cultural values. Therefore Persian immigrant women may need to be encouraged to incorporate more of the Australian values and beliefs instead of resisting and rejecting the host culture. However, they need to be assured that it is not necessary for them to give up their own culture in order to adapt to Australian culture. Those who are bicultural may have an advantage over those who are totally acculturated or totally reject the host culture. Bicultural immigrant women may fit into both Persian and Australian societies; thus, they may suffer less from alienation and may have the least adaptation problems.

The complexity of the issues involved in migration experience demands far more investigation and discussion than provided here. We cannot in fact learn about learning unless we become capable of expanding our own vision of what possibilities lie hidden in the

everyday world. Unfortunately, so little research has dealt with members of the Persian population in Australia. This might be partly due to the size of the Persian community and partly due to the communication difficulties involved with this newly established community. As Taft (1986) correctly pointed out, communication is an especially acute problem for researchers when subjects are recent arrivals of non-English speaking backgrounds.

The most frequently mentioned negative aspects of life in Australia concerned separation from family members and loneliness. For very many of the respondents, life in Australia meant much more than becoming accustomed to a new culture; it involved the establishment of a whole new set of friendships and personal relationships. The specific experiences most commonly reported concerned feelings of separation, isolation and loneliness. Loneliness was the most commonly reported personal problem and was manifested in a number of ways. Some reported having trouble in finding new friends. These tended to be common to all age groups, but especially so for the elderly group. The second type of experience most frequently mentioned was related to more practical aspects of life - employment, finance and future security. The most commonly mentioned positive aspect was freedom. A few respondents mentioned similar aspects - peace, political and religious freedom, and privacy as the most attractive things about life in Australia. However, the study findings revealed that overall, Persian women are in a position to relate themselves to both societies and this seemed to be frustrating for some, since neither the home country, Iran, at the present time, nor the host country, Australia, is perceived as an ideal place to live.

8.2   Limitations

The present study has several limitations. Further research should take into account a more elaborate model of intervening variables between Persian migration and psychological outcomes, specifically the type of migration (voluntary or refugee), and work out a detailed concept of their cultural pattern as related with their ways of expressing psychological or social problems in the new environment. Lack of this distinction should be considered as the most significant limitation of the present study. However, the decision was made consciously to maximize the participation rate as it was felt that asking Persian women their migration status could jeopardize the participation rate and accuracy of the responses due to political issues attached to the refugee status.

The results reported here might not necessarily relate to the Persian population as a whole in Australia as many of the findings relate specifically to women. Given the sharp contrast of gender roles between Persian men and women in Persian culture, quite different patterns might emerge when migration experiences of Persian men are considered.

Translation of measures used in the survey method that were originally designed in English might be considered as a limiting factor in this research. Although extreme care was taken for the questionnaire translation into Persian [the Persian translation of the questionnaire was obtained through the method of back translation (Brislin, 1970)], the translation into Persian, together with the fact that the reliability and validity of these measures have not been adequately established with a Persian population, lower the level of confidence we might have in the quantitative findings. However, except for one finding that was not partly confirmed by the qualitative data (no significant relationship between age and adjustment problems), all other findings from the quantitative survey received support from the qualitative data analysis.

The present study is the first study of its kind that looks at the psychological well-being of a sample of Persian women in Australia. The present study was not designed to adjudicate between competing theoretical models of cultural adaptation as it was exploratory and primarily empirically driven. However, the study represents the development of a composite study model, based on interactions of concerned measures and includes potential predictors of psychological outcome measures. Of significant value would be for further research to compares the composite study model with theoretical adaptation models.

8.3   Implications

The findings have numerous implications particularly with respect to mental health related work with immigrants in general, and with Persian women in particular.

The findings highlight a group of Persian women who might be at a high risk for developing psychopathology. This group includes educated women but with low income and language problems, either not working or working in an area not consistent with their qualification with low job satisfaction, who lack extended family support and are marginally connected to their native group. These are the women who have high expectations of themselves and their lives and want to succeed the most in the home and at work. They are frustrated and

psychologically depressed as they feel they are capable of doing many things, but they do not see the new society as giving them the opportunity to utilize their skills and potential. This profile suggests a need for assistance in different areas from welfare and health service providers to help them to maintain their strength and confidence and facilitate them to increase their job opportunities in the areas in which they are qualified. This will enhance their life satisfaction and psychological well-being.

The analysis of focus group interviews and the survey findings identified a number of immigration-associated problems in the lives of the Persian women immigrants. All these problems signal that there are some gaps between various segments of the Persian population and a larger gap between them and the remaining Australian population. The unemployment rate among Persian immigrants is over two times higher than the total Australian population. It should not be forgotten that once the Australian Government agrees to permit an immigrant residency, it has an obligation to ensure their security and provide them with job opportunities. Thus there is a great need for the intervention and support of the Australian Government to bridge the gaps by enhancing opportunities in the areas of employment and equal access to resources and social services available to them in the society.

