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**An Investigation of the Communal and Individual Resilience of
Immigrant Women in New Zealand**

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree

of

Master of Social Sciences

at

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by

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DEDICATION

For Anna Kolorossi

ABSTRACT

Some immigrant women face triple discrimination due to their, gender, ethnicity and immigrant status. The voices of immigrant women are absent from literature on immigration, furthermore the experience of immigrant women are omitted as prominent literature largely presents the male immigration experience. In addition, immigrant women have been pathologised as much of the psychological literature views them through a deficit perspective, affirming that immigrant women are at risk of psychological disorders such as depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress. This research adopts a strengths perspective in order to investigate resilience of immigrant women in New Zealand. This research explores the communal and individual resilience of immigrant women using a feminist qualitative framework. The women were interviewed by means of semi-structured, in depth interviews and the data was analysed by means of thematic analysis in order to report the experiences, meanings and realities of immigrant women's lives. The analysis revealed that collective roles such as the role of mother, "co-madre", the benevolent woman, the breadwinner and the role of spirituality and religious beliefs contributed to the resilience of immigrant women. It was also found that individual constructs such as individual spirituality, the emergence into a contemporary paradigm that allowed women to break free from traditional life, as well as the establishment of identities of independence and empowerment aided women's resilience. The findings highlighted the complex and contradictory nature of immigrant women's stories presenting a challenge to the pathology discourse of immigrant women evident in the literature and within society.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Approximately 51% of immigrants in the developed world and 46% in the less developed world today are female (Killian, Olmsted, & Doyle, 2012). There a pressing need exists to unravel the specific experiences of women who are adapting to new worlds and a new way of life as immigrants (Buijs, 1993; Yakushko & Chronister, 2005). As the economy becomes more globalised, immigration has increasingly become an economic strategy pursued by individuals and families. Immigration is on the increase and New Zealand is a popular destination for immigrants because of the lifestyle that it offers as well as educational opportunities (Statistics New Zealand, 2010). According to statistics New Zealand, the number and proportion of people who were born overseas and are now living in New Zealand continues to increase. To illustrate this increase, a census shows that at the time of the 2006 census, 22.9 % of people usually living in New Zealand were born overseas, compared with 19.5% in 2001 and 17.5 % in 1996 (Statistics New Zealand, 2006).

The act of migration can be defined as involving the movement of groups and individuals from one country to another country, intending to settle either temporarily or permanently (Melias, Hillfingier Messias, & Aroian, 2012). Women immigrate because of a myriad of complex reasons such as social, economic, political and environmental difficulties and uncertainties. It has been found that immigrant women often pursue improved economic and educational opportunities in the hopes of securing stability in terms of their personal and family life (Thai, 2012).

The main focus of this research is to investigate the experiences immigrant women in relation to what enhanced their resiliency. This research explores the communal roles and the individual constructs that enrich immigrant women's resiliency. The analysis revealed that communal roles such as the role of mother, "co-madre" (defined as surrogate mother / surrogate sister), the benevolent feminised role, the breadwinner and communal spirituality contribute to resiliency. The effect of these roles on women's resiliency will be explored in Chapter Four. Further analysis revealed that, in contrast to communal roles, individual constructs such as individual spirituality, the emergence into

contemporary paradigms and the establishment of new identities contributed to women's resiliency. These individual constructs are investigated in relation to its contribution to immigrant women's resiliency in Chapter Five.

Immigrant women and resilience. The literature review revealed that mainstream resiliency models and literature do not account for the experiences of immigrant women because of its rootedness in western norms and it's primarily focus on individual resilience and coping strategies (Hobfoll, Jackson, Hobfoll, Pierce, & Young, 2002). Research specific to the resilience of immigrant women is sparse, it however has found that immigration presents women with losses, yet despite loss immigrant women can celebrate a range of gains such as opportunities for new liberties, professional, educational and personal growth that broadens their horizons (Berger, 2009). Moreover, immigrant women have been found to demonstrate significant resilience that has familial, social, personal, spiritual and circumstantial sources that enables them to cope with relocation and its challenges (Berger, 2009). Key resilience features has been found to be significant relationships in the lives of resilient women as well as the importance of affective expressions (Ramsey, 2012). In addition, the exploration of ethnic, gender and cultural identities has been found to play a significant role in an individual's ability to be resilient in the face of adversity (Clauss-Ehlers, Yang, & Chen, 2006). Interpersonal relationships, frame of mind and religion / spirituality as important have been found to be important contributors to the resilience women (Ramsey, 2012). This study aims to investigate the resilience of immigrant women in New Zealand. The need for research from a strengths based perspective is evident as immigrant women have been under represented and stigmatised within academic literature.

Women and migration. It was not until the mid-1970's that women became more visible in the studies of migration, and when they were recognised the were only acknowledged as the dependents of men (Buijs, 1993). Historically deficit models have been used to investigate immigration. This has led to research that focuses on issues such as psychological disorders, social challenges, and barriers to help-seeking. Much knowledge supports the notion that immigrant women are especially vulnerable to stress, psychological strain and psychiatric disorders such as depressive disorders, posttraumatic stress disorder and somatisation disorder (Bromand et al., 2012; Yakushko & Chronister, 2005).

These deficit theories assert that women's vulnerability may be due to the complex social, economic, cultural and environmental transitions that they make. Within these transitions it is said that immigrant women commonly meet numerous barriers to appropriate and affordable resources, services and support (Melias et al., 2012). These transitions involve changes within women's identity construction, interactions and social networks. In addition, migration is inclined to be a continuing transition as immigrants may find themselves in situations (job loss, death of a family member, pregnancy, illness) where their transition may be restarted (Yakushko & Chronister, 2005). These health risks are often compounded by gender roles that create expectations that women have to do domestic duties, provide childcare and contribute to generating household income. Moreover, women often engage with host country institutions such as immigration departments, schools, health care services and social services that can be stressful (Melias et al., 2012).

However, there are challenges to the prevailing focus on the negative impact of immigration on women. Opposing positions of the negative effects of immigration asserts that it is possible that immigrants can be resilient and healthy despite migration related health threats (Berger, 2009). These positions are based on the principle that immigrants may encounter improved living conditions, enhanced economic status, upward mobility as well as better environments in terms of health and safety in host countries. It has been argued that prevailing models of immigration and health contain inadequate empirical support and ethnocentric bias, and lacks applicability to a varied heterogeneous immigrant population (Buijs, 1993).

Historically, research on immigration was predominantly focused on the experience of male immigrants (Buijs, 1993; Killian et al., 2012). Such research is biased and therefore does not represent female immigration (Ip & Liu, 2008). The experiences of women as immigrants in a patriarchal society have largely been absent in literature (Johnson-Bailey, 2004). Recent literature acknowledges that immigration is gendered; this has led to an influx of research that focuses on women's life experiences in immigration (Buijs, 1993; Killian et al., 2012). We now know that traditional immigration patterns are changing and that women are increasingly immigrating independently from men and the traditional nuclear family (Ip & Liu, 2008).

Numerous approaches have been established to provide adequate care for immigrant women. The most effective models focus on women's strengths and work with cultural advisors and are implemented using feminist participatory models (Buijs, 1993). Areas for further development in research regarding immigrant women include developing culturally safe research tools and using appropriate theoretical frameworks (Buijs, 1993). More recently, research has utilised positive psychology, to look specifically at immigrant woman through a strengths based model. This type of research acknowledges the role that women play in immigration and values their experiences. Exploratory approaches aim to understand immigrant women's experiences and looks at the issues that they face through a resilience model.

It is timely to ask new research questions that focus on immigrant woman from a positive enquiry rather than from a deficit perspective. This study is centred on two main questions: a) What do immigrant women do in order to cope well thrive as immigrants? b) What strategies do immigrant women employ that buffer them from or enable them to recover from misfortune, stress, depression and change? These research questions are based on a strengths perspective and are essential as no research has previously been conducted on the resiliency of immigrant women in New Zealand.

A story leading into and inspiration for this thesis. Between the age of four and fifteen my aunty Anna, played a substantial role in my life as my main caregiver. She had a boisterous, laugh that was comforting to my soul. She smelt like sweet hair oil, cigarette smoke, and sunlight mixed together. She was a humorous soul, with a warm embrace. She cooked my lunches and ironed my school uniform and took care of me after school finished until my parents came back much later in the day. As a little child, I remember sitting with her as she polished the brass ware outside, and eating *pap* with her and her friends.

As I grew older she was there, during the time I needed guidance in negotiating my way through puberty. Unknowingly to me at the time, she also 'allowed' me to steal her cigarettes, and never told my parents about my escapades, she was a true confidant and secret keeper. As I grew up, I faced a predicament as I slowly came to the realisation that the Apartheid regime in South Africa, where I lived, held very different values to what I had for my Aunty Anna,

a Zulu [Native African in Southern Africa] woman. This slowly became apparent to me as a 7 year old Afrikaner [Dutch European in South Africa] girl. I vaguely remember the day that aunty Anna, took me to visit one of my school friends, I noticed that she was not allowed to use the same cups, plates and cutlery that we were using for lunch and ate outside. On another occasion I remember asking why Antjie, as I used to call her [pronounced as Ainkie], could not use the toilet in our house and had to use the outside toilet. As a child I was unaware of the full extent of the principles of the Apartheid regime that governed the South African population prior to the 1994 election.

I lost touch with aunty Antjie when I was 15, when my parents suddenly decide to move and I never had the opportunity to say goodbye to her. To outsiders she was regarded as a maid and the essence of my relationship with Antjie was disregarded. I left South Africa when I was nineteen. For a long time, I blocked out the conflict within myself regarding my attachment to Antjie, it was too painful to admit the loss that I experienced and too painful to understand the complexities of the context of our relationship.

I have come to recognise that the separation from somebody so pivotal to my life was my first experience of loss. It is a story about the loss of an intimate relationship, belonging, and familiarity. Little did I know that this story of loss would be repeated as I immigrated at the age of 19 and left all that I know and love behind, in the search for a better life. Once again I experienced a sense of loss, this time it was the loss of land, language, culture and family. I had to find ways to recover the void that was left after my immigration to New Zealand.

What sustained me during this time was the building of close relationships, as well as opportunities for learning and advancement through university study and career opportunities. I have found that my spiritual beliefs and practices have brought me courage and reassurance in times of despair and hopelessness. I gained much strength from being linked with social organisations that promote social justice and spending time doing voluntary work in the community. These associations enhanced my sense of belonging and acceptance.

It was through my voluntary work at an immigrant women's centre that I met other immigrant women and came to see their strength and perseverance. I made friends and deeply enjoyed the times that I spent there, it became the highlight of

my week as I heard some of their stories and shared mine. I saw how creative and resourceful immigrant women can be. It was there that I experienced communal friendship and acceptance, in some ways we all found ways to cope with the difficulties of immigration in the communal setting of the centre. I observed how women support each other and empower each other.

My experience at the immigrant women's centre was the impetus for this study. I was interested to find out what learning, growth and coping occurs in women despite the problems and challenges that the immigration experience presents. As I read through the literature I realised that what I experienced in the centre was not captured within much of the research that I investigated.

Positioning the author. "Reflexivity involves exposing the subjective locations of the researcher" (Wickramasinghe, 2010, p. 58). As a feminist researcher, it is important to focus on the facets of my identity and reflect critically on how I am positioned in writing up research as well as the degree to which my identity constructed and positioned my work as noted by Wickramasinghe (2010). As a researcher, I have an emic perspective or an insider's view as a woman and as an immigrant. As an insider, I may have insights into the day to day realities of the women who participated in this study. Insiders are frequently trusted as they have an understanding of the experiences of the group (Wilson & Neville, 2009). I however also had an etic perspective (outsider looking in) as I interviewed women from different backgrounds, and cultures than myself (Pernice, 1994).

Discipline. My original training was in Education and Psychology. I became interested in Community Psychology because of its focus on social justice, empowerment and power and position. My undergraduate studies have made me aware of feminist theory. This research project was an opportunity to learn more about and engage with feminist research practice. Feminist literature and the advice from my supervisors were central to my methodological decisions.

Ethnicity. My life experience has caused me to have hybrid identities, perhaps more accurately it is useful to think about my identity in terms of 'multibridity' as pointed out by Wickramasinghe (2010, p. 59) to describe the multiple influences that defines a person's life. A significant feature of my identity is my ethnicity, as Wickramasinghe (2010, p. 59) points out "there are always tensions in how one

conceptualised oneself and how one is perceived within the different social strata”. I have reflected on my ethnicity with mixed emotions. I felt a sense of shame and guilt of my Afrikaner ethnicity. I learned to skilfully avoid the ‘where are you from” questions when asked. Thanks to the education inspired reflection on my sense of identity and place, I find that shame and guilt misguided, and I have come to learn from and critique the political and social structures that oppress people and destroy relationships. As part of my healing process, and as a tribute to Antjie, I have come to make meaning out of the past by using the present as an opportunity to learn about and invest myself in social justice. It is because of my upbringing with Antjie that I identify and subscribe to the philosophy of Womanism, a feminism that seeks social justice in terms of gender, class, and ethnicity (Campbell & Wasco, 2000, p. 182). Despite my upbringing in pre and post-Apartheid South Africa, as an Afrikaner, I have strong convictions towards ethnic diversity and multi culturalisms. I attribute these philosophies to the significant influence that my aunty Anna, mentioned above had on my early developmental years.

Class. I am positioned within the middle class of New Zealand, I therefore occupy somewhat of a position of class privilege. I believe that my training in Community Psychology has sensitised me to this and the issues of power and position.

Aims of the present study. The aims of this present study was to focus on immigrant women from a position of positive enquiry, by investigating what strategies women employ in order to thrive or recover from stress, misfortune, depression and change. Therefore the chief aims of this study was to:

1. Explore the resiliency of immigrant women in New Zealand across two dimensions: Women’s collective roles and women’s individual agency.
2. The tensions that exists as women negotiate drawing strength from both their collective roles and individual agency.

Scope of the study. This study utilised a feminist approach to gather in depth qualitative data to gain an in depth understanding of social reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). A qualitative approach enables a researcher to draw attention to the experiences of people by examining their practices and ideas (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). The recruitment process resulted in a culturally diverse sample.

The stories of nine immigrant women were collected through semi structured individual interviews. This qualitative approach allowed the gathering of in depth information within this topic.

Thesis outline. This thesis consists of six chapters. This chapter has centred on an introduction in order to provide a background and context for the research. It also provided a story leading into this thesis and provided a personal position of the author.

Chapter Two surveys a comprehensive range of existing material and sources, in the general areas related to the resilience of immigrant woman. It provides a critical view of current resiliency models and addresses the gaps that exist in the research in relation to immigrant women.

Chapter Three describes the procedures and methods designed in this research and why a feminist qualitative method was chosen. Furthermore, the ethical issues related to this research is outlined and discussed. Chapter three concludes with a description of how the thematic analysis was done using an inductive approach on a latent level. In addition to the chapter a description of each of the participants and their immigration story is included as an appendix (Appendix Six).

Chapter Four presents the findings of this study that relate to the collective roles of women as well as the strategies their collective roles have allowed them to employ to strengthen their resiliency.

Chapter Five deliberates on the findings of this study related to the individualistic agency of women that enabled them to strengthen their resiliency.

Chapter Six provides the reader with the key conclusions of this study. A discussion is then presented to consider the tensions that exist between the collective roles and individual agency of women and the resistance that they experience as they transition between the two dichotomies. The limitations of the study and future directions for investigation are also presented.