The results of this investigation have significant practical implications for services rendered to Persian immigrants during their settlement. First, given the reportedly high incidence of problems involving family conflicts, interventions which consolidate or develop the support systems and networks of Persian immigrants would appear particularly valuable. The increased availability and effectiveness of social support may reduce stress and prevent the development of psychological problems. Special effort should be directed at preserving the viability of the family unit.

"Culture, tradition and social customs are the natural evaluative processes for the preservation of a healthy interpersonal relationship suitable for a given society, with its own psychological particularities....the safest way to avert undue mental stresses, would be adherence to many useful traditions; the introduction of technology does not necessarily mean abolishing traditions" (Davidian, 1973, p. 543). The expressions of mental illness have meaning in the context of people's lives and their historical and social experiences. In order to establish a positive relationship with Persian women, a health professional such as a counselor, a psychologist or a clinician would have to reflect on memories of her past, to rediscover

cultural and linguistic elements that would enable understanding of the woman. It would also be necessary for health professionals to comprehend the current cultural world of women as it is constituted in Australia, and be prepared to participate in their social lives in order to gain the experience necessary to understand the social interactions, expectations and values of the sub-culture.

The study findings have implications for health and social service professionals who work with Persian immigrants. Health professionals often have little sense of the depth of the subtle and not so subtle stressors experienced by their immigrant clients. Some immigrants experience a multitude of communication problems, not only because of difficulties expressing themselves in English, which may easily be misinterpreted by service providers. Research such as this can alert health professionals to socio-cultural patterns that affect health but are not commonly recognized in clinical practice. One cannot ignore that armed with a basic knowledge of the cultural group, health and welfare services can provide more effective assistance to the Persian community.

Older Persian women who are mainly unemployed, and lack language proficiency, are at greater risk for adjustment problems than other age groups, and may thus need more extensive assistance from service providers. Health care professionals are also advised to be aware of loneliness among this non-integrated group and to use discretion in making appropriate medical and or psychological treatments.

The practical relevance of these findings may be that societies and their political institutions should consider the implications for the health of a social group and health related costs when making their decisions about immigration policy and promoting a particular immigration policy. The study findings indicate that job opportunities for professional immigrants and recognition of their qualifications are of high importance for this group of immigrants and have direct impact on their adjustment process and their life satisfaction in Australia. The findings of this study necessitate that more attention is required by policy makers, to make the transition more smooth and less painful for immigrants to the new society and to provide special services for skilled immigrants to enable them to use their experiences and skills. The findings further illustrate a need for psychological support for new immigrants to help them have a less stressful and smooth adjustment.

The study findings indicate that those who were culturally incorporated tended to have better psychological well-being than those who were cultural resistant. Therefore, it is recommended that special educational and discussion groups on immigration and biculturality and workshops on Australian customs should be organized to help Iranian immigrants for social participation to deal more effectively with the integration of the two cultures.

Persian women need to be provided with adequate English language classes at an advanced level to help them improve their chances of finding a job in their profession and also to improve their participation in the mainstream society. This proficiency will help them have a better understanding and insight of the host culture as well as give them a better chance to share their culture and its values with the wider community and to achieve a deeper and more satisfying participation in the host community.

The findings of this study suggest that ethnic community support is particularly helpful where migrants have sustained great loss. It is reasonable to suggest that immigration policy needs to encourage the formation of ethnic support groups and organizations, as their presence can help and welcome new immigrants in order to give them orientation, emotional support and ease the pain of the migration process. Nevertheless, it is the quality of the emotional support that is more important than the quantity of help available.

The study findings also indicate that Persian women have strong ties with Iran. However, despite some dissatisfaction with aspects of life in Australia, it seems likely that Persian immigrants now living in Australia intend to make Australia their permanent home. Therefore, it is important to study the behaviour of Persians in Australia in order to be aware of problems that may arise during the settlement process. The findings of this study suggest that it would be important for health professionals to pay special attention to minority groups. In fact, certain practices are felt to have done great harm to minority groups by ignoring them, maintaining false stereotypes, and distorting their life styles. As Sue (1981) pointed out, although many health professionals such as counselors recognize that cultures vary, difficulties emerge when perceptions and images are distorted, exaggerated, and generalized. It is ineffective to attempt an understanding of ethnic minorities without an adequate exploration of their cultural background, sub-cultural values, and unique conflicts.

As many multicultural researchers indicate, a knowledge of culture and an awareness of the attitudes and values of minority groups are important to any cross-cultural psychology. The strategies that enhance cross-cultural counseling stress primarily an understanding of our own and our clients' worldviews and philosophy of life (Ibrahim, 1985). Therefore, it is important that when working with Persian women in psychotherapy, counselors take into account both the family and cultural background of the individual. This should be an essential element of practice for a therapist to bear in mind. A treatment strategy that has worked for one ethnic group may be harmful and conflict-inducing for anther ethnic group.

Mental health practitioners working with Persian women immigrants should be mindful of the traditional family hierarchy, power structure, gender roles, and roles of different members of the family. They should also consider the assimilation rate of the individuals, so that they do not label them or take sides according to the general norms of the Australian culture. It is important that when a Persian woman comes in for counseling or psychotherapy, the counselor or therapist take into consideration the cultural background engraved in her personality and her everyday life. It is especially important that health professionals dealing with young Persian women recognise that many of them are raised within two cultures where they may have found themselves immersed in the sometimes conflicting values of a western way of life and the traditional culture in the home environment.

As Hanassab (1991) pointed out, mental health practitioners should give importance to the issues relating to personal identity, social identity, and cultural identity of the clients. In doing so, they might deal better with the difficulties related to who they are. When treating a Persian woman in cultural as well as interpersonal and intrapersonal conflict, it is crucial that mental health practitioners remain aware of the subtleties of the problems such cultural conflict creates (Hanassab and Tidwell, 1989).

Another implication of the findings of this study concerns older Persian women immigrants who seem to have more adjustment problems and psychological disturbance. This group of Persian women lack the opportunity of engaging in particular activities that they might enjoy. It is very common for the cumulative effects of non-participation in social activities to be associated with life dissatisfaction. Currently, the Persian community is concerned with the problem of caring for its elderly. This study found that this group seemed dissatisfied with their life in the new society particularly in their social isolation. Programs may need to be

designed by mental health service providers to meet specifically the needs of this group and help them to resolve their social isolation by engaging them into specified programs that can inject some leisure and joy into their life.

8.4   Direction for further research

Adjusting to a new country which is very different from one's own country of origin is complex and one single research project can not discuss all the problems that are associated with this phenomenon. The present study is not excluded from such shortcomings. However, the results of the present study point to several issues that could usefully become a focus for future research. One of the attempts that seems more appealing for studying immigrants' adjustment to the new society in a dynamic fashion is conducting a longitudinal comparative study of different age groups with both genders of Persian immigrants in Australia. Through this, patterns of change in the adjustment process can be detected and these patterns can give the researcher a clearer insight into the process of adjustment itself and also its impact on individuals.

Persians, like other immigrants, tend to under utilize mental health services. Research on how the Persian population utilizes social, welfare and mental health services, and their experiences and satisfaction with these services will be useful in guiding service providers to deliver appropriate mental health interventions to this group of immigrants.

A program that delivers educational sessions for health professionals about the unique cultural make up of this group of immigrants will be useful in guiding service providers to deliver appropriate mental health interventions to Persian immigrants. Furthermore, those who are interested in policy development regarding cross-cultural educational exchange will benefit from these sessions. Moreover, in addition to research, cross-cultural educators and curriculum developers can benefit from the findings of this study and other similar studies to improve content on culture and immigration in their coursework training for health care providers to help them provide more culturally appropriate and culturally sensitive care to this group of immigrant clients.

Also valuable will be further studies to target Persian men and their adjustment process, in particular its impact on their mental well-being. It may also be interesting to compare these

findings with the present study's findings to evaluate the psychological impact of gender roles in the adjustment process.

It will be of value for psychological studies on Persian immigrants, to consciously focus on emotional conflict, adaptability, coping strategies and expectations this group experience as a newly established group in Australia. These studies also can consider the role of the host society's setting, the effect of regular visits to Iran, and the impact of their goal achievements on their adaptation process. Researchers are advised to use standard questions and scales so that more comparisons can be made with other immigrant groups. This will enhance the value of their findings. One important issue, which has wider implications for all cross-cultural assessment, is the problem of equivalence. As Malprass and Poortinga (1986, Cited in Sang 1992) appropriately state, comparing inequivalent data, obtained from "inequivalent" instruments, results in misleading conclusions about the nature and extent of cross-cultural differences in behaviour.

The importance of English language proficiency as an important factor in finding employment in the present study, necessitates the inclusion of an English language proficiency scale in future studies. However, it is important when considering such a scale that it be sensitive to the participants' own perception of their proficiency to prevent any biased results. The additional inclusion of an 'objective' measure of language proficiency will avoid the problems associated with participants' own subjective evaluations of their proficiency.