In summary, this study offers a strengths perspective on the experience of immigration from a woman's point of reference. This study offers an alternative approach to immigrant woman that does not further discriminate towards women from their gender, ethnicity or immigrant status. The next chapter will outline the

literature review that surveyed a range of existing material and sources in the general areas of resilience as well as the resilience of immigrant women.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

As seen in the previous chapter which provided an overview of immigration, immigrant women as well as resilience, it is evident that more research on the resiliency of immigrant women is required. This literature review surveys a range of existing material and sources in the general areas of resilience as well as the resilience of immigrant women. This chapter is constituted of three sections. The first section investigates the origins, definitions and motivations of resilience and provides a historical overview of resiliency studies. The second section explains current resiliency models and offers a review of current literature by focusing on five subthemes such as: individual qualities, resilience as a coping strategy, resilience forces and quality of relationships. The chapter concludes by offering a critique of current resiliency models, theories and literature from a feminist perspective, by addressing gaps in the literature in relation to gender, ethnicity and immigrant status. Outlined below is an overview of the origins, definitions, motivations and related concepts that clarifies how resiliency is commonly understood.

Section One: Origins and definitions of resilience inquiry.

In the 1990s "...theoretically resiliency" was "in its infancy" (Richardson, 1990, p. 33). The concept of resilience emerged out of the psychopathology and child development field (Richardson, 1990). In the 1980s some primary studies were done to investigate resilient children (Felsman & Vaillant, 1987; Werner & Smith, 1982). The initial exploration of resilience occurred in order to explain how some people cope more adequately with challenges in spite of facing similar stressors, resulting in maladaptation, compared to so-called non-resilient people. Even though several attempts have been made to explain what resiliency is, very little is known about the complete nature of resiliency (Richardson, 1990).

There are numerous definitions for the word resilience. The term is generally used to describe the ability to recover readily from stress, illness, depression, adversity or the like (Connor & Davidson, 2003). It is also described as the ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change (Resilience, 2013b). More specifically to psychology the term is defined as "the capacity to recover from a downturn to a former state of wellbeing" (Carver, 1998, p. 248).

The term resilience suggests that "...the experiences of adversity (serious stress or trauma, physical or physiological) can sometimes yield benefits to the person who experiences it" (Carver, 1998, p. 245). Not only has the word resilience have various meanings, conflicting conclusions exist about the nature and functioning of resilience. According to Connor and Davidson (2003) resilience personifies the personal qualities that enable a person to thrive when facing hardship. However, contrary to the notion that resilience is primarily a trait or set of characteristics, it is argued that resiliency as a process (Richardson, 1990). Others argue that it is an inborn quality, while some suggest that resilience can be taught and fostered. It is clear that resiliency is complex and is not easily defined, hence it is apparent that resilience is multidimensional and varies with context, time, age, gender, and cultural origin, as well as within an individual subjected to different life circumstances" (Connor & Davidson, 2003, p. 76). Furthermore, resilience is associated with coping and healing. The word coping has a similar definition to that of resiliency and relates to the ability to effectively deal with something difficult (Coping, 2013). In some instances resilience may be considered as an ability to cope with stress and could be an significant buffering factor when treating anxiety, depression, and stress reactions (Connor & Davidson, 2003). In addition, resilience is also related to healing, which is the process of becoming sound or healthy again (Coping, 2013). This is confirmed as it has been said that "resilience and resiliency theory may help to promote healing at a deeper, softer, yet more efficacious level" (Richardson, 2002, p. 308). As seen above, various definitions exist to describe resilience, likewise various motivations exists for gaining a greater understanding of resilience.

Economical motivation for the study of resilience. An understanding of resilience can be beneficial for various reasons, for example, acknowledging the honourable side of human experience, such as learning how to make something good out of something bad (Carver, 1998). Understanding resilience can also be beneficial for financial reasons. When facing traumatic events such as heart attacks, natural disasters, or the experience of rape the future becomes more ambiguous. In such situations, some people are more resilient than others and have the ability to rebound. Consequently, resilient people cost the health care system significantly less than less resilient people (Carver, 1998). An understanding of why some people are more resilient than others aid effective

skill transferral to others which, in turn benefits the health care system. Therefore, resilience is an important notion for further examination (Carver, 1998). As noted above, the study of resiliency is motivated by various factors. The following section will provide an overview of the history of resiliency enquiry in order to set the context in which to understand the different waves of resiliency investigation.

Richardson (2002) provides a summary of resiliency enquiries over the last twenty years by grouping investigations into three waves. The first wave focused on the shift from investigating risk factors to focusing more on the strengths that enable individuals to survive adversity. The first wave specifically looked at the qualities that individuals possess, such as self-esteem, which help them survive difficulty. The second wave investigated how resilience qualities were acquired. During this time, resiliency became defined as the process of coping with adversity or change in a way that marked identification and protective factors. The third and current wave is more concerned with what the motivation or energy source to reintegrate resiliently is. Resilient restoration requires greater energy to grow, “and the source of the energy, according to resiliency theory, is a spiritual source or innate resilience” (Richardson, 2002, p. 309). From this summary, I established that my research is located within the third wave, which focuses on what drives a person forward. As seen below, a table is provided which outlines the three waves of resiliency enquiry in more detail.

Table 1: Three waves of resiliency enquiry

	Description	Outcome
First Wave: Resilient Qualities	Phenomenological descriptions of resilient qualities of individuals and <i>support systems</i> that predict social and personal success	List of qualities, assets, or protective factors that help people grow through adversity (<i>i.e., self-esteem, Self-efficacy, support systems, etc.</i>)
Second Wave: The Resiliency Process	Resiliency is the process of coping with stressors, adversity, change, or opportunity in a manner that <i>results in the identification, fortification, and enrichment of protective factors.</i>	Describes the disruptive and re-integrative process of acquiring the desired resilient qualities described in the first wave; A model that helps clients and students to <i>choose between resilient reintegration, reintegration back to the comfort zone, or reintegration with loss.</i>
Third Wave: Innate Resilience	Postmodern multidisciplinary identification of motivational forces within individuals and groups and the <i>creation of experiences that foster the activation and utilization of the forces.</i>	Helps clients and students to discover and apply the <i>force that drives a person toward self-actualization and to resiliently reintegrate from disruptions</i>

Table 2: Adapted from Three waves of resiliency inquiry from The metatheory of resilience and resiliency by Richardson (2002) *Journal of Clinical Psychology*. p.308 2002. Reprinted with permission.

As seen in the table above, the focus in resilience has changed in recent years. The emphasis on pathology and problem orientation has shifted with the growing focus on health promotion and wellbeing. This shift has enabled researchers to revisit the role that resilience plays in health. However, there still is very little awareness about resilience and its standing in clinical therapeutics.

Therapeutic trials traditionally have focused on measuring morbidity, more recently, quality of life is now included in many trials. Various scales have been established that measures resilience; although, the measures have not been applied to specific populations nor has it been widely used and therefore lack generalisability. It is evident that there is a need for measures of resilience that are well validated and simple to use. Even though numerous scales have been developed “none has gained wide acceptance and no scale has established dominance” (Connor & Davidson, 2003, p. 77).

Section Two: Resiliency models and review of current literature

As seen above, it is apparent that resiliency inquiry has evolved over time, the following section endeavours to outline resiliency models that has shaped the way in which resiliency theories are understood. Below is a resiliency model developed by Carver (1998).

Resiliency models. How does resilience work?

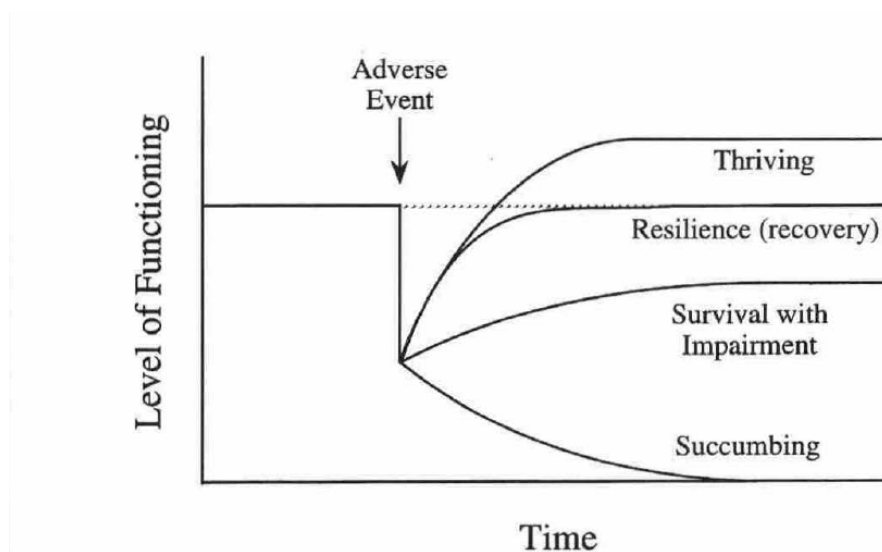


Figure 1: Responses to adversity: the domain of possibilities

From Resilience and thriving: Issues, models, and linkages by Carver (1998) *Journal of Social Issues*, 54, p. 246 1998. Reprinted with permission.

Explanation of figure 1: Responses to adversity. This model illustrates that when a person faces adversity or physical or psychological downturn, at least four potential outcomes can be expected. The first possibility is a continual

downward slide where the person finally gives in. This is a “dysfunctional state in which maladaptive strategies” (self-destructive behaviours) are used to cope with stressors (Connor & Davidson, 2003, p. 77). The second possible outcome is where the person endures, but is weakened in some way. This is a recovery with loss, establishing a lower level of homeostasis, (Connor & Davidson, 2003). The third possible result is when a person returns to the pre-adversity level of operating, or the way they were before the downturn. This can happen quickly or more progressively and is what is called resilience (Carver, 1998). Resilience is a homeostatic phenomenon, that is, a state of psychological equilibrium or stability acquired when tension has been reduced or eradicated (Resilience, 2013a). It is a return to baseline homeostasis, in an effort to just get past or beyond the disruption. The fourth option is that the person exceeds the previous level of operating, before the down turn; this is called thriving (Carver, 1998). In this case the disruption embodies a prospect for growth and improved resilience, whereby adaptation to the disruption leads to a new, higher level of homeostasis. It is possible for resilience and thriving to co-occur. Not all people who experience adverse event experience resilience or thriving. For some, such anguish leads to greater vulnerability and additional sensitisation (Carver, 1998). This process can be described as using kindling to start a fire, that become increasingly intense (Carver, 1998). Some people respond to adversity and experience deterioration while others respond with homeostasis or even growth. As mentioned earlier this phenomenon stimulates question as to why some people are resilient and others are weakened when dealing with the same situations.

Although this model described above, offers a good starting point to understand resiliency, it is evident that it lacks depth and flexibility because it is rigid and does not cater for different genders, personalities, life stages nor different coping mechanisms. It is clear that this model does not cater for the complex lives of immigrant women and does not offer an explanation of what strategies immigrant women use to be resilient. The findings of a study specifically focused on the resiliency of immigrant women challenges this simplified model. It found that resiliency is multi layered as immigrant women find diverse routes to cope with duality in terms of their identity, loyalty and affiliation (Berger, 2009). It was found that immigrant women suffer a mix of social, economic, personal and psychological losses but they also celebrate a range

of gains, such as opportunities for new liberties, professional, educational and personal growth that broadens their horizons (Berger, 2009). It is also recognised that it “is possible to perform well in one area in the face of adversity” (e.g., work) “but to function poorly in another” (i.e., interpersonal relationships) (Connor & Davidson, 2003, p. 81)”. Supporting this statement, research has found that resilience is not a straight forward process but that women are resilient in different stages of their lives (Casanova, 2012; Flynn, Sotirin, & Brady, 2012). It appears that this resiliency model is simplistic and does not account for resiliency which requires “multiple and sometimes contradictory strategies that must be worked out simultaneously” (Berger, 2009; Flynn et al., 2012, p. 1). A feminist approach further challenges current resiliency models by arguing that resilience does not necessarily return an individual to homeostasis or equilibrium, but that resilience is a process that involves “an on-going responsiveness, never complete nor predetermined” (Casanova, 2012; Flynn et al., 2012, p. 7). It is evident that there is a need for the development of models that are more sensitive to “diversity of culture, faith group and gender” (Ramsey, 2012, p. 143). To compensate for some of the weaknesses in the model of Craver, (1998), Richardson (2002) offers an updated version of the resiliency model above.

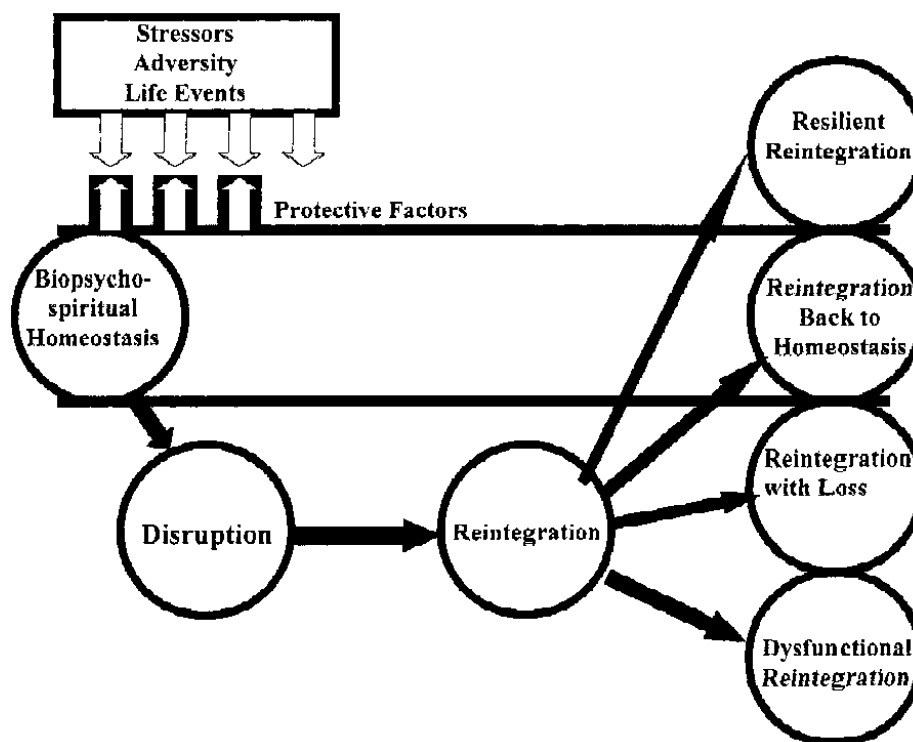


Figure 2: Metatheory of resilience and resiliency

Figure 2. Taken from *Metatheory of Resilience and Resiliency* by Richardson (2002) *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 58, p. 311 2002. Reprinted with permission.

This model is very similar to that of Carver (1998) it however does have a few additions. The model includes a personal state of mind, described as biopsychospiritual homeostasis, this describes the adapted state of mind, body and spirit. It shows that stressors, adversity and life events surround a person. Unlike Carver’s model, the meta-theory acknowledges protective factors that buffer individuals from harm. When disruption occurs, the person utilises coping strategies, described as reintegration. Following the coping strategies are the four outcomes. At the bottom of the model, there is dysfunctional reintegration, and then there is reintegration with loss, reintegration back to homeostasis, and resilient integration, which Carver (1998) calls thriving. Richardson (2002) states that, an individual experiencing difficulty has the opportunity to choose, either consciously or unconsciously, the outcome of the disruption.

In contrast to the above models that offered limited outcomes, the Basic Ph model of coping and resiliency (shown below) offers a more appropriate framework for understanding the coping strategies that aid resilience as it applies

specifically to the lives of immigrant women. It however still is lacking in some areas. The Ph model of coping offers a broader range of coping styles that different individuals engage in. The different modes are belief, affect, social, imagination, cognition and physical, as seen in the table below.