Further studies could explore various aspects of adjustment and historical and maturational processes. It would be worthwhile investigating the psychological impact of the cultural expectations of Persian young adults and their parents.
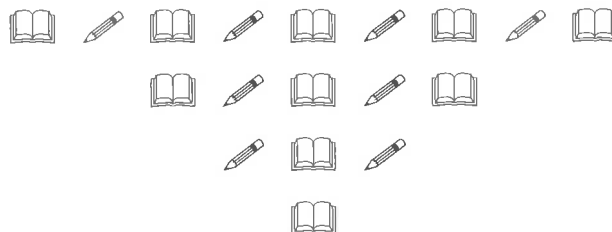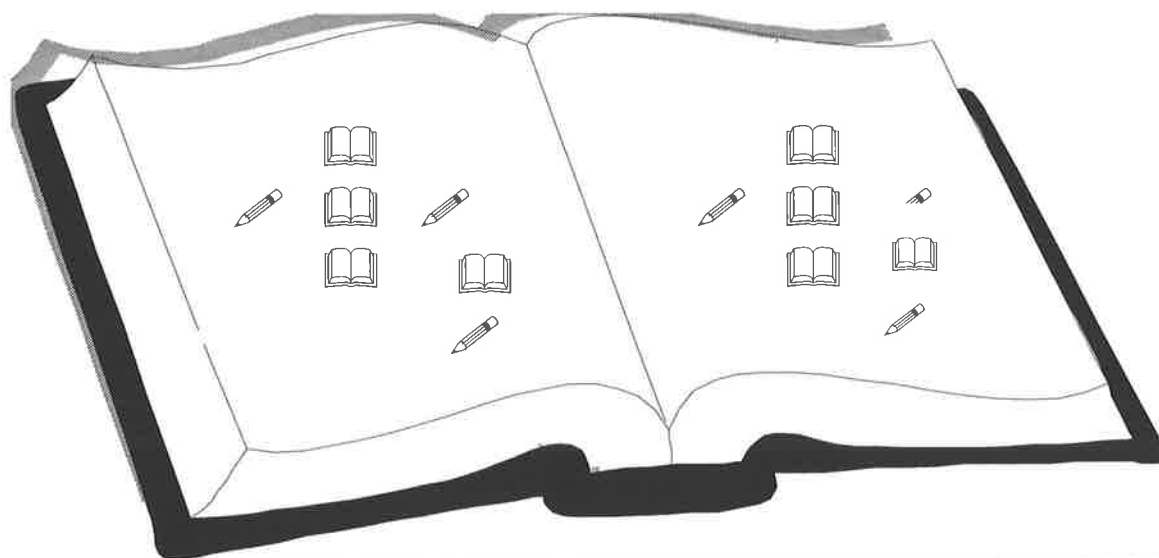
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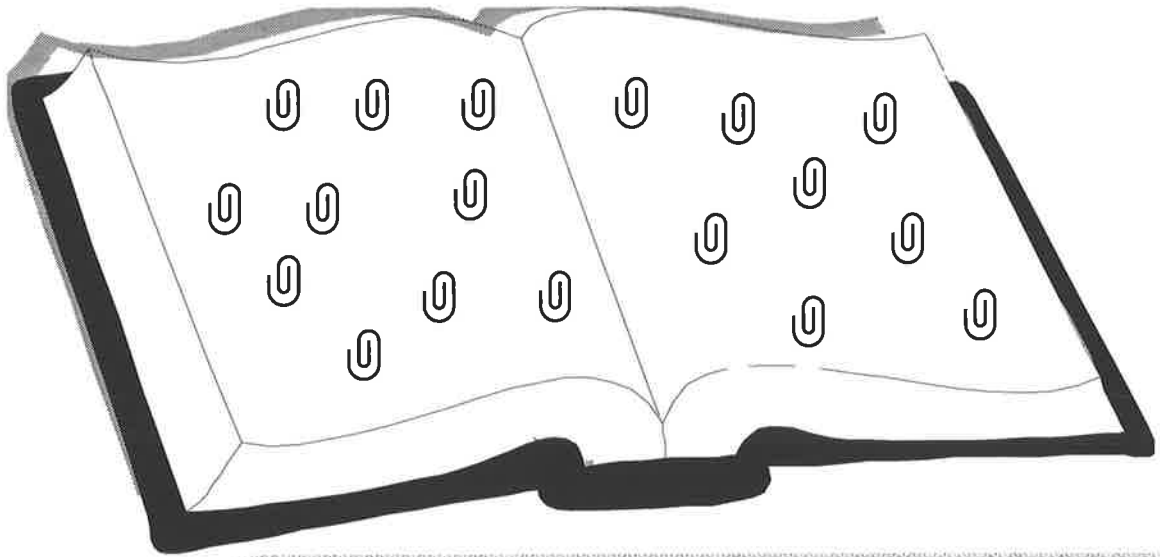
APPENDICES

Appendix A

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

"PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF MIGRATION ON PERSIAN WOMEN"

Tahereh Ziaian who is a PhD student with the University of Adelaide, Psychology Department is conducting this research. This research has no connection with any political or religious groups, the Australian government, the Immigration Department or other organisations.