Table 2: Model of coping and resilience

B	A	S	I	C	Ph
<i>Belief</i>	<i>Affect</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Imagination</i>	<i>Cognition</i>	<i>Physical</i>
Self, ideology	Emotions	Role, others, organisation	Intuition, humour	Reality, knowledge	Action Practical
Frankl (1963) Maslow (1962)	Freud (1933) Rogers (1951)	Adler (1956) Erikson (1963)	De Bono (1992) Jung (1977)	Ellis (1994) Lazarus and Folkman (1984)	Pavlov (1927) Watson (1924)
Attitudes Beliefs Lifespan Value clarification Meaning	Listening-skills Emotions Ventilation Acceptance Expression of feelings	Social role systems Social skills Assertiveness Group role-play	Creativity Play Psychodrama 'As-if' Symbols Guided imagery/fantasy	Information Order of preference Problem solving Self-navigation Self-talk	Activities Games Exercise Relaxation Eating Work

From The “Basic Ph” Model of Coping and Resilience: Theory, research and cross cultural application, p.22 by Eshet, Elmaliach, Lahad, Shacham & Ayalon, 2012 London Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Reprinted with permission

This table concludes that different coping styles and mechanisms exist that are used by different people under stress (Eshet, Elmaliach, Lahad, Shacham, & Ayalon, 2012). *Basic Ph* is an acronym for six coping styles. The model depicts that some people cope better by employing a cognitive-behavioural mode of coping, these people prefer to use strategies such as problem solving, information gathering, internal conversation, self-navigation and lists of activities and preferences (Eshet et al., 2012). Others may display an emotional or affective coping mode and may express themselves by crying, laughing, talking with someone about their feelings or non-verbal methods for example drawing, reading or writing (Eshet et al., 2012). The third type operates by using a social mode of coping, they obtain their support from belonging to a group, being part of an organisation, having a task or playing a role. The fourth type makes use of their imagination to cope with stress. This is done by daydreaming pleasant thoughts to front cruel facts or by averting their attention using guided imagery. The fifth type

relies on beliefs and values such as religious beliefs, political stands, beliefs and feelings of meaning and the need for self-fulfilment. Lastly, there is also a physical type (Ph), this type prefers to cope by using physical expression in conjunction with body movement. They may utilise methods, such as, relaxation, physical exercise and activity (Eshet et al., 2012).

The basic assumption of this model is that it is possible to identify each person's unique coping behaviour based on the six modes explained above. The authors of the model recognised that the model will need to be adapted in cross cultural settings and suggest that cultural advisors act as informants when applying the model cross culturally. I would add to their comment that it may be possible that immigrant women may have similar coping strategies because of their shared experience of immigration. As seen above, I have outlined three resiliency models in order to define resiliency and how it operates. The following presents the literature reviewed. The literature was categorised according to the main themes that emerged out of the review such as: a) individual qualities, b) resilience as a coping strategy, c) resilience forces such as spirituality and inner drive and d) quality of relationships. Firstly, individual qualities are investigated. The studies that were investigated were not all specific to immigrant women as specific research on the topic was difficult to access, alluding to the fact that there is a significant gap in the area of the resiliency of immigrant women.

Individual qualities. There is evidence that certain qualities can predict resiliency (Carver, 1998). As mentioned earlier, the first wave of resilience enquiry offers phenomenological descriptions of resilient qualities of individuals (Richardson, 2002). The literature reviewed suggested that resilience is an individual characteristic and is based on a positive outlook on self and on circumstances. Resilient qualities include expecting the best or worst in ones future, being optimistic rather than pessimistic, having a sense of hope and self-efficiency (Carver, 1998). It is interesting to note that all the qualities mentioned above signifies continuing efforts versus giving up (Carver, 1998).

The literature above is not specific to immigrant women, however, consistent with a focus on individual qualities, research has found that immigrant women are fast adapters and view themselves as such (Berger, 2009). Contrary to the stereotype that immigrant women lack self-confidence, immigrant women

have been found to express a positive view of themselves and their accomplishments (Berger, 2009). In addition, immigrant women have been found to attribute their resilience to “internal” factors such as sense of role, inner strength rather than external characteristics such as demographics or cultural features. It was found that immigrant women have qualities such as “gutsiness”, “determination”, unwillingness to give up”, “seeing the bright side of the situation” and “optimism, seeing the half full glass” (Berger, 2009, p. 184). Immigrant women were also found to be fighters who refuse to give up, they are women who take an active stand, for example: “ I will show them” , “I will not let them break me” and I will make it in spite of all difficulties and in spite of all odds” (Berger, 2009, p. 184). It has also been found that immigrant women tend to have what is called a hardy attitude (Maddi, 2005). Resilience is a positive perception of reality, also known as a hardy attitude (Maddi, 2005). A hardy attitude structures how people think about their interactions with the world around them and provide them with the motivation to do difficult things and turn disruption into opportunities (Maddi, 2005). For people with a hardy attitude, stressful changes may be developmentally provocative, while for others it may be debilitating. It is evident that the perceptions around resilience are evolving and some studies have been done to investigate the biological or innate features that cause or influence resilience.

The biological component of resilience has been investigated (Connor & Davidson, 2003). This raises the age old nature versus nurture argument. Is resilience a learnt behaviour or is it an innate disposition? Research on biological or innate resilience question the role of personality and genetic makeup in enabling immigrant women to be resilient despite the perceived circumstantial challenges and structural constraints they face as immigrants (Koert, Borgen, & Amundson, 2011). It is suggested that resilience is something that people are born with, for example negative correlation was found between mental distress and traits such as extroversion (Bromand et al., 2012). Moreover, a positive correlation was found between mental distress and traits such as neuroticism (Bromand et al., 2012). Furthermore, a relationship was found between resilience and central serotonergic function. This theory might prove useful in studies of the biology of resilience. Fluoxetine has been found to have an effect in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (Connor & Davidson, 2003). To the researchers

knowledge “this is the first demonstration that increased resilience, as operationally defined, can be associated with a pharmacologic intervention” (Connor & Davidson, 2003, p. 81). Their study found that resilience can be measured and is influenced by health status, for example they state that individuals with mental illness have lower levels of resilience than the general population. They believe that resilience can be “regulated” and can be “improved through interventions such as treatments” (Connor & Davidson, 2003, p. 81). In stark contrast to the perception that resilience is innate or biological, it has been found that resilience is a skillset, or a learnt behaviour (Koert et al., 2011). A study specific to immigrant women found that personal qualities and attitudes can be taught and external supports that can be put into place to facilitate resiliency processes in the work place (Koert et al., 2011). There appears to be no clear agreement about how exactly resilience is acquired, there seems to be a variety of contributing factors. One of the weaknesses of these studies was that it analysed individuals from a deficit perspective. An additional limitation of these studies was that they did not include in depth interviews to provide context to their findings. It seems that the concept of resilience is an emerging field of research that requires much exploration (Bromand et al., 2012). The next subsection reviews literature that focused on resilience as a coping strategy.

Resilience as a coping strategy. The second wave of resilience enquiry states that resiliency is a process or method of coping with change, adversity or stressors in such a way that it results in learning and the enrichment of protective factors (Richardson, 2002). Literature reviewed within this subsection exhibit that different coping strategies helped immigrant women deal with stressors in their immediate environment. For some immigrant women, a helpful strategy was practicing self-care, relaxation techniques, learning from past experiences as well as the positive reframing of their problems (Koert et al., 2011).

It was found that immigrant women who practices self-care reported improved concentration, focus and motivation if they had time to care for themselves (Koert, et al., 2011). Factors that contributed positively to the resilience of immigrant women in relation to dealing with mental illness has been found to be relaxation techniques, ethnic community support, cook ups with groups, communal support, willpower, positive self-talk, keeping busy, being physically active as well as peer, family and spousal support (Donnelly et al.,

2011). Self-care, personal reflection and the re-evaluation of life roles were also found to contribute to the resilience of menopausal, Korean, immigrant woman (Chung, 1999). Consistent with a focus on coping strategies it was found that immigrant women have the ability to help their children and family cope with the stress of immigration (Berger, 2009). In addition to helping their family cope, immigrant women were also able to grow personally and attain personal accomplishments (Berger, 2009). It was found that immigrant women exhibit extraordinary courage in coping with resettlement issues, despite their sense of isolation and dependence (Berger, 2009). Furthermore, it was found that, problem focused coping can foster a better result in dealing with the difficult circumstances (Aldwin, 2007). In contrast to this, avoidance coping, for example the disengaging of an effort produces less successful results. It appears that there is a relationship between engagement and disengagement with problems that affects resiliency outcomes (Carver, 1998). Likewise, it was found that those who have been able to learn from adverse conditions in past circumstances, tend to master situations effectively and evaluate their experience as beneficial, they are also able to transfer this learning into other situations (Berger, 2009; Carver, 1998). However people who do not learn from or value their learning through adverse conditions, tend to cope with difficulties by avoiding them or trying to escape them. It has been noted that “High-mastery or confident people are continually trying to succeed in efforts to overcome the adversity and that low-mastery people are vulnerable to giving up the attempt” (Carver, 1998, p. 256). It is suggested that people cope more easily when they see difficulties as opportunities to show that they have particular knowledge and skills, and see the difficulty as an opportunity to extend their knowledge and skills (Carver, 1998). The literature reviewed in this section offers some insight into which factors contribute to immigrant women’s resilience but leaves much room for further research to be done in the field. I observed that much the research was written for an audience of health care professionals and aimed to educate practitioners about culturally competent practice (Huang & Mathers, 2008). The next subsection will offer a review on literature that focused on resilience forces.

Resilience forces: Inner drive and spirituality. The third wave of resilience enquiry focused on the “postmodern multi-disciplinary identification and motivational forces within individuals and groups. It investigates the creation of experiences that foster the activation and utilisation of the forces” (Richardson,

2002, p. 308). These literatures focused on the discovery that drives a person towards self-actualisation to reintegrate resiliently from disruptions as outlined in the waves of resiliency table (Richardson, 2002). Research found that immigrant women drew strength from various forces, such as social, familial, personal, circumstantial and spiritual sources (Berger, 2009). It was found that a contributing factor to the resilience of immigrant women in terms of dealing with grief, was spiritual care (Saito, 2002). This claim is partially supported by another study that concluded religious beliefs and its healing power contributed to the resilience of immigrant woman suffering from mental illness (Donnelly et al., 2011). Religious beliefs and its healing power however did deter some women from accessing health care, as immigrant women deferred visiting medical doctors and relied on prayer only (Donnelly et al., 2011). Recent research identified multiple pathways to spiritual resiliency and emphasises the importance of an emotionally rich relationships with the self, others, the Divine as well as rootedness in a healthy spiritual community (Ramsey, 2012). A belief in God and the support from a church community has also been found to contribute to the resiliency of immigrant women (Berger, 2009). Spirituality was located as a coping strategy and gave women the power to survive (Berger, 2009). In terms of social support, role models played a significant role in terms of women's inner drive. Immigrant women tended to access their inner drive through familial sources such as motherhood as well as providing for their extended family (Berger, 2009). Women also drew strength from their circumstances and did not allow themselves to give up or sink into depression (Berger, 2009). The next subsection reviews literature focused on quality of relationships.

Quality of relationships. This category includes articles that investigated the quality of relationship in different contexts that relate to resilience. Relationships in different contexts such as social support, social networking, friendships or peer support were investigated. It became apparent that the perception of solid relational resources helped people to engage in efforts to move forward when facing adverse circumstances. If the perception of solid relationships is low, the person is likely to disengage from efforts to move forward (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). The perception of support and acceptance from significant others provides a person with a solid base from which to function (Hazan & Shaver, 1994).

Likewise, it was found that immigrant women's networks confirm their agency and resourcefulness in transforming their lives as well as their societal environments (De Tona & Lentin, 2011). It is argued that immigrant women live within the contradictions of belonging and living in the margins in society (De Tona & Lentin, 2011). In terms of familial support, some studies investigated the role of familial support and familial strain that arises due to cultural differences within the host country (Casanova, 2012). It was also found that close female relationships provides women with a sense of family (Silverstein, 2013). Intimate women to women friendships have also been found to strengthen a sense of acceptance, connection and belonging amongst women that enable them to build their resilience during hard times (Comas-Diaz, 2013). The limitations in regards to some of these findings was that when researching the social networks of immigrant women the researchers designed their research to interview organisations and failed to interview immigrant women (De Tona & Lentin, 2011). The voices and experience of immigrant women are therefore not heard and the research is based upon the organisations assumptions how immigrant women construct their social networking (De Tona & Lentin, 2011). Moreover, when immigrant women were recruited, another methodological error occurred as researchers recruit only married women, hence the experiences of single women, single mothers, lesbian women or divorced women are not reflected in many findings this was also suggested to be a limitation by Killian et al. (2012). The next subsection offers a critique of current resiliency models and literature.

Section Three: A critique of current models and literature.

In stark contrast to popular understandings of resilience, some feminist challenge the emphasis placed on individualistic qualities such as self-sufficiency, heroism, and the focus on resiliency as an inherent psychological trait (Flynn et al., 2012). Some feminists question the notion of triumphant narratives such as a "happy ending" and argue that resiliency is not only individualistic but is "communal" and is deeply rooted within "relationships", "community" and "interactions" (Flynn et al., 2012, p. 6; Ramsey, 2012). Ramsey, (2012) emphasises the importance of recognising the "high levels of individualism in western thought", theorising and research on resiliency (Dwairy, 2002; Hobfoll et al., 2002; Ramsey, 2012, p. 143). Henceforth, research that assumes individualism

as the norm is “limited in its usefulness in a pluralistic world” (Ramsey, 2012, p. 143).

Furthermore the importance of relationships are neglected within current models. According to Ramsey (2012) the notion of relationships is a dominant theme in the lives of resilient women as well as the importance of affective expressions. Women seem to talk more freely and easily when it comes to their feelings than men did, they were more at ease relating emotions to their life stories and their spiritual selves (Ramsey, 2012). It was found that women’s resiliency included interpersonal relationships, frame of mind and religion and spirituality as important contributors to resilience in aging (Flynn et al., 2012; Ramsey, 2012). In contrast, men have been found to take care of themselves, women were more ‘other’ focused, women referred more often to faith, activities with others and community work (Ramsey, 2012). As mentioned earlier, the importance of gender is ignored in current resiliency theories and models, despite the fact that gender seems to play a significant role in how resiliency operates (Ramsey, 2012). Gendered role identities have been found to support resiliency and wellbeing among women (Marks, 1998). Gendered roles such as caring, can boost women’s sense of purpose and personal growth (Marks, 1998). While it is possible that some gender differences are related to cultural stereotypes, for example proposing that women are more emotionally expressive than men, it is important to note that gender differences needs to be taken into account in theorising resilience (Ramsey, 2012).

A further critique of current models is that it does not appreciate diversity. It is clear that resiliency models do not account of ethnicity. Current mainstream findings on the topic of resilience is challenged in relation to cultural resilience, ethnic identity and gender identity across diverse racial and ethnic groups of young women (Clauss-Ehlers et al., 2006). It was found that ethnic identity, gender identity and culture played a significant role in an individual’s ability to be resilient in the face of adversity (Clauss-Ehlers et al., 2006). This is supported by findings that assert that “*culture and diversity influence resilience processes, particularly for those who are actively learning about their ethnic identity, finding a middle ground between feminine and masculine gender identities, and have experienced racism / sexism as stressors in their everyday lives* (Clauss-Ehlers et al., 2006, p. 135)”.

As seen above the limitations of mainstream studies, in terms of gender, ethnicity and immigration status are highlighted. Much of the research that focus on resilience has studied samples with predominantly white participants (Buijs, 1993). Future research would profit from exploring how resilience processes such as those described here play out for ethnically diverse groups. Researchers should broaden the demographics of study samples, as future research would benefit from exploring other variables that might provide insight into what works for different people (Buijs, 1993; Clauss-Ehlers et al., 2006).