The research is inviting Persian (Iranian) women who live in Australia permanently to be volunteers.

Persian women Immigrants are experiencing many problems in the new social environment which appears to be post-migration. The exposure of Persian women living in Australia to contrasting Australian and Persian standards has generated many tensions and pressures. The aim of this survey is to investigate the effects of migration on the well being of Persian women and their role within the family after migration. As this is the first study of its kind, it is hoped that the results that emerge from this survey will be of great interest to Persian women and all other members of the Persian community.

Involvement

Your participation only requires completing a questionnaire. It should not take more than 30 minutes to complete the entire questionnaire. All information given will be treated strictly confidential. All volunteers will be protected by ethical guidelines monitored by the Ethics Committee of the University of Adelaide, Psychology Department.

Enquires: The investigator, Tahereh Ziaian, Ph: (08) 83035660 (all enquires will be treated with strict confidence).

✂...I_____

_____ am interested to participate in the study.

The questionnaire can be sent to the following address:

_____

_____post code_____

I would prefer to complete the questionnaire in English ☐
I would prefer to complete the questionnaire in Persian ☐

Please forward detached section at your earliest convenience to Tahereh Ziaian, Adelaide University, Department of Psychology, PO Box 498, Adelaide SA 5005.

Appendix B

code ☐

UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE
PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT

A QUESTIONNAIRE FOR:

Persian Women who live in Australia

Thank you for taking time to answer these questions.

The investigator is doing a research project on "Psychological Effects of Migration on Persian Women" towards her PhD. The investigator is interested in knowing whether the migration and settlement process have had any impact on the well being and status of Persian women who live in Australia.

Instructions:

- Please do not write your name anywhere in the questionnaire.
- At the end of the questionnaire, there is a blue sheet. Please detach this form from the questionnaire <u>now</u>.
- If you are interested in meeting with me and some other Persian women of your own age group, please fill in the blue form and place it in one of the enclosed envelopes and send it to me as soon as you can. I will then be able to contact you to arrange a time for a focus group. The purpose of the focus group (group interview) is for me to talk to you about issues not raised in the questionnaire, but which you might still think should be considered in this project. I feel it is important that you and other Persian women are given a chance to tell me in your own words about anything else you may think is important.

- Please begin the questionnaire and answer all the questions if possible. Feel free to make any further comments in the space provided at the end of the questionnaire. Try to answer the questions in the order in which they are written.

All information you give in this questionnaire will be completely **CONFIDENTIAL** and **ANONYMOUS**

Investigator: Tahereh Ziaian

April 1997

Please do not write your name anywhere on the questionnaire

1   What is your age?   ....

2   What is your country of birth?   ....

3   In what year did you leave Iran?   ....

4   In what year did you arrive in Australia?   ....

5   What is your religious background?   ....

6   What is the highest level of education you have completed?

No schooling ☐
Primary ☐
High school ☐
Tertiary incomplete ☐
Tertiary complete ☐

7   Are you?

Single ☐
Married ☐
Divorced ☐
Widowed ☐
Separated ☐

8   If you are separated / divorced, did it happen before or after migration?

Before migration ☐
After migration ☐

9   If you separated/divorced after migration, do you think migration contributed to the breakdown in the relationship with your partner?

Yes ☐
No ☐
I don't know ☐

     9.1   If yes, what were the main reasons?

....
....
....

10   If you are/were married in which country was your husband born?

....

11   If you have children, please state their sex, age, present level of study (ie. primary, secondary, tertiary)/or occupation and their marital status.

	age	**sex**	**country of birth**	**level of study**	**occupation**	**Marital status**
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						

12   What is your and your partner's occupation?

	You	your partner
Employed	☐	☐
unemployed	☐	☐
self employed	☐	☐
retired	☐	☐
housewife	☐	☐
student	☐	☐

13   If you and/or your partner are employed / self employed, what kind of work are you doing?

	You	your partner
Professional/managerial	☐	☐
Semi-professional	☐	☐
Clerical or sales	☐	☐
skilled	☐	☐
Semi-skilled	☐	☐
Unskilled	☐	☐

14   If you are working, are you on the whole, satisfied or dissatisfied with your occupation in Australia?

very satisfied	☐
satisfied	☐
uncertain	☐
dissatisfied	☐
very dissatisfied	☐

15   If you were working in Iran, what was your occupation in the 2 years prior to your migration to Australia?

....

16   If you are working, is the work you are doing in an area consistent with your qualifications?

yes   ☐
no   ☐

17   If you were working in Iran, how does your present occupational standing compare to that which you had in Iran?

very much better   ☐
better   ☐
about the same   ☐
not as good   ☐
very much worse   ☐

18   Did you have any problems with any of the following when you first came to Australia?

1.	getting a job	Yes	☐	no	☐
2.	accommodation	Yes	☐	no	☐
3.	language	Yes	☐	no	☐
4.	Australian customs	Yes	☐	no	☐
5.	loneliness	Yes	☐	no	☐
6.	lack of friends	Yes	☐	no	☐
7.	homesickness	Yes	☐	no	☐

If other problems, please specify

....
....

19   To what extent are you satisfied with life in Australia in the following areas:

Complete (✓) the table below using the following scale:

not at all satisfied   = 0
a little satisfied   = 1
quite satisfied but not completely   = 2
completely satisfied   = 3

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	
not satisfied	a little satisfied	quite satisfied	completel y satisfied	
_____	_____	_____	_____	Financial opportunities for yourself and your family.

_____	_____	_____	_____	Educational opportunities for yourself and your family.
_____	_____	_____	_____	Opportunities to work in a desirable job for which you are qualified.
_____	_____	_____	_____	Your social life and community life.
_____	_____	_____	_____	The way in which children are brought up in Australia.
_____	_____	_____	_____	Opportunities to practice your religion.
_____	_____	_____	_____	The general moral and ethical environment for you and your family.

20   Except for possible overseas holidays, would you like to spend the rest of your life in Australia?

yes   ☐
undecided   ☐
no   ☐

21   Would you like to go back to live in Iran if there were a change of situation?

yes   ☐
undecided   ☐
no   ☐

22   Do you ever wish you were back in Iran with things the way they used to be?

often   ☐
sometimes ☐
rarely   ☐
never   ☐

23   What is your feeling about being considered as an Australian?

a strong positive feeling   ☐
a moderately positive feeling   ☐
no feeling   ☐
a moderately negative feeling   ☐
a strong negative feeling   ☐

24   How would you describe your feelings about your Persian nationality?

a strong positive feeling ☐
a moderately positive feeling ☐
no feeling ☐
a moderately negative feeling ☐
a strong negative feeling ☐

25   Has your level of responsibility over important financial matters affect the family increased, decreased or remained the same since coming to Australia?

Decreased ☐
stayed the same ☐
increased ☐

26   Has your level of responsibility over important family decisions changed since coming to Australia?

Decreased ☐
stayed the same ☐
increased ☐

27   Has your level of control over decisions affecting your children changed since coming to Australia?

Decreased ☐
stayed the same ☐
increased ☐

28   Has your level of participation in social activities and social engagement changed since arriving to Australia?

Decreased ☐
stayed the same ☐
increased ☐

29   In your view are the roles of Persian males and females here in Australia, in terms of marriage, courtship, or career matters different or the same as those in Iran?

Basically the same ☐
a little different ☐
quite/very different ☐

29.1   If different, do you consider this difference to be for the better or for the worse?

for the better ☐
neither better or worse ☐
for the worse ☐

30   In your view is the relationship between Persian parents and their children in Australia different or the same as it is in Iran?

Basically the same ☐
a little different ☐
quite/very different ☐

30.1   If different, do you consider this difference to be for the better or for the worse?

for the better ☐
neither better or worse ☐
for the worse ☐

31   In your view, is the general ethical and moral environment in the Australian-Persian community different or the same as it is in Iran?

Basically the same ☐
a little different ☐
quite/very different ☐

31.1   If different, do you consider this difference to be for the better or for the worse?

for the better ☐
neither better or worse ☐
for the worse ☐

32   How do you feel about the way you handle the problems that come up in your life?
Very happy ☐   happy ☐   unhappy ☐   very unhappy ☐

33   How do you feel about yourself?
Very happy ☐   happy ☐   unhappy ☐   very unhappy ☐

34   How competent do you feel you are to do the things you are really interested in doing?
very competent ☐   fairly competen ☐   not too competent ☐   not competent at all ☐

35   How easy is it for you to discuss your personal problems with your friends?
very easy ☐   a bit easy ☐   a little difficult ☐   very difficult ☐

36 How easy is it for you to make new friends?

very easy   a bit easy   a little difficult   very difficult

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

37 How interesting do other people find you?

They find me:

very interesting   fairly interesting   not too interesting   not interesting at all

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

38 How do you feel about the way you get on with other people?

Very happy   happy   unhappy   very unhappy

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

39 Most of the things I am doing with my life seem worthwhile and meaningful to me.

strongly agree   agree   disagree   strongly disagree

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

If you have become tired by now and have lost concentration, please leave the questionnaire at this point and get back to it at some other time.