Conclusion. In conclusion, the literature review surveyed the major categories of immigrant women's lives related to resiliency. Firstly a historical overview was provided to explain the origins, definitions and motivations or resiliency enquiry. Secondly current resiliency models were outlined and explained. This literature was examined in terms of topics related to individual qualities, resilience as coping strategy, resilience forces, and quality of relationships. Thirdly a critique of current resiliency models and theories was presented.

The balance of the research reviewed suggested that internal as well as external factors influence the resilience of migrant women. A powerful interplay between personal attributes and structural constraints was observed, a remark also made by Killian et al. (2012). The medical model suggests that immigration can be a health risk to some, however immigration is experienced by some women as an opportunity for identification and growth (Berger, 2009). Moreover, while to some it may seem that stressful changes are debilitating, to others change may be stimulating and exciting (Maddi, 2005). To some degree resilience or happiness in immigration depends on how people think about their interaction with the world around them and provide motivation to do difficult things and turn disruption into opportunities (Maddi, 2005). However, whether or not immigration is seen as positive or negative depends on several factors including power relationships, gender, level of education, voluntary decision making about immigration, socioeconomic status, social support, personality traits, and social strain (Bromand et al., 2012).

It was evident that research available on female immigration was largely done from a deficit perspective or medical model and that female immigrants were easily pathologised by health care professionals as also noted by Yakushko

and Chronister (2005). There is a need for more research to explore the real life stories of women from an insider perspective by means of qualitative methods. To my knowledge, very little research has been published in relation to resilient migrant women in New Zealand. Therefore, a significant gap is identified within research that focus on resilience in female immigrants in New Zealand.

The reviewed literature made clear what factors may contribute to women's resilience. However, a deeper investigation is necessary in order to better understand the process and experiences that women engage in, in order to find pathways to resilience. This study aims to provide further insight into the real life stories of women by exploring resilience from communal roles as well as from individual constructs. Having identified the key features of the literature review and areas relevant to current research, the following chapter provides a description of the methodological procedures that was employed in this study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I outline the methodological strategies utilised in this thesis. This chapter comprises four parts. The first part addresses a feminist epistemological positioning, that acknowledges that every group is located socially and historically and that the knowledge they produce is influenced by their context. The second part describes the process of gathering of the women's stories: How I recruited the women, who the women are, methods used to gather stories, the interview schedule and how I recorded the stories. The third part addresses ethical issues such as cultural competence, hierarchy and reflexivity as well as explaining how I gained consent, protected the women's privacy, maintained confidentiality and confirmed accuracy. The chapter concludes with a description of how I conducted the transcription, coding and analysis of the women's stories.

Section One: A feminist approach to research

Feminist methods are part of a larger intellectual movement characteristic of moving away from traditional social science methodology that argues for absolute truth or uncontaminated science (Nielsen, 1990). Such positivistic research is based on the notion that there exists one objective reality and that such a reality can be discovered by objective scientists. In contrast, most feminists question dominant ideology and reject the notion that there can be objective knowledge. They assert that every group is located socially and historically and that the knowledge they produce is influenced by their context (Nielsen, 1990). Feminism recognises that researchers cannot escape from their own assumptions or world views and therefore cannot be fully objective. Feminist research involves a level of awareness and consciousness about one's social location and how that location relates to one's lived experiences (Nielsen, 1990). Feminism recognises the contradictions, tensions, and dilemmas that form part of women's concrete experiences in patriarchal worlds; these dilemmas can only be grasped with feminist consciousness starting with women's experience. Feminist approaches also acknowledge that women's voices are muted in society and that language and conversation is based on male experiences and structures.

There is no universal definition for what is or what is not 'feminist' (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). This is reflected in the heterogenous nature of the feminist group that differ on many issues, such as the causes of male domination and how to achieve women's liberations (Kirsch, 1999; Letherby, 2003; Sprague, 2005). Feminists however are united in their joint concern for seeking the reasons why there is inequality between men and women and the overall subordination of women (Letherby, 2003). Elements that unite feminist philosophy are issues of a) gender as a key organiser of social life and b) taking action towards progressive social change and equality (Sprague, 2005).

Because of the lack of definition for what is or what is not 'feminist', feminist research is characterised by its features. First, research can be acknowledged as feminist if it is framed by feminist theory and if their purpose is to produce information that will be beneficial for the "transformation of gendered injustice and subordination" (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002, p. 147). Feminist approaches are recognised chiefly by their theories on gender and power as well as philosophies of transformation and accountability (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). A distinguishing feature of feminist research from other traditions of enquiry is the considered focus on gender, highlighting the importance of emancipatory goals (Kirsch, 1999). The feminist viewpoint embraces a commitment to advance women's lives and to eliminate inequalities between researchers and participants (Kirsch, 1999). The key features of feminist research considers the significance of "gender as an aspect of all social life", "challenge the norms of objectivity" that accepts that knowledge can be "uncontaminated" and "pure", "value the personal and the private as worthy of study", cultivates "non-exploitative" research relationships and values emotion and reflexivity as a "essential part of research" as well as a "source of insight" (Letherby, 2003, p. 73). Therefore the role and position as a feminist researcher is to become part of the understanding and discovery of women's oppression and to create change (Maynard & Purvis, 1994). This positioning draws on the method of consciousness raising (Maynard & Purvis, 1994). This means using our experiences as women as a starting point to inform activism (Maynard & Purvis, 1994).

The aims and purposes of feminist researchers is that of liberation and social change. Feminism as a praxis is based on more than the fact that women share gender, it is based on a common agenda "the liberation of women"

(Maynard & Purvis, 1994, p. 28). The purpose of feminist research is said to “understand women’s oppression in order that we might end it” (Maynard & Purvis, 1994, p. 28). The goal of feminist research is to generate beneficial knowledge that can be used to “make a difference” (Maynard & Purvis, 1994, p. 28). This is provided by giving insight to the “gendered social existence that would otherwise not exist” (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002, p. 147)

My aim was to I employ a ‘power with’ participants rather than a ‘power over’ participants approach. I incorporated a ‘power with’ approach by utilising a strengths based style and acknowledging the participants as the experts of their own lives (Wilson & Neville, 2009). I endeavoured to empower the voices of women in this research by not further oppressing them with inappropriate research methods or by my own power as a researcher. I explored what approach might enable me to cultivate awareness and consciousness of women’s lived experiences, in a patriarchal world. It appeared that Feminist methodology would be a suitable approach.

The word Feminism suggests that there is only one feminism, this however is misleading, as there are various feminisms (Campbell & Wasco, 2000). These feminisms are different in the way they theorise that marginalisation however, they all focus on the experience of women’s lives as well as the oppression of women. (Campbell & Wasco, 2000). In searching for the appropriate feminist positioning for this study, it became clear that there are several feminist positions to consider. According to Campbell and Wasco (2000) there are four principal forms of feminism, namely Liberal feminism, Radical feminism, Socialist feminism and Womanism. African American feminists who were marginalised within the women’s movement created womanism with the intention to explore the connections between race, gender, and class oppression (Campbell & Wasco, 2000). Womanism advocates for more responsiveness to the different experiences among women of different classes and ethnic groups (Campbell & Wasco, 2000). Alice Walker describes womanism as follows: “*I don’t choose womanism because it is better than feminism...I choose it because I prefer the sound, the feel, the fit of it; because I cherish the spirit of the women (like sojourner) the word calls to mind, and because I share the old ethnic American habit of offering society a new word when the old word...fails to describe behavior and change that only a new word can help it more fully see (Kramarae & Treichler, 1985, p. 495)*” I

subscribe to an eclectic view of feminism, much like Preissle (2007) as my positioning is varied by time and place, circumstances and people. However, because of my upbringing in pre and post-apartheid South Africa and my intimate mother daughter like relationship with my aunty Anna, a native Zulu woman from the age of 4-15, I have a critical awareness of the inequalities that affect women due to their gender, class and ethnicity. This awareness urges me to challenge the mainstream notions of women that are not inclusive of class and ethnicity and to advocate for social change through this research. Womanism appeared to be an appropriate positioning for this study because of its inclusivity of diverse experiences and world views. Therefore I believe that Womanism is appropriate epistemological positioning for the study and will not further discriminate against women for their gender, ethnicity and immigrant status as pointed about by Johnson-Bailey (2004).

In keeping with the view of a constructed reality, feminists see value in qualitative methods. Historically feminists preferred qualitative methods as it was believed to “correct biases in quantitative methods”(Campbell & Wasco, 2000, p. 784). Traditionally, qualitative methods have been seen to be more useful in capturing women’s stories, because it can be “organised and evaluated subjectively in terms of themes, categories and new concepts not statistical significance” which legitimises women’s experiences as sources of knowledge (Campbell & Wasco, 2000). However, contemporary feminist scholarship embraces both qualitative and quantitative methodologies as it was concluded that neither methodology guaranteed bias-free research (Campbell & Wasco, 2000). Qualitative research can be described as a “...naturalistic enquiry that gathers descriptive information about a person or persons as they go about their lives” (Strachan, 1997, p. 87). Another way of defining qualitative research is to note that “qualitative research studies things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomenon in terms of the meanings that people bring to them” (N. K. Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). Qualitative research challenges the notion of appropriateness of an epistemological approach to knowledge development, especially within social sciences. In turn, human experiences and social life is emphasised “by taking into account matters such as history, language and contexts that relativise the knowledge gained to the individuals and situations studied and to those doing the enquiry” (Elliott, Fischer, & Rennie, 1999). The

aim of qualitative methods is to make the world more “visible” through a set of “interpretive, material practices” (N. K. Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). The information gathered through qualitative research enables the researcher to comprehensively explore specific subjects, as well as “explore ideas and concepts such as thoughts, feelings, ideas and experiences” that had been lost within other research methods (Strachan, 1997, p. 86). Qualitative methodology was appropriate for this exploratory study because it complemented the feminist epistemology and enabled the incorporation of in depth interviews, which enabled the analysis of data on a latent level.

Section Two: Research design

This small scale qualitative research project consisted of a total of nine participants. Immigrant women were recruited based on the criteria outlined below. The women were interviewed between May 2013 and July 2013 and were recruited from Hamilton City in New Zealand. For the purpose of this study the term immigrant is used as it refers to the movement of “individuals and groups from one region or country to another with the intent of temporary or permanent settlement” (Melias et al., 2012, p. 1). The selection criteria took into account the level of stress experienced within the early years of immigration. Therefore the selection criteria was set to recruiting women who have lived in New Zealand for a minimum of five years thus respecting the experiences of women.

The participants were recruited for this study if they:

- Had lived in New Zealand longer than 5 years
- Arrived in New Zealand as an adult (over the age of 18)
- Were a first generation immigrant
- Were aged between 25- 65
- Had a conversational level of English

The women who contacted me had a conversational level of English and did not need an interpreter. This was done due to resource constraint, in addition it was believed that minimising potential language barriers would be beneficial to the quality of data collected.

Participant recruitment. I planned to recruit women by means of three recruitment strategies such as, e-mailing women that I was acquainted with, the

placement of recruitment posters in various areas as well as e-mailing the managers of businesses in order to gain permission to recruit participants from their organisations. However, I prioritised e-mailing women that I knew as I anticipated that this strategy would help me recruit women with whom I have rapport. I wanted to interview women with whom I had commonalities as commonality of experience can help to establish rapport and enrich interviews (DeVault, 1990). It happened that I recruited enough participants via e-mailing women and did not need to utilise other strategies. In hindsight, I should have utilised a broader range of strategies as I unintentionally recruited women who were all from a Judeo Christian background. Hence the findings of this research are not generalisable to broader populations. I informed a number of immigrant woman whom I knew about the study by sending out a bulk e-mail to those whose e-mail address I had. This indirect approach minimised the possibility of women feeling obliged to participate because they knew me. This method meant that women could ignore or decline the invitation if they were not interested. Because I sent the e-mail to a relatively large number of women, those women who chose to ignore the e-mail were not very noticeable (See Appendix One). This approach was adopted in order to respect the women's autonomy. Consequently this tactic also minimised any power that I may have over them as a researcher as well as a friend. I had some familiarity with the women but were not directly close friends with any of them.

The recruitment process resulted in a culturally diverse sample. The culturally diverse group provided an opportunity for me to investigate if there were any similarities in the roles that women took on, regardless of culture. According to Berger (2009), women prefer to attribute resilience to internal factors such as responsibility and inner strength as opposed to external characteristics such as cultural features. I agreed with her and therefore designed my research to focus on the roles that women take on regardless of their culture or country of origin rather than specifically focusing on cultural traits.

Women who participated in this study contacted me in various ways. Four women contacted me via electronic messaging (e-mail and Facebook). Two women called me and one woman texted me on my mobile phone and two women expressed their interest to me in person. Because of the circles that we move in, these two women knew where to find me.

Two women contacted me to participate in the study several weeks after the initial recruitment e-mail was sent and the interview process was completed. I thanked them for their interest and explained that the interview process had ended.

Introducing the women. A description of each woman and her immigration journey is outlined in Appendix Six.

Table 3: Participant demographic data

Pseudonym	Region of origin	Years in NZ	Age	Marital Status	Children	Occupation
Heidi	Southern Africa	5-10 years	25-30	Single	No	Caregiver
Amanda	Southern Africa	5-10 years	30-35	Single	No	Health care worker
Lydia	Southern Africa	5-10 years	45-50	Married	Yes	Health care worker
Marissa	South East Asia	5-10 years	45-50	Married	Yes	Health care worker
Jasmine	Central Asia / Oceania	10-15 years	30-35	Single	No	Administrator
Maria	South East Asia	5-10 years	25-30	Married	Yes	Government worker
Kay	Northern America	5-10 years	30-35	Married	Yes	Caregiver
Sue	South East Asia	15-20 years	50-55	Married	Yes	Entrepreneur
Coral	Western Europe	5-10 years	35-40	Married	Yes	Educator

Semi structured / in-depth interviews. The stories of nine immigrant women were collected through semi structured individual interviews.

The value of in depth semi structures interviews in Feminism. The value of qualitative methods for feminist research is claimed by various scholars (Landman, 2006; Maynard & Purvis, 1994). Qualitative interviews are seen as a route that provides the opportunity for inter-subjectivity and non-hierarchical relationships to develop between women participants and woman researchers (Maynard & Purvis, 1994). Narrative techniques have also been predominant within feminist research because collecting peoples life histories is a method that enables the realisation of the social experiences of women who have been silenced (Letherby, 2003). I chose to conduct in depth interviews because feminist research facilitates woman to woman talk that allows women to talk more comfortably among each other (DeVault, 1990). In addition, in depth interviews enabled a constructivist paradigm, which is appropriate for cross cultural research. Social constructivism centres on understanding the intricate world of lived experiences from those who live in it (N. K. Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In other words, the in depth interviews helped to facilitate the understanding of world views of different groups of people by analysing the “emotional, linguistic, symbolic, interactive, political dimensions of the social world and their meaning or the lack thereof” (Greene, 2003, p. 597).

Before conducting the in depth interviews, I explained the broad purpose of my research to each woman. I informed the participant of my personal experience as an immigrant, and how this has shaped this research question. The interviews were developed through the use of a schedule (See Appendix Five) which contained flexible and fluid questions. The interview protocol was semi-structured and open ended in order to allow conversational flexibility and flow. This helped to reveal the participants’ real life situation in context (Flick, 2006). The interviews were all approximately one and a half hours long and were conducted much like an everyday conversation thus allowing natural and contextualised conversations to occur. This approach is supported by research that states that interviews consist of “human talk” (DeVault, 1990, p. 173). It is suggested that such patterns of talk and interaction provides the means through which members of any group establish a shared reality (DeVault, 1990). DeVault (1990) argues that such an approach should be central to a feminist research

project. I endeavoured to listen ‘around’ and ‘beyond’ the words of women in this study in order to capture and understand the lived experiences of women as suggested by (DeVault, 1990, p. 101). “A researcher’s practice of listening deeply affects the data and knowledge that she or he produces. “The feminist researcher who takes the work of active listening for granted, risks producing data, writing up his or her findings, and responding in ways that are colonising rather than liberating because they reproduce dominant perspectives” (DeVault & Gross, 2007, p. 182).

I allowed myself to emotionally connect with women as they shared stories that I related to as an immigrant. I laughed with Amanda about humorous situation in her adjustment to a new country as well as crying tears of joy with Marissa about her dreams coming true in New Zealand. Emotion may be useful in research because “by using and analysing our emotional experiences we can add to our understanding of respondents lives” (Letherby, 2003, p. 113). It can be difficult for a feminist researcher to be an “ideal” interviewer and maintain a role prescribed by traditional methodological strictures (DeVault, 1990, p. 101). Therefore I endeavoured to engage in ‘woman to woman’ talk, and validated emotions, a feminist method approved by DeVault (1990) and Letherby (2003).

Moreover, as seen below, the interview process had unexpected benefits for some participants. Taking part in an interview can be rewarding (Banks, 1998; Rice & Ezzy, 1999). The questions asked encourage participants to think about matters that they may not have before. This was evident as Amanda, Heidi and Jasmine who thanked me for the opportunity to be interviewed. They stated that the interview experience provided them the opportunity to reflect on their lives and to acknowledge the growth in their journeys. This was reassuring to hear because within an interview there is potential for a researcher to exercise power over participants. For example, a researcher could be seen as an academic or editor who may have the power to change someone’s words (Russo, 1999). My background as an immigrant woman allowed me to relate to women on various levels such as language and accent barriers, orientation to a new country and culture. This may have contributed to a more equal research relationship. The ages of women also contributed to a more egalitarian environment that may have neutralised my perceived power as a researcher as four women were my peers,

two were slightly older than me and three were much older than me. Furthermore, I gave the women the opportunity to choose where the interviews could be held by stating in the information sheet that we can meet at a time and place that suits us both. I reiterated this when women contacted me and gave them options such as meeting at a coffee shop or in their home, if they feel comfortable to do so. The interviews with women were all conducted face to face and took place in the following places. I interviewed five women in coffee shops around Hamilton city centre, two women were interviewed in their homes in Hamilton and two women in a nursery room of a local community kitchen in Hamilton.

Recording. The interviews were recorded. This was done because of the greater accuracy that a recording provides compared to note taking as affirmed by DeVault (1990). I used a MP3 recording as the main method of recording interviews with the participants' permission. Recording the interviews enabled me to fully engage in women to woman conversation, as I was able to make eye contact, pay attention to body language and maintain a relaxed environment. I did not take notes during the interviews but wrote notes directly after the interviews. Within the notes I recalled the general mood of the interview, the tone of their voices and pivotal moments within the interviews. All interviews were recorded without any technical difficulties.

Section Three: Ethical issues

The ethic of care is well known within Feminism, although women may reason through decisions and may consider principles, they also consider the feelings and relationships involved in the situation. This motive of care comes from previous experience of caring as well as being cared for. "It is an affective aspiration lodged in relationship rather than a pursuit of some principle such as fairness" (Preissle, 2007, p. 158). Feminists are concerned with the ways in which participants are treated with care (Maynard & Purvis, 1994). Feminist criticise mainstream assumptions that moral development is principle based. Feminist research acknowledges that women's "most sophisticated moral decision making was based on the value of relationship, not the value of principle" (Preissle, 2007, p. 517). Women reason through choices and justification of choices as they focus on relationships with other people not just rules or laws in situations where ethical decisions need to be made. "Women tend to ask "does this decision indicate

peoples caring for one another? rather than “Is this decision fair to everyone?” (Preissle, 2007, p. 517). Ethics are not rules, regulations or laws, rather they are frameworks which direct and guide the researcher’s decision making (Preissle, 2007). This section will discuss the ethical framework that guided my decision making in relation to doing research with immigrant women. I describe how I addressed ethical issues regarding cross cultural research, reflexivity, hierarchy, consent, confidentiality and representation. It must be noted that the research was approved by the Department of Psychology Research and Ethics Committee at the University of Waikato. In addition, the Code of Ethics of New Zealand Psychological Society was used as a guideline to secure the ethical appropriateness of the research design.

Cross cultural research. In this study I had an emic perspective or an insider’s view as a woman and as an immigrant (Morris, Leung, Ames, & Lickel, 1999). I however also had an etic perspective (outsider looking in) as I interviewed some women from different backgrounds, and cultures than myself (Morris et al., 1999; Pernice, 1994). Pernice (1994) describes the difference between an emic and etic approach as follow: “*The emic approach attempts to describe items of behaviour occurring in a particular culture, using only concepts that are part of that culture, whereas the etic approach describes behaviour by using external criteria imposed by a researcher*” (Pernice, 1994, p. 209). However, according to Wilson and Neville (2009) being an outsider does not exclude the ability to undertake culturally safe research with populations different from oneself. As I considered this duality, I realised that there are some characteristics or personality factors that can aid effective cross cultural research (Pernice, 1994). These characteristics include open-mindedness, the ability to communicate effectively with others, having minimal levels of prejudice or ethnocentrism and having accurate perceptions of the similarities and differences between personal social context and the context of the immigrant group (Buijs, 1993). In addition, Pernice (1994) states that research is facilitated if the individual is genuine, non-judgmental and possesses intercultural empathy. In reality it is difficult for a researcher to have all the characteristics mentioned above, yet it is necessary to identify any areas that might hinder the research process (Buijs, 1993; Pernice, 1994). Social stereotyping about migrant groups may be one of these hindering factors. As a researcher, I was aware of the pitfalls

of ethnocentrism and stereotyping (Pernice, 1994). In order to enhance my awareness and consciousness in this regard I incorporated reflexivity in the research process.

Reflexivity. Reflexivity is said to be the trademark of innovative feminist research (Landman, 2006, p. 3). Reflexivity can be defined as an “overarching action of consciousness that straddles the entire research process” (Wickramasinghe, 2010, p. 56). It is important for feminist researchers to reflect on their purpose and approaches to reflexive analysis (Preissle, 2007). The reflection process allows researchers to be introspective and alter and refine their research as they learn more about their participants (Kirsch, 1999). When researchers reflect on their thoughts and feelings in the research process they present the “human side” that motivates research and inspires every action of the research (Russo, 1999, p. 2). Feminist researchers are responsible to be aware of how their personal assumptions, procedures, questions and conceptualisations can reproduce social values that produce knowledge. This can be done by considering our own biographies, contexts and relations (DeVault & Gross, 2007). It is vital when investigating gender to have an awareness of race and class. These privileges the experience of marginality without speaking to the complexities of human oppression (Preissle, 2007).

I have considered my own immigration journey and have told my story to the women who participated in this study. According to DeVault and Gross (2007) the strategic disclosure of personal information is a dimension of reflexive interviewing. This meant that I was open about my background and experiences as an immigrant woman and made clear my reasons for doing this research (Board, 2002). Consistent with a feminist approach, I emphasised to the women that they are the experts of their lives and that it is my privilege to hear their stories. This enabled me to build trust and rapport with the participants as they became more open to share personal information with me, also referred to as a useful strategy by Wilson and Neville (2009). I further incorporated reflexivity into the research process by keeping a journal in which I reflected on and recorded my experiences, thoughts and reactions about the interviews. I reflected on how I could practise the skills of a good cross cultural researcher. I reflected throughout

the developing stages of the thesis and I noted down what worked well in my research and what could be improved upon.

Hierarchy and power. Feminist researchers have made significant efforts to “reform the exploitive hierarchy of the researchers” (Preissle, 2007, p. 524). However, “issues of power are complex within research and notes that it is imperative to recognise that researchers often have the objective balance of power throughout the research process” (Letherby, 2003, p. 114; Preissle, 2007). In order to account for the power and perceived level of authority of researchers, because they are in control of collecting, interpreting of the data, it is suggested that researchers endeavour to equalise their relationships with participants by making themselves vulnerable. Managing the research relationship where power can be shared is said to bring forth transformation and empowerment (Letherby, 2003). There are several ways in which a relationship between a researcher and a research participant can be equalised, as these relationships are fluid and are jointly constructed (DeVault & Gross, 2007). I endeavoured to equalise the research relationship by offering women a choice of where they would like the interview to be conducted. I realised that women could feel more comfortable in their own homes, or in a coffee shop than at the university. I thereafter offered them such alternative venues. I hoped that this would help women feel more in control and hoped that it would enhance the research relationship. Doing research in places and space that participants feel comfortable with, can make them feel more in control, this had a more equalising effect on the research relationship (DeVault & Gross, 2007). When I met with women in their homes, I was offered a hot drink and we sat down to talk, much like friends would. When I met with women in coffee shops we met in a manner than friends would do. In addition, many of the women that I interviewed were either my peers or older than me, when I interviewed women who were my seniors, I was seen as younger and less experienced, which affected the research relationship as also noted by DeVault and Gross (2007). In addition, prior to the interview I e-mailed women a copy of the type of questions that may be asked in the interview (See Appendix Three), this was done to neutralise the power relationship as women could mentally and emotionally prepare to answer the questions. This meant they could decide which questions they may not want to answer, or even at this stage withdraw from the study.

Consent process. According to Pernice (1994), having rigid methods for gaining consent may engender distrust and anxiety on the part of immigrants. This could possibly prevent a research practice designed to protect participants to unintentionally cause psychological harm (Pernice, 1994). In my study this consideration was paramount in order to prevent harm. In order to protect participants from anxiety, a participant information sheet was given to all participants before commencing the interviews (See Appendix Two). This was done by attaching an information sheet to the electronic bulk message sent out to the women. When I met with participants, after the initial introductions, I informally restated the key points covered in the participant information sheet. I casually informed participants of their rights, printed on the information sheet. I reiterated that the women did not have to answer any questions that they did not wish to answer and were able to withdraw from the study up to two weeks after receiving their transcripts. I asked permission to audiotape our conversations and gave the women the opportunity to ask any further questions. Prior to commencing the interviews, I stated the key points of the consent form and gained verbal consent from all participants (See Appendix Four). Verbal consent was audio recorded and women were not expected to sign any documentation. I implemented audio recorded consent as according to Pernice (1994) this is a socially and culturally sensitive method of gaining verbal consent when doing research with immigrant women. I was sensitive to the possibility that some participants may have had negative experiences because of political and social experiences in their countries of origin (Pernice, 1994).

Privacy and confidentiality. The concept of confidentiality is supported by the principle of respect for autonomy (Wiles, Crow, Heath, & Charles, 2008). This means that identifiable information collected during the process of research about women will not be disclosed without their permission (Wiles et al., 2008). Confidentiality implies that information gathered in interviews will not be deliberately or accidentally disclosed. This notion is reiterated by Punch (1994) who states that research participants should not suffer harm or any embarrassment for their participation in the research nor should they be identifiable. Within a research setting confidentiality means that information provided by women will not be discussed with others and findings will be presented in such a way to ensure that women will not be identified (Wiles et al., 2008). Feminist researcher

Letherby (2003) emphasises the importance of fully explaining issues of confidentiality and anonymity to participants at the earliest stages of research. This is done to ensure that the participant is fully informed of what the intentions of the researcher are in terms of their information provided. I informed women my commitment to their confidentiality and anonymity within an information sheet that I sent out before interviews were conducted. I also restated the confidentiality sections from the information sheet at the beginning of each interview confirming to the women that I am protecting them from exploitation by protecting their identities, and keeping their data secure (Wilson & Neville, 2009). In addition, all identifiable information such as names was omitted from the thesis. Participants were given the opportunity to choose their own pseudonyms, giving them ownership of their privacy. Women were assured that only I would be listening to and having access to any recordings. All recordings of the interviews will be destroyed approximately 3-4 years after the thesis study has been completed. Until then, all files will be kept on a computer secured by a password only known to me. Although the details of my research were discussed with my supervisors and student support, I maintained confidentiality by not disclosing names and identifying details.

Validating accuracy and the ethics of representation. Because feminists believe that the experiences of women have been misrepresented in literature, they have challenged the way that people are represented in human and professional science (Preissle, 2007). The issue of representation is not only concerned about accuracy but is also conscious that texts carry ideology, and therefore researchers need to be mindful of how their representation of women will travel and function in ideology (DeVault & Gross, 2007). As a feminist researcher, I acknowledge that I have power as I collect and interpret data and present it in a report form as suggested by Preissle (2007) and Wilson and Neville (2009). According to Preissle (2007) I have a double responsibility as a feminist doing research with women, as well as to the broader world of women whose lives I hope to improve to accurately present the immigrant women that I interview. Some Feminist researchers attempt to address the ethics of representation by asking participants to edit or approve the data and interpretations that involve them (Preissle, 2007). However, Letherby (2003) argues that full representation is difficult if not impossible to attain, she supports the possibility of a less complete representation

and suggests that it is better than no representation at all. In order to conduct research that is consistent with feminist thinking on the issue of representation, and that are an accurate representation of the stories which women entrusted to me, I took the following measures to validate the accuracy of the data. These measures were taken in order to demonstrate to participants that I was respectful of their rights and their information. I provided opportunities for the women to ask questions after each interview if there was anything else that the women wanted to add. Transcripts of the interviews were e-mailed to the participants with an invitation to read over the transcripts and add, remove or change any information. All women approved their transcripts and returned the transcripts to me via e-mail. I asked permission to contact them should I need any further clarification or information. However, no further communication was necessary. I asked women for their contact details in order to send them a summary of the main findings of my research.

Section Four: Analysing the immigrant women's stories

The following section outlines how the data was transcribed, coded and describes the phases of analysis.

Transcription and content analysis. As already noted, the interviews were fully transcribed as soon as possible after the interview was conducted in order to recall the conversation and to add further remarks that may have been missed during the initial note taking (Curtis & Curtis, 2011). I recorded details such as tone of voice, emotional expressions such as laughter or crying as well as obvious body language in the transcriptions. I also noted where emphasis was added to particular statements that participants made. As noted by various authors, the process of transcription may seem as time consuming, it however is has a “significant and vital role in the qualitative research process” and is a crucial phase of data analysis that helps to “locate the researcher within the context of their own assumptions about discourse” (Bird, 2005, pp. 227,229). The process of constructing a transcript, involves analysis through the process of understanding, listening and reviewing. Transcription enables close attention and interpretive thinking in order to make sense of the data (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999).

Thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was suitable for this feminist study because it is compatible with both an essentialist paradigm and a constructionist paradigms within psychology (Braun & Clarke, 2006). An essentialist paradigm reports the experiences, meanings and realities of participants. In addition, a constructionist paradigm explores the ways in which realities events, and experiences are the effect of a variety of discourses functioning in society (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis acknowledges the theoretical positions and values of the researcher in relation to qualitative research and does not subscribe to a realist view of qualitative research that can give voice to participants, a key concept within feminist research (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This means that thematic analysis recognises the active role that I as the researcher played in identifying patterns / themes, selecting which are of interest, and reporting them to the readers (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is a method for categorising, analysing and recording themes within data. It organises and pronounces the data set in rich detail; it also interprets various aspects of the research topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Inductive approach. Because the topic of resilience is understudied, my research on the resilience of immigrant women was an exploratory study (Bernard, 2011). I made use of an inductive or bottom up analysis: This means that the themes identified are strongly linked to the data itself. The data were specifically collected for the research. I did not endeavour to fit the data into a pre-existing code frame nor did I have a specific hypothesis (Bernard, 2011; Curtis & Curtis, 2011). Inductive coding can also be described as “open-coding”, it implies the idea is rooted in the data and that understanding can emerge from close study (Bernard, 2011). Open coding involves “selecting and naming categories from the analysis of the data... this initial stage of data analysis aims to describe the overall features of the research” (Curtis & Curtis, 2011, p. 44) Because I am not value free or completely neutral, the data was not coded in an epistemological vacuum (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Latent level. This thematic analysis was done at a latent level. A thematic analysis at the latent level starts to examine or identify underlying assumptions, ideas and conceptualisations. The development of the themes involved interpretive work, hence the analysis is not merely a description but is theorised

(Braun & Clarke, 2006). This meant that I identified the underlying ideas, assumptions and conceptualisations and made use of a constructionist paradigm where broader assumptions, structures and meanings were theorised as underpinning what was actually articulated in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Table 4: Phases of thematic analysis

Phase	Description of process
Phase 1 I familiarised myself with the data	I transcribed data, read and re-read the transcripts, and noted down my initial ideas.
Phase 2 I generated initial codes	I coded interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set. I collated data relevant to each code. (See figure three and four below)
Phase 3 I searched for themes	I collated codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme (See figure three and four below)
Phase 4 I reviewed the themes	I checked if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), I generated a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis.
Phase 5 I defined and named themes	I conducted an on-going analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis told, I generated clear definitions and names for each theme.
Phase 6 I produced a report	This was the final opportunity for analysis. I selected vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, that related back of the analysis to the research question and literature, I then produced a scholarly report of the analysis.

I adapted a table by Braun and Clarke (2006) to summarise the phases of the thematic analysis, as seen below:

Helping themes

Theme	Name	Quote / Link
<u>Personal</u>		
Being open to receive help or ask for help		
Feel bad to accept help	Sue	"Sometimes, people are not used to getting help for free, they feel bad".
Swallowing your pride	Amanda	"Ask for help, even though you feel like you are being a burden on others"
Learn as a child	Jasmine	"Innocence": doing something that humiliating, but taking it as learning. Like a child, being open
Accept help	Kay	"Whatever help was offered, I took" "...and then I just found some nice Kiwi people who would explain things to me"
Not taking offense	Sue	"Sometimes people didn't mean bad, but we took it the wrong way"
	Kay	"I got through it because I just didn't take offense... "

Figure 3: Partial screenshot of electronic thematic analysis

I grouped data according to categories within a 'helping' and 'hindering' themes and used colour codes to further distinguish themes.

Colour Code	
	Family relationships negative
	weighing the benefits
	Confidence
	Push factor to leave country / politics / economical/ safety
	Personal growth / discovery
	Faith
	Loss of Family support
	Independence
	community
	Decision not owned by self
	work
	Calling home
	Negative feelings about friends

Figure 4: A partial screenshot of colour coding of electronic thematic analysis

I made use of different colours to differentiate themes.

Conclusion. In this chapter a feminist epistemology was discussed and a theoretical account given of the application of this approach. The recruitment of participants as well as the data collection through semi structured in-depth interviews were outlined and a rationale for the application of these methods was provided. The steps that I took to ensure that the research is ethical were outlined. Specific ethical consideration was given to reflectivity, hierarchy and power as well as the consent process. Furthermore, the process of transcription and analysis of the women’s stories was described. The following chapter offers an analysis and discussion of the collective themes that emerged from the in depth interviews. Chapter Four outlines the collective roles from which immigrant women drew strength.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESILIENCE THROUGH COLLECTIVE ROLES

A review of the literature in the areas related to resilience revealed that mainstream resiliency models, theories and research are rooted in western norms. Hence much of the literature primarily focus on individual resilience and coping strategies (Ramsey, 2012). However, in many parts of the world and within collectivistic cultures resilience is understood as a communal practice (Ramsey, 2012). It appears that communal resilience is derived from communal networks, relationships, identities and roles. Historically, mainstream research has investigated the resiliency of individuals high in sense of individual resilience or personal mastery¹, however these theoretical views are consistent with western males approaches to coping and are not consistent with how women from diverse cultural and ethnic groups may view the success of the self (Hobfoll et al., 2002). As seen above, it is evident that some mainstream literature is limited in its applicability to collectivistic cultures as it assumes individualism as the norm is limited in its usefulness in a pluralistic world (Dwairy, 2002; Ramsey, 2012). Therefore, it is clear that resilience has not yet been adequately explored within collective cultures.

This then raises the question of what collective resilience is and how it functions. To answer the question it is important to define what a collectivistic culture is. Communal cultures are those having an extended sense of family, community, extended networks and relationships. Collectivism emphasises the notion of interdependence, within groups where people give priority to the goals of their 'in-group' and shape their behaviour according to in-group norms (Triandis, 2001). Cultivating and maintaining good relationships are of high importance for people of collective cultures (Triandis, 2001). Communal resilience can be defined as a sense that individuals can overcome obstacles and challenges of life through and because of their social networks (Monnier. & Hobfoll., 1997).

¹Self-mastery denotes the perception of an individual self as able to endure and overcome stressful states of affairs on their own (Hobfoll et al., 2002).

As pointed out in the literature review, resilience is closely related to coping and may be considered as an ability to cope with stress and could be a significant buffering factor when treating anxiety, depression, and stress reactions (Connor & Davidson, 2003). The concepts of communal coping, communal resilience and communal mastery are interlinked. Communal coping can be defined as the combining of resources and efforts of several individuals to oppose hardship (Lyons, Mickelson, Sullivan, & Coyn, 1998). Research has found that communal coping may motivate the resilience of those dealing with stressful life events (Lyons. et al., 1998). For women from collectivist cultures a sense of communal resilience also known as communal mastery² is central to resiliency in the face of life's challenges (Hobfoll et al., 2002). These researchers distinguish individual and communal mastery as follows: Individual resilience or mastery asserts that "I am the key to my success" whereas communal resilience or mastery asserts that "I am successful by virtue of my social attachments" (Hobfoll et al., 2002, p. 853). It is clear that for people who come from communal social systems individuation does not necessarily occur in the way that it does for Westerners. For them, norms, values, roles and familial authority predicts their behaviour and personality rather than individualism (Dwairy, 2002). However, I found that for immigrant women who enter an individual host culture from a collective culture the definition of what constitutes collective and individual is multifaceted.

As mentioned earlier, immigrant women in this study buffered themselves against stressors within groups by taking on particular roles and positions with defined rights and responsibilities (Moen, Dempster-McClain, & Williams, 1989). Each role has its own related behaviours for example, a friend, a breadwinner or a mother (Moen et al., 1989). An immigrant woman may have multiple role identities which help her to function in the surroundings of the host culture. Having various role identities provides a woman with wider access to various components of society which in turn promotes their social connectedness, especially important within the context of immigration (Moen et al., 1989). Multiple role identities have been found to enhance an individual's prestige, power and emotional gratification as well as social recognition, thus amplifying a

² Communal mastery can be defined as a sense that individuals can overcome the obstacles and challenges of life through and because of their social networks (Hobfoll et al., 2002).

sense of identity (Moen et al., 1989). Participation in such roles links women with relationships and social bonds which promote mental health. Research has also found that the roles that people take on and the requirement of their roles give them a sense of life purpose and meaning (Moen et al., 1989). The positive effects of having role identities were evident within the lives of immigrant women who participated in this study. It was clear that the collective roles that immigrant women took on enhanced their wellbeing within the host culture. Because women were separated from their families back home as well as the roles that they took on historically, they either re-established their roles in New Zealand or created new roles. The main roles that women took on in this study was the role of mother, co-madre, the benevolent feminised role, the breadwinner and the role of religious beliefs and spirituality.

This study found that that women who had multiple role identities were able to turn the stress and disruption of immigration into opportunities for growth and resilience. This finding is supported by research that has found that women high in communal mastery display fewer periods of depressive mood as well as anger compared with women who have low communal mastery, especially when facing high stress circumstances (Hobfoll et al., 2002). This evidence suggests that communal mastery could be a key aspect of the resilience of women from collective cultures. I investigated the communal roles that women take on regardless of their affiliation with western or non-western origins. I did not assume that the women in this study from ‘so called’ individualistic cultures would embody all the characteristics of individualistic cultures, neither did I assume that the women from ‘so called’ collectivistic cultures would embody the characteristic of those cultures. I anticipated that women would draw from both individualistic and collectivistic structures depending on the situation that they are in, as suggested by Triandis (2001).

In the two analysis chapters that follow, I explore both collective and individual resiliency and the ways in which women coped with the stress of immigration. As noted, this study included the experience of women from both collective and individual cultures. The findings have therefore been divided into two chapters reflecting their communal and individual world views. Chapter Four will focus on the effects of collective roles during different stages of women’s

lives which enabled them to be resilient, while Chapter Five will focus on the individual constructs that enhanced the resilience of women in this study.

Section One: Resilience from the role as mother

The women in this study all came from different backgrounds and accessed different pathways to coming to New Zealand. Yet many of them shared a common denominator, which is motherhood. A significant finding among mothers in this study, was the protective role that children played in their mothers' lives, thus strengthening their mothers' resiliency (Brodsky et al., 2012). This finding is supported by research done by Brodsky et al. (2012) who found that children play a protective role in the lives of their mothers. Their research asserts that children's role as protective factors may offer a significant strength based approach and function as an advantageous mechanism to strengthen women's resilience in diverse conflicts and contexts (Brodsky et al., 2012). I identified the effect that children had on their mother's resilience as 'motherhood resiliency'. This study found that motherhood was a source of strength, much like adrenalin that surged through the veins of women, when they faced adversity. This section outlines how the role of motherhood provided women with a) a goal to achieve, b) a sense of place, c) a reason to establish themselves and d) the inspiration to find a new identity. Although children have been found to be a potential risk factor in difficult circumstances in some studies, the majority of the narratives in this study referred to children being central to the resilience of their mothers. While the role of motherhood is presented in this study as a source of strength, the paradox of motherhood was also acknowledged by some women. The analysis revealed that women experienced two distinct effects of motherhood simultaneously. On one hand motherhood was described as a driving force that propelled women forward in difficult times. Yet, on the other hand, motherhood was described as exhausting and a self-sacrificing experience, especially in the early years of motherhood and immigration as stress was compounded.

As seen above, the paradox of motherhood for immigrant women was also found by Berger (2009). Berger (2009) found that motherhood was both a source of stress and of power. This notion was evident in the life of Kay, a stay at home mother of two who recognised the paradox of motherhood within immigration. Kay was determined to succeed in her adaption to New Zealand culture and lifestyle by proactively making friends and finding support systems. However, she

found the combination of early motherhood and immigration very difficult to cope with. The following comment made by Kay and Maria illustrates this point:

...That time of life, for any woman, can be very tricky, there is such *beauty and fulfillment*... it is wonderful to have a child but ... *it is isolating in a number of ways*...

(Kay, Northern America)

Likewise, Maria noted in the interview that motherhood has made her stronger regardless of the hard work that it requires. Despite perceiving her healthy pregnancy as an achievement, she was open about the struggles that she experience as a mother, reiterating that motherhood is both a source of stress and of power.

...you need a lot of *strength*, a lot of *everything* to handle a baby...if you have a baby you will know what I mean...just have... to be strong ...I have to look after Lenard [son] ... I have to do the dinner, I have to... basically *I have to do everything*... I have to be strong for us as a family, because I...feel like I am responsible in order for us to be functional...

(Maria, South East Asia)

It is clear that motherhood is a complex and sometimes contradictory phenomenon. Irrespectively, the role of mother may be able to provide women with the motivation to achieve a goal.

As mentioned above, motherhood can provide women with the inspiration needed to accomplish their goals. This is apparent, as previous research has found that in some difficult situations, mothers can view their experiences as personally transformative and see motherhood as a means of building confidence that empowers them to disrupt the negative effects of immigration (Levine, 2009). This was evident when Lydia, a once transnational mother³, described that being a mother has given her significant strength, motivation and determination throughout some of the most difficult times that she faced as a transnational immigrant. Lydia came to New Zealand in the hope of creating a new life for her

³ Defined as “the practice of mothers living and working in different countries from those of their children”. (Hewett, 2009, p. 122)

family, due to the political situation in her home country in Southern Africa. Her role as transnational mother provided her with a “goal” to provide her children with better education. This was her driving force as well as her source of resilience during times when she encountered loneliness, discrimination and felt like giving up and going back home. In essence Lydia’s focus on providing a better future for her family fed her resiliency.

Lydia uses a metaphor of a runner, running an agonisingly difficult race to explicate the driving force that being a transnational mother has given her. Lydia describes having her children as a “banner” over the finishing line of her race to describe how she remained focused during her toughest times without her family unit. For Lydia a vital component of her resilience was her ability to generate constructive meaning from difficult circumstances. Her capacity to reframe her circumstance of being separated from her family to running a race, and achieving a goal developed into what previous research defines a “key resilience building process” (Levine, 2009, p. 409).

I came here [New Zealand], because ... it was about, a big banner that was written all over... So whenever I felt [sad, lonely, depressed]... *that was my goal* [children’s education], *I am not gonna stop achieving the goal because that was like a big banner, that’s where I am heading to, that is my race... I had to come here because of my kids, so then I got motivated...* That is what made me stay, otherwise if it wasn’t for that...

(Lydia, Southern Africa)

Likewise, Sue experienced significant difficulties as their family business in New Zealand was struggling financially and eventually proved to be an unsuccessful endeavour. However, Sue was strengthened by seeing her son excel in the freedom of the New Zealand educational system. Sue went to kindergarten with her daughter to support her, and seeing the opportunities that her children now have was an eye opening experience, this brought her hope and strength despite the complications in their family business and financial uncertainties.

...Our son was very happy to go to school...the class room, it's not rigid... he was allowed to do his thing. But being in the kinder garden with Jenny [daughter] *was good, for me* just seeing how the other kids play... and seeing what the teacher does, *was quite big, eye opening to me, and it was a good experience for me... I enjoyed every moment of being there, yeah, and... what else, business wise, we tried many things...it didn't work.*

(Sue, South East Asia)

As seen above, Lydia and Sue were able to transform anxiety, sadness and loneliness into goals that gave them purpose; this resulted in the building of their resilience. This noteworthy finding is validated as other research has also affirms that “The wish to give their children the best opportunities in an engine for a mothers resilience” (Berger, 2009, p. 183). Furthermore, Lydia explains her experience through the use of a metaphor of being in the middle of the ocean, halfway between the Southern Africa and New Zealand, having strong currents pulling her to both sides, but she had to be stronger to go in the right direction for her family despite how difficult it was for her. Lydia was able to tap into an inner source of strength, by focusing on her children, that enabled her to be stronger than the pushing and pulling factors that she experienced, that source was the desire for the educational opportunities for her children.

...It was hard, because you are in the middle, of the sea, you are halfway and there is your home, there is your family you know, and then you have got things that are pulling you on both sides, they are all strong but *you just have to have a stronger one to pull the other ones so that you head in one direction so that is what I did, I focused on my children and then I said okay, I will carry on.*

(Lydia, Southern Africa)

As mentioned earlier, research done by Brodsky et al. (2012) found that children are symbolic resources to a mother's resilience. This is evident as Lydia and Sue were able to tap into an inner source of strength by focusing on their goal, the education of their children, which enabled her to be resilient. In addition to

establishing a goal to achieve the role of motherhood also empowered women to establish a sense of place.