---

40 How is your relationship with your husband since coming to Australia?

Better than before ☐

The same ☐

Worse than before ☐

41 All things considered, how satisfied are you with your family life?

Very happy   happy   unhappy   very unhappy

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

42 How do you feel about the things you and your family do together?

Very happy   happy   unhappy   very unhappy

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

43 Would you say that, the members of your family are:

very close   close   a little distant   pretty distant

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

44   How do you feel about your marriage?

    Very happy   happy   unhappy   very unhappy

       ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

45   How much companionship do you and your husband have? how often do you do things together?

    all the time   often   sometimes   hardly ever

       ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

46   How well do you think your husband understands you, your feelings, your likes and dislikes, and any problems you may have?

    very well   fairly well   not very well   not well at all

       ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

47   Are you happy with the sort of friends your children have?

    very happy   happy   not too happy   not happy at all

       ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

48   How satisfied are you with the way you handle your role as a mother?

completely satisfied   quite satisfied   not too satisfied   not satisfied at all

       ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

49   How do you feel about your children?

    Very happy   happy   unhappy   very unhappy

       ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

50   How do you feel about your parents?

    Very happy   happy   unhappy   very unhappy

       ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

51   How well do you think your mother understands you, your feelings, your likes   and dislikes and any problems you may have?

    very well   fairly well   not very well   not well at all

       ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

52   How well do you think your father understands you, your feelings, your likes and dislikes and any problems you may have?

    very well   fairly well   not very well   not well at all

       ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

YOUR HEALTH:

I would like to know if you have had any medical complaints and how your health has been in general, over the past few weeks. Please answer ALL the questions on the following pages simply by circling the answer which you think most nearly applies to you. Remember that I want to know about present and recent complaints, not those that you had in the past. It is important that you try to answer ALL the questions.

Recent Symptoms:

53   Have you recently:

Been able to concentrate on whatever you're doing?	Better than usual 1	Same as usual 2	Worse than usual 3	Much worse than usual 4
Lost much sleep over worry?	Not at all 1	No more than usual 2	Rather more than usual 3	Much more than usual 4
Felt that you are playing a useful part in things?	More so than usual 1	same as usual 2	less useful than usual 3	Much less useful 4
Felt Capable of making decisions about things?	More so than usual 1	same as usual 2	less useful than usual 3	Much less useful 4
Felt constantly under strain?	Not at all 1	No more than usual 2	Rather more than usual 3	Much more than usual 4
Felt that you couldn't overcome your difficulties?	Not at all 1	No more than usual 2	Rather more than usual 3	Much more than usual 4
Been able to enjoy your normal day to-day activities?	More so than usual 1	same as usual 2	less so than usual 3	Much less than usual 4
Been able to face up to your problems?	More so than usual 1	same as usual 2	less able than usual 3	much less able 4
Been feeling unhappy and depressed?	Not at all 1	No more than usual 2	Rather more than usual 3	Much more than usual 4

| Been loosing confidence in yourself? | Not at all 1 | No more than usual 2 | Rather more than usual 3 | Much more than usual 4 |

| Been thinking of yourself as a worthless person? | Not at all 1 | No more than usual 2 | Rather more than usual 3 | Much more than usual 4 |

| Been feeling reasonably happy, all things considered? | More so than usual 1 | about the same as usual 2 | less so than usual 3 | Much less than usual 4 |

Chronic Symptoms:

54   Now I would like to know about how things usually are for you.

I believe I am no more nervous than most others.

generally false ☐
generally true ☐

I tire quickly

generally false ☐
generally true ☐

I blush no more than others

generally false ☐
generally true ☐

I am usually calm and not easily upset

generally false ☐
generally true ☐

I feel anxious about someone or something almost all the time

generally false ☐
generally true ☐

I am happy most of the time

generally false ☐
generally true ☐

I have periods of such great restlessness that I
cannot sit long in a chair

generally false ☐
generally true ☐

I have sometimes felt that difficulties were piling up
so high that I could not overcome them

generally false ☐
generally true ☐

I wish I could be as happy as others seem to be

generally false ☐
generally true ☐

I am not usually self-conscious	generally false ☐ generally true ☐
Life is a strain for me much of the time	generally false ☐ generally true ☐
At times I think I am no good at all	generally false ☐ generally true ☐
I am certainly lacking self-confidence	generally false ☐ generally true ☐
I certainly feel useless at times	generally false ☐ generally true ☐
I am a high-strung person	generally false ☐ generally true ☐
I am not easily embarrassed	generally false ☐ generally true ☐
I sweat very easily even on cool days	generally false ☐ generally true ☐
I worry quite a bit over possible misfortunes	generally false ☐ generally true ☐
I shrink from facing a crisis or difficulty	generally false ☐ generally true ☐
I tend to be pretty casual about things	generally false ☐ generally true ☐

Symptoms of Tension:

55   Each person has a different way of showing tension. Which of the following describes you? Put a tick (✓) if you do this to some extent and two ticks (✓✓) if you do it a lot. If you don't do it at all, leave the space blank

Very restless	( )	Worry about many things	( )
Irritable; quick to fly off the handl	( )	Afraid of new things	( )
Fussy, over-particular	( )	Toss and turn in sleep	( )
Often complain of pains or aches	( )	Get up often; restless	( )
Difficulty in going to sleep	( )	Cry easily	( )
Sulk when things go wrong	( )		

56 In the five years leading up to your migration to Australia to what extent were you healthy?

Not healthy most of the time ☐
Reasonably healthy/ sometimes unhealthy ☐
Very healthy always ☐

57 What were the main problems with your health?

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58 Here are some problems that have been expressed by Persian women during informal conversations. For each problem, I would like you to indicate how serious it is to you and your family.

(3) Very serious	(2) Somewhat serious	(1) Not serious		
_____	_____	_____	1	Not enough money
_____	_____	_____	2	Difficulty in understanding the Australian way of life
_____	_____	_____	3	English language problems
_____	_____	_____	4	Being separated from family members
_____	_____	_____	5	Lack of close friends (loneliness)
_____	_____	_____	6	Difficulty in getting Persian food
_____	_____	_____	7	Dissatisfaction with present job
_____	_____	_____	8	Conflict between husband and wife
_____	_____	_____	9	Other conflicts among family members
_____	_____	_____	10	Problems in raising children
_____	_____	_____	11	Inferior social status of some Iranians in Australian society
_____	_____	_____	12	Poor housing conditions (example: too small, poor heating, lack of necessary facilities, bad neighborhood, etc.)
_____	_____	_____	13	Difficulties in adjusting to climate
_____	_____	_____	14	Transportation problems
_____	_____	_____	15	Difficulty in dealing with Australian people and agencies

_____	_____	_____	16	Conflict and negative feelings that exist between different Persian groups
_____	_____	_____	17	Conflict and negative feelings that exist between Persian families
_____	_____	_____	18	Difficulty in communicating with family and friends in Iran
_____	_____	_____	19	Need for counseling services for personal and family problems

59   Any comments that you would like to add?

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Thank you very much for your valuable time and the effort you have spent in completing this questionnaire. It is greatly appreciated.

Appendix C

Please fill this form in only if you are interested in participating in a focus group (group interview) and send it in one of the envelopes provided.

"Psychological effects of migration on Persian women"

☐   Yes, I would like to be involved in a focus group at a later date.

My name is:

My address is:

---post code ----------------------------

My telephone number is:

My age group is:

less than 26	27 - 36	37 - 46	47 - 56	more than 56
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Appendix D

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The following questions are for stimulating the discussion:

1. What are the significant changes in your life after coming to Australia? (Positive and negative)

2. What impact have these changes had on you, your status as a woman and your family life after migration?

3. What are the positive aspects of migration for you and your family?

4. What are the negative aspects of migration for you and your family?

5. What change in your life after migration is disturbing you most?

6. Who makes the decision in your family? Who is the family boss? Has migration had any impact on this situation?

7. Has male authority increased in your family after migration? If yes, why?

8. Who is doing the housework and shopping in your family? Why?

9. What impact has migration had on your relationship with you husband, your children and your parents?

10. Overall as a woman, living in Australia is better for you or living in Iran? Why?

11. In summary, all points considered, are you happy that you have migrated to Australia?

Thank you

Appendix E

INTRODUCTORY LETTER TO THE SUBJECTS

Department of Psychology
University of Adelaide
PO Box 498
Adelaide SA 5001
March 1997

Dear Reader

My name is Tahereh Ziaian. I am a postgraduate student at the University of Adelaide, studying towards my PhD in Health Psychology. My thesis topic is "Psychological Effects of Migration on Persian Women".

The aim of this study is to investigate the role and well being of Persian women within the family after migration. My hope is that the survey will provide valuable information on the status of Persian women in Australia. As this is the first study of its kind, I would hope that the results that emerge from this survey will be of great interest to you and all other members of the Persian community.

You will find within this package a Blue form, a questionnaire and two envelopes. It should take no more than 30-45 minutes to complete the entire questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire relates to basic demographic information. The second part of this questionnaire is comprised of a variety of questions that relate to your well being and your view on different aspects of your life here in Australia. As I don't require your name, please feel assured that your anonymity will be maintained.

Should you agree to participate in this study please ensure that all of the questions are answered and mailed **as soon as possible**. To ensure anonymity and convenience, two stamped and addressed envelops have been included into this package (one for the Blue form and the other for the questionnaire).

I would like to add that this study has the approval of the Psychology Department's Ethics Committee, and I assure you that **all information given will be treated strictly confidential**. The age, date of birth ....are only for my identification purpose.

Should you have any queries regarding this study, please feel free to contact either myself at work (08 - 83035660) or at home (08 - 82673219) or my supervisor Dr Martha Augoustinos who may be reached by telephoning 3034627. Upon the completion of this study, I will be pleased to discuss the results with those who are interested.

Thank you very much for your valuable time and co-operation

Yours sincerely

Tahereh Ziaian