Kay and Marissa's children's happiness became their symbols of hope and future. Their children acted as a resource of strength to them in difficult times. They were able to settle in New Zealand for the sake of their children's wellbeing. In addition, Sue explained that seeing her children happy and settled made her feel like New Zealand can be her home which allowed her to put her roots down, so to speak. The following quotes exemplifies this notion:

... our children when they grew up, they study...knowing what they really like... and gone to...uni...they are settled as well, they found their purpose in New Zealand. It is their journey for now...*and then we felt this is going to be our home town or the next generation, to come from them, and we will have roots from here.*

(Sue, South East Asia)

...To see my children do things that are normal to their childhood that is so foreign to me. Like, going to the beach...I didn't see the ocean until I was 4 years old...and then I didn't get to see the ocean again until I was 14! But for my kids it's like "Oh, wanna go to the beach?"... "... No, I don't feel like it today..." "You don't even know!"... So those are pretty special things..., being barefoot, playing in the sand... that brings me a lot of joy actually. *It confirms that we are in the right place.*

(Kay, Northern America)

As seen above, Kay's comment is particularly relevant as seeing her children happy re-established her sense of place in New Zealand which in turn strengthened her resilience. Confirming the above finding, a study by Berger (2009) also found that when a mother sees her children as successful, safe and healthy in spite of all the difficulties the family has faced in the migration experience, all its struggles are justified. The joy of her children merited the hardships that Kay has gone through in order to provide her children with a good childhood. For Kay and Sue, the realisation they are in the right place was

comforting and reassuring, this led to an acceptance of their lives being in New Zealand. Additionally the role of motherhood provided women with a reason to establish themselves.

Another key finding was that motherhood provided immigrant women who have been uprooted from their home countries with a reason to re-establish themselves in a new environment, creating a sense of home. According to Brodsky et al., (2012), children can function as pathways that provide women with roles which in turns provides them with a reason to establish themselves. Children often function as a mechanism that translates desperation into opportunities for resilience. This was evident in the life of Coral and Kay. Coral had her first baby approximately four months after their arrival in New Zealand. For the first time she was separated from her wider family, who had served as a major source of support to her. She described having a “focus” and “determination” that came with becoming a mother and having to get ready for when her baby arrives. For Coral, a change of focus occurred as she was able to be future-minded on behalf of her unborn baby rather than experiencing anxiety about her present circumstances. The role of mother gave Coral the reason she needed to find friends and settle in her new environment for the sake of her baby. In turn, motherhood provided her with an opportunity for resilience. Coral’s comment elucidates this point:

...and our [Coral and her husband] approach when we got here was, “right, we are settling here, we have got a baby on the way” ... I know for anyone else ... they would fall to pieces, *but for us it was a focus...*

(Coral, Western Europe)

Similarly for Kay, knowing that she was about to become a first time mother, without the support of her family and friends back home, gave her a strong determination to establish herself. This enabled her to focus on gaining a support network.

... I knew it would be hard leaving a career that I loved and then starting motherhood... without a support network, *so I was just determined...* I am

going to get.... a support network...

(Kay, Northern America)

As demonstrated above, the role of motherhood enabled Kay and Coral to be future focused rather than being anxious about living in a new country with limited support. They were able to translate their desperate situations into an opportunities for resilience. Moreover, for some women the role of mother also provided them with the opportunity to establish a new identity.

An important finding in this study was that immigrant women constructed new identities through their role as mothers. This finding is affirmed as Brodsky (1999) who found that a significant part of parenting involves the transferal of values from mothers to their children. This process, in turn, reinvigorated the mother's motivation to advance their lives. This process was observed in Maria and Marissa's life. Marissa is a mother to two diligent students, one of whom is to soon graduate as a doctor. Marissa transmitted her value of education and hard work to her daughters, in turn, the hard work of her daughters inspired her to up skill herself in her new occupation as a rehabilitation coach. Marissa was inspired by her children's educational journey to explore a new identity through work training. For Marissa, motherhood provided her with a pathway to her future and a new identity. She is proud of her achievement, as she puts it: "... *I made it...*"

... I finished that course and said "Oh! I have the national certificate now!" ... I want to... up-skill myself...I don't want to be...a stagnant worker there, *because I can see my children doing their best to up skill themselves. Then I said "Oh, I can do that as well"* ...We had, three or four, taking that career force... but I was the only one who finished... They were happy to say "Oh, Marissa!" *Yeah, I made it...*

(Marissa, South East Asia)

Likewise, Maria also found a new identity as a mother as she found that being a mother requires her to be strong, brave, disciplined and responsible, in order to set a good example for her son. The role of mother invigorated her to advance herself by becoming a stronger

more disciplined person. She realised that she is transferring her values to her son.

...and now that I have Lenard [son] I have to be brave for him, I think it's a mother instinct to have to protect your child, so you have to be brave.....
now that we have Lenard...I feel like I have to be more responsible, you know? ... to be good parents for Lenard...stronger also in a way that like, you have to, I felt like I had to be disciplined, because as Lenard grows, he will see in me... imitate, so I have to be, have to be disciplined...setting a good example for him...

(Maria, South East Asia)

Maria experienced an altering in her identity that allowed her to be strong for the sake of her son. Confirming the experience of Marissa, it was found that in communities where immigrant women's children do well in school, the recognition brings power to the mother (Brubaker & Wright, 2006). This was evident as Marissa enjoyed great esteem because of her soon to be doctor daughter's academic achievements. In such communities motherhood can be related to values such as "creativity, continuity, providing self-esteem and self-actualisation" (Brubaker & Wright, 2006, p. 1216). Thus, mothering successful children, reflects power and recognition on a mother in a way that she does not often experience as part of the immigrant minority groups in New Zealand. The act of mothering develops into a work of the 'mind and soul' (Thorne & Yalom, 1992, p. 239) in which themes such as identity, power and survival are critical (Brubaker & Wright, 2006). This was evident in the life of Marissa and Lydia who are both very proud of her children's academic achievements.

L: What did it mean to you when she [daughter] got in [entrance to medical school]?

M: It was heaven! You know, because I have been supporting her for the whole year...and she said, "Maybe mum, in five years I will be a doctor, Wow, and you happy"? "Yes I am" I said, *it is a nice prize for me...* because of the hard work... because, I come from a poor family ... that it was a struggle when I was studying back home, so supported by my aunty just to study, and *now to see that my children, are having their*

dreams come true...

(Marissa, South East Asia)

Similarly, Lydia felt a sense of pride because of her children's academic achievements. For Lydia her children's education gave her a deep sense of satisfaction as it was the realisation of a dream that she fought very hard for. Her children's success has become part of her story of survival.

...my daughter is studying social work, and the other one is studying psychology, *so it's good, I feel yes*, it is now time for them to work for themselves, and the last, two young boys, one is doing level 1 and the other one is year 12. *It is time for us to focus on them, yes.*

(Lydia, Southern Africa)

For Lydia and Marissa, seeing their children's dreams come true was their dream come true and has become part of her story of survival, enhancing their resiliency through difficult times. Marissa's collectivistic world view with a strong focus on relationships enabled her to enjoy the success of her daughter, nieces and nephews just as her aunty could enjoy her success as a child. As seen above, the role of mother provided women with different pathways to resilience. For Lydia, motherhood provided her with the motivation she needed to reach her goal, which was the education of her children. For Kay and Sue, motherhood enabled them to realise that their place was in New Zealand. Motherhood provided Coral and Kay with a reason to establish themselves. Moreover Marissa and Maria discovered new identities through the inspiration of their children. Their role as mothers to successful children had aided their self-esteem and has become part of her story of survival. It appeared that motherhood is a role that functions in a communal sense as mothers view their children as extensions of themselves. It seemed that the happiness and success of their children became their happiness and success. Mothers were not driven by their individual needs but were energised and motivated by the communal needs of their families.

The mothers in this section were not invulnerable, nor did they present themselves as so called super-mothers. They were honest about the dichotomy of motherhood that offers reward but also requires sacrifice. Mothers in this study, experienced both success and failures in reaching their goals, a phenomenon also

found by Brodsky (1999). It appeared that the role of motherhood was personally transformative and allowed women regardless of age, culture or social class to discover pathways to personal resilience. However, resilience is not exclusive to those who are mothers. Child free women also found different avenues for resilience as seen below. The next section focuses on the how non- mothers accessed resilience.

The resilience of women who were not mothers. The women who were not mothers in this study initiated their immigration to New Zealand and arrived by themselves. In many ways women who were not mothers, drew from similar sources of strength as mothers, as they connected with “co-madres”, were breadwinners, participated in benevolent behaviour and spiritual practices. However, for these women a major sources of strength was their work-related achievements. They prized their personal learning and growth highly. They were able to look at themselves and compare their growth, experience and learning as individuals, especially within the workplace. Their personal growth, knowledge and skills provided them with sureness and a confidence that when difficult times arose they would be able to draw from their learning to effectively deal with challenges.

Work-related success or accomplishments were motivational forces that enabled child free women in this study to affirm their self-confidence and perception of their abilities when facing difficulties. Amanda was able to turn adversity into opportunity when she was dissatisfied in her job and pursued her dream of working in a large hospital. Amanda had a clear personal career vision which allowed her to make the decision to apply for the job at the hospital. Having a clear career vision had been found to enhance resiliency in the workplace (McEwen, 2011). Her decision to pursue her career vision effectively enhanced her job satisfaction, and enabled her to bounce back from her disheartening work experience. She found the challenge of working in a public hospital rewarding and fulfilling and gained much self-confidence form her ability to be “brave” and adjust to her environment.

...working at a rest home [in New Zealand], it was like, one step back...
So my next step was *trying to find a way of getting into a public hospital, somewhere big...* but I was...afraid...*But I have to be brave and face the*

challenges, so I applied for the job, went for the interview and I was quite frank with them that I was from Southern Africa and I was willing to learn... it was challenging because ... the new equipment, the way of doing, it was different.. I managed to fit in, adjusted fast...so that was... a highlight, it was full of challenges.

(Amanda, Southern Africa)

Amanda was able turn the anxiety that she experienced about the challenge of working in a new environment with new equipment into positive action. This has been found to be a characteristic of resilient behaviour by McEwen (2011). Amanda noted that she is now thinking of working in Australia to enhance her working experience, it is clear that her accomplishments motivated her and gave her the strength she needed to keep pursue success in her career. Likewise, Heidi had a similar experience as her job promotion strengthened her self- assurance and perception of her ability. She took pleasure in her accomplishment of being promoted and being named employee of the month. Relishing achievements has been proven to enhance mood, health and happiness (McEwen, 2011). Heidi's achievements produced a positive mood, which enabled her to be more open to solutions at work in addition her belief in her ability was enhanced.

... I did my work and they were... pin-pointing me and said: "you did a great job, you are getting a promotion" or "... employee of the month" ... *it actually made me feel like, wow, I am actually doing a great job and just achieving stuff...*

L: So how did it make you feel when you got promoted?

H: Awesome, it's always good... It makes you feel special, like wow, man. *You actually start believing in yourself.*

(Heidi, Southern Africa)

Heidi was optimistic about her work environment because of her achievements. Research has found that optimism can create a spiral which increases belief of potential (McEwen, 2011). As noted above, Heidi, like Amanda, gained a sense of self belief, accomplishment and achievement in her vocational success. Similarly Jasmine, who grew up not knowing who she wanted

to be, was able to establish a strong professional identity which gave her a sense of meaning and purpose. This strengthened her job satisfaction and fulfillment. It has been found that building a sense of value and meaning into work on a daily basis, promotes resilience (McEwen, 2011).

Like my work at the college...*it is a privilege*. Because I started off ... in our family as being the quiet one, who didn't know what I wanted to do with my life, had no idea where I wanted to be, I was like a blank slate... It [*work*] was my purpose, it was my purpose for that time...it was important.

(Jasmine, South Asia and Oceania)

Jasmine's sense of doing meaningful work strengthened her professional identity as it provided her with a clear purpose. From her workplace, Jasmine gained a sense of being in a family where she had a prominent and important role, unlike her biological family where she felt invisible and insignificant. Because Jasmine sensed that she made a strong and meaningful contribution in her workplace, she felt a sense of belonging and acceptance. This in turn, kept her optimistic in her workplace which enhanced her perception of her personal worth and professional potential.

As seen above, women who were not mothers, were able to gain strength from their work, Amanda had a clear career vision which enabled her to turn adversity into opportunity, and she was able to turn her anxiety about entering a new environment into positive change. Heidi savoured her work accomplishments which enhanced her level of optimism, this in turn, increased her belief in her work potential. Moreover, Jasmine's workplace provided her with a clear professional identity, role and purpose. This enhanced her sense of belonging and self-esteem which improved her wellbeing. For child free women, work accomplishments were important and they gained a sense of purpose and belonging as well as increased confidence from their success in the workplace. This section investigated resilience through the role of motherhood as well as investigating the resilience of women who were not mothers; and extended conclusion is presented in the final conclusion chapter. The next section will look at the role of a mentor or intimate female friend who act as co-mothers described as "co-madres".

Section Two: Resilience from the role as co-madre / co-mother

One of the resilient roles that women either bestowed on others or chose to take up themselves was the role of a co-madre. A co-madre relationship was a prominent theme within this study as a significant number of women shared stories of either having or becoming a co-madre. Younger women accessed co-madres as surrogate mothers or surrogate sisters in order to support them during major life events. This was done because their biological mothers were far away and could not offer immediate physical or emotional support. The word co-madre literally means co-mother. Traditionally, a co-madre connection is a relationship between a mother and her child's godmother, typically found in Latino culture. In addition, this relationship signifies a special bond between women who are cherished friends (Comas-Diaz, 2013). GreyWolf (2013) describes a co-madre relationship as having a best friend or having a sister of the heart. She also asserts that co-madre relationships can have strong spiritual components. Women described their co-madres as being like members of their family; a notion confirmed by Silverstein (2013). Literature further defines a co-madre as a person who allows her best friend to reveal her true feelings (Comas-Diaz, 2013). A Co-madre can also play the role of a lay psychotherapist, as she can act as empowering healer (Comas-Diaz, 2013). The role of a co-madre is to help women empower themselves. In a therapeutic sense, a co-madre helps women to reclaim their voice, build their strengths and cultivate resilience during hardship (Comas-Diaz, 2013).

The term co-madre can be applied to an immigrant setting in New Zealand where immigrant women face the loss of their family support networks. Women found ways to adopt co-madres in their communities, like surrogate mothers who take on the role of co-mothers in the absence of their biological mothers. Women in this study adopted different pathways to cope with the loss or altering of their family support systems. Many of them joined communities, established friendships and close confidants but more pointedly, created alternative families for themselves. Most of the women in this study took on informal approaches to finding co-madres within their communities, for example some women adopted co-madres at their workplaces and some adopted older women in their cultural communities to be their co-madres.

Co-madres were sought out as women anticipated that they would need a source of support in New Zealand. They realised that they needed to find someone who could understand their contexts and situations especially during challenging times, a finding supported by Aspinwall and Taylor (1997). The analysis revealed that immigrant women in this study employed proactive coping strategies. Proactive coping can be defined as the efforts that individuals undertake in advance of a possibly stressful experience in order to prevent or to modify it before it transpires (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997). A significant step in proactive coping is the safeguarding and accumulation of resources (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997). The women in this study cultivated mentoring relationships and were able to recognise potential stressors such as issues related to their families, in laws, parenting, child birth or child rearing without family support. It appeared that the women had the ability to employ a proactive coping skill as they readily identified that the immigration experience would be stressful on various levels. They pursued relationships with co-madres that would aid them in difficult times when they needed the help of a mother who was too far away to lend a hand, or give a word of wisdom (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997; Comas-Diaz, 2013). Women accessed co-madres in different contexts.

Co-madre relationships took on various forms, and women had different approaches to safeguard such relationships, in turn enhancing their resilience. Jasmine, a thirty-four year old, was able to safeguard a relational resource of having co madres in different contexts in her life. She had a co-madre at her workplace as well as in her personal life. A sense of mutuality was clear as Jasmine's co-madre, also her work manager became a family friend. Jasmine's relationships with her co-madre enabled her to be resilient at work, she felt that at work she is known and cared for. An informal mentoring experience can be a "qualitative experience that has great meaning for the parties involved" the relationship matures and is often characterised by mutuality (GreyWolf, 2013, p. 102).

... My manager always joked that she was like my *work mum*, and she just lives down the road as well...and has met all my family ..., *and it really is like family...*

(Jasmine, South Asia and Oceania)

As seen above, it was clear that Jasmine's manager, an older woman, took on the role as a surrogate mother in her workplace. Similarly, in her personal life, Jasmine had an additional co-madre, a peer, who was like a sister of the heart. They shared a deep spiritual connection as prayer partners and her friend lived with her in her family home. To Jasmine both co-madres were like family members. This was evident as Jasmine became the god mother of her younger co-madre's daughter. The co-madre relationship between Jasmine and her friend was a source of great strength for her as seen below.

...I had a friend very close to [me], which I considered as if she was my sister... *she was a big source of strength for me.*

(Jasmine, South Asia and Oceania⁴)

... her daughter has become my god-daughter and so that is *something that is precious to me...*

Jasmine describes her co-madre, who was her peer, as a sister rather than a mother. Women tended to refer to older co-madres as second mothers and younger co-madres as sisters, both denoting a surrogate female family role. Jasmine who grew up in various countries around the world felt comfortable to connect with women from different cultures to herself, unlike most women who connected with co-madres from their own cultures. Another interesting feature of the co-madre relationship was that it enables women to feel comfortable to be culturally authentic.

This research found that a co-madre relationship facilitates cultural authenticity. This finding is supported by other research that found that co-madres help women gain confidence in their cultural identities, simply by authentically being themselves (Comas-Diaz, 2013). From Heidi's comments it became clear that establishing authentic relational resources that resemble family relationships is an essential connection for sustaining resilience, particularly in very stressful times. For Heidi, a co-madre relationship was established by being included in the family of her best friend, as a daughter in the house. Heidi's co-madres was her

⁴ Jasmine is an immigrant in New Zealand. She defines herself as being from both South Asia and Oceania. This was due to her father's occupation that caused her to be brought up in various parts of the world.

best friend who was also an immigrant from Southern Africa. Heidi, felt so welcome and at home in her co-madre's family's house that she felt confident to fully be herself.

...it's amazing how I only realise now how much they mean to me. ..., and they don't have to coz I am not even their child.
... but I've, ...lived with them, I'm there every weekend, I'm there every day when I am off, *I am like another child in that house.* ... you really need those people in your life.

(Heidi, Southern Africa)

It is interesting to note that Heidi connected with co-madres from her own culture with whom she felt very comfortable. This appeared to be a similar feature from most women who utilised co-madre relationships. However, some women connected with co-madres outside of their cultural communities and within a formal context.

In stark contrast to women from non-western countries in this study who connected with co-madres in their own cultural community. Kay, a thirty- four year old woman who grew up in a western setting in Northern America articulated the difficulties of being a first time mother in a foreign country without the help of her mother. She connected with her co-madre, a trained counselor who guided her to self-actualisation, and self-awareness. Kay was the only woman who utilised the skills of a professionally trained co-madre. In a therapeutic sense a trained counsellor who is seen as a co-madre helps women to build their strengths and cultivate resilience during hardship (Comas-Diaz, 2013). Kay's choice of a formal co-madre relationship to develop her individual agency may be due to her Western upbringing in an individual culture. Conversely, for Kay it was important to have a co-madre with whom she shares a spiritual connection hence, accessing a co-madre in her faith community. This finding is supported by research asserting that having a spiritual connecting with a co-madre is a strong element of the co-madre relationship (Comas-Diaz, 2013; GreyWolf, 2013).

I knew how vulnerable I was, I knew my life was changing
and I knew that I needed a support network I needed to be
involved with people. I also approached Susan ... *a counsellor*

at church and said, “Look, I’m just going through a big transition right now, and I don’t even know all that’s coming, I’m about to have a baby... and so I just started meeting with her, just to talk.

(Kay, Northern America)

As already mentioned, Kay appeared to be the exception to most of the women. Most women in this study who utilised a co-madre relationship grew up in non-western countries. They connected with co-madres from their cultural communities within informal contexts. In contrast, Kay utilised a formal relationship to develop her self-awareness, an individualistic character trait that may be common of western cultures. It became clear that women tended to choose strong co-madres from whose experiences they could learn.

A fascinating finding in this study was that strong co-madres offered life lessons from which other women could learn. Literature suggests that it is not uncommon for a co-madre or a surrogate mother to see herself as a strong woman and to challenge her pseudo daughter to be “fiercely honest with herself” thus helping her to recognise different paths to a healthy space. According to GreyWolf (2013), this approach is consistent with the feminist therapy value of liberating women’s strength for empowerment. Co-madres played an important role in helping women to be resilient and helping them to cope, when they did not have their family of origin to rely on during difficult times. This was evident in Maria, a twenty nine year old, said that she really missed her mother, especially during significant life events such as childbirth. She sought out a substitute “physical” mother in time of need. Maria, describes her relationship with her co-madre, an older woman from her cultural community, as comforting as well as being very similar to her relationship with her biological mother.

She is like my second mother here. Everything I tell her...

Which is really helpful ... and it makes me feel good.

[She is]...Very... [Supportive] and she will scold me, no limitations, if she doesn’t like what I do, she will tell it to me...

I like it because ... you feel so comfortable, because you know that whatever she says, she doesn’t have any bad intention,

Just good intention...She is ... 50 years old... but yeah she is

very nice... Its' really good...*especially if you don't have your mum here...*

(Maria, South East Asia)

As seen above, having surrogate mothers like co-madres helps women to “witness the experiences of others” and to reframe their own experiences (GreyWolf, 2013, p. 126). In such relationships the loyalty of a co-madre is strong and she is able to offer a perspective not seen before (GreyWolf, 2013). Maria’s co-madre has shared her experience as an immigrant woman. Maria was able to see that her co-madre managed to cope through the difficulties of immigration and that she too could “*make it*”. From her co-madre’s experience Maria could see that her situation could get better. Co-madre and close female mentoring relationships are filled with “humanness, humour, generosity compassion and individual growth” (GreyWolf, 2013, p. 125). However the disintegration, and loss from betrayal of such relationships are intensely emotionally painful and can hinder resilience (GreyWolf, 2013).

The importance of co-madre relationships in the women’s lives was highlighted by the problems created by the betrayal, which had a negative effect on the resilience of Heidi and Jasmine. The data revealed that the betrayal by a co-madre had a significant effect on Heidi and Jasmine, who both conveyed the need for an extended period of emotional recovery afterwards. Literature suggests that the betrayal by a Co-madre relationship can have a devastating effect (GreyWolf, 2013). This was palpable in the lives of Heidi, twenty eight and Jasmine thirty four, both younger, single women. For them the co-madre relationship was like sisterhood, with women close to them in age and was an essential component of their lives. They reported that the betrayal by a co-madre relationship was incredibly painful, as was seen to be one of the hardest things they have ever gone through in their lives. According to the resilience model of Carver (1998) one of the outcomes of a downturn may be that a person is able to endure hardship, but is weakened in some way. This is what is known as recovery with loss, establishing a lower level of homeostasis, (Connor & Davidson, 2003). Because they trusted their co-madres and saw them as sisters, it was hurtful and was like losing a family member. The feeling of loss and hurt surfaced, as neither Jasmine nor Heidi felt that they were trusted any longer by their co-madre and others involved.

Not much is known about the context of Jasmine's betrayal, she however had the following to say:

I guess a situation happened where *I felt quite betrayed* by her and... *It was really hard, enormously hard*, because I ... never trusted someone like that. Including her making some accusations against me...

(Jasmine, South Asia, Oceania)

Furthermore, for Heidi, talking about the loss of her co-madres and the accusations that led to the disintegration of their relationship was very difficult to talk about because of the very close bond that they shared. Heidi said that "I was like another sister to my friend and her husband was like my brother and their kids were like my nieces and my nephews". The betrayal of her co-madre occurred when:

She thought that I had an affair with her husband...*that really hurt me...*" ...But it was probably the *worst time* that I had in New Zealand. Like *ever, ever, ever*, even in Southern Africa...

(Heidi, Southern Africa)

It appeared that the disintegration of co-madre relationships had a significant impact on the resilience of both Heidi and Jasmine. Not long after the accusations of having an affair with her co-madre's husband, Heidi, decided to return⁵ to Southern Africa to live with her parents. Not much is known about the context of the betrayal that Jasmine experienced; however, shortly after the betrayal of her co-madre she decided to move to Australia to live with her sister. It appeared that the collapse of a co-madre relationship that functioned as a surrogate sister proved to be overwhelming for Jasmine and Heidi, both younger single women. The breakdown of their co-madre relationships appeared to have a ripple effect on their extended relationships that made it very difficult for them to remain in New Zealand without family support.

⁵ Heidi returned to join her family in Southern Africa shortly after her interview for this study. This is likely to have been due to her parent's persistent requests for her return as well as the need for a recovery period after the emotional ordeal being accused of having an affair by her co-madre.

Although the breakdown of a co-madre relationships had negative effects on women, healthy co-madres relationships strengthened women. It became apparent that co-madres were helpful to newcomers. Helping women develop resilience is a key trait of a co-madre (Comas-Diaz, 2013). This characteristic was apparent in Marissa. The complexities of immigration and relationships were understood by Marissa, an older woman. She understood the implications and the hardships that new immigrant women face. Marissa positioned herself as a co-madre as she was ready to help newcomers from her cultural community with their physical needs and their emotional needs, as she offers blankets, orientation, encouragement and advice. As a more experienced immigrant and older woman she offered help to less experienced newcomers whose ages she did not disclose. She described the roles of a co-madre as a counselor or guide, who orientates newcomers and defines her role as being a “fairy godmother”. She actively took on the role of a co-madre as she guided newcomer women to resilience or “making it” as she puts it. She helped women to develop resilience against adversity. Marissa encouraged women to “be strong” and to “just do what you can” and she helped them to take charge of their lives.

...and when they [new immigrants] need some help... and they didn't have any, blanket, or anything... we gave them some things like linen, a pillow... and give them some of our old appliances, ... we tell them “*just be strong, you can stay here... you can stay as much as you want, just do what you can, be strong*”. ...*Give them advice...* they were saying that I am the Nenang or Godmother.... Because *I orientate them, and help them what to do...* [Some are] still struggling, but I think they are making it now... [I am] Nenang like godmother, like fairy godmother... We help them, because we know what it is if you are new, if you come here, New Zealand, what it is, you don't have family you don't have friends...

(Marissa, South East Asia)

Moreover, Marissa specifically connected with new immigrants who were from her country of origin. She appeared to feel at ease to provide advice to South East Asian women as she was familiar with the culture and practices. From the

analysis it appeared that the women who participated in this study may have been able to employ a proactive coping strategy. Women safeguarded relational resources such as co-madre relationships, these relationships helped women to cope with the stresses of day to day life as immigrants as well to cope with major life events. These relationships were specifically important to women who were saddened by the loss of their biological mothers to whom they were very close in their home countries. Hence women safeguarded surrogate mothers in New Zealand. Immigrant women were able to recognise potential stresses and they pursued relationships with co-madre's that would aid them in difficult times when they needed the help of a mother who was too far away to help them as also found by Comas-Diaz (2013). Marissa recognised the need to be proactive. As a co-madre she empowered women to take charge of their own lives. Interestingly most women who engaged in co-madre relationships chose co-madres within their own cultural communities, with the exception of Jasmine who grew up in a multi-cultural environment. It appears that women felt comfortable to relate with co-madres in their own cultural communities.

In relation to age, it is interesting to note that most women chose to engage with older women as a co-madres and referred to them as second mothers, with the exception of Marissa who was older and positioned herself as a co-madre and helped younger women. Where co-madre's were peers or only slightly older, they were referred to as sisters. In addition, the fact that the women chose females to be their co-madres as opposed to males, gave the impression that the co-madre relationships were gender specific. This could be because co-madre relationships were related to female roles such as a sister or a mother. These relationships are described as surrogate family members especially by women who feel the loss of their biological mothers very deeply. These dynamics will be further explored within the conclusion chapter. This section addressed resilience from a communal role such as the co-madre relationship. Immigrant women in this study have been found to cope with the difficulties of immigration by means of employing emotional and affective coping modes as shown in the Basic Ph model of coping and resilience (Eshet et al., 2012). Women did this by engaging in intimate co-madre relationship where they took up a specific role as a surrogate mother or as a surrogate daughter, these relationships provided a safe place in which women could share their emotions and receive comfort and support. As seen above, this

section focused on the resilience from a surrogate mother or sister relationship.
The next section will examine resilience from a benevolent feminised role.

Section Three: Resilience from a benevolent feminised role in the community

A significant number of women who participated in this study were involved in various types of volunteer work in diverse communities. For example, women were involved in different capacities within cultural communities, international communities, business and work communities, faith communities, parenting communities as well as music / recreational communities.

This study found that belonging in a community was a significant contributing factor to women's resilience. The term community can be defined as an establishment that shares common values and practices (McMillan, 1996). According to McMillan (1996) the key components of community has been found to be spirit, trust, trade and art. These key components were evident in the women's narratives as a spark of friendship became the 'spirit' of community; friendship was seen to be the essence of belonging together. 'Trust' projected that there was an authority structure that can be trusted. 'Trade' exudes that there was mutual benefit to be gained from being together. Art conveyed that there was 'shared emotional connection in time and space' (McMillan, 1996, p. 322) . According to the Basic Ph model of coping and resilience, one of the modes or resilient coping is a social mode of coping (Eshet et al., 2012). Within this mode of coping it was evident that immigrant women's resilience was enhanced by obtaining support from belonging to a community group or being part of an organisation.

Women across the board, regardless of life stage, age, marital status or socio economic status, conveyed how vital being part of a community was to them. A shared view was expressed by Kay and Coral about what their community groups meant to them. Coral reflects on what her involvement in different music groups' means to her. Coral associated community with a sense of belonging, which aided her sense of resilience.

... Being part of community, *you feel connected you feel part of something* ... bigger than just you.

(Coral, Western Europe)

Similarly, for Kay having a community group, such as a parenting group, which she could contribute and receive from was important, in turn, this

contributed to her sense of resilience. This is what she had to say about what her involvement in different parenting groups' meant to her.

... people who *care about me* and people that *I care about* and want to contribute to their lives...

(Kay, Northern America)

The analysis disclosed that immigrant women who actively participated in their communities or who filled leadership roles in a voluntary capacity gained various benefits in so doing. Empirical research has found that benevolence beliefs are important for wellbeing (Poulin & Cohen Silver, 2008). In addition a strong correlation has been found between benevolence beliefs (kindness, generosity and compassion) or goodwill and well-being (Poulin & Cohen Silver, 2008). It has been found that altruism or selflessness lies at the heart of a women's role and personal needs can be contented by means of satisfying the needs of others (Browner & Lewin, 1982).

It was clear that women's community involvement returned some unexpected returns such as taking the focus off themselves, gaining a social network and deeply connecting with people. This resulted in women feeling valued and useful. These feeling of value acted as protective factors, which nurtured their resilience. Another interesting finding of this study was that benevolent behaviour distracted women from personal stress.

This study found that benevolent behaviour can act as a distraction from the day to day pressures that women face. On a surface level, some women found that their involvement in various capacities enabled them to take the focus off themselves and their situations and place it on the task at hand. Kay and Coral, who were both first-time, stay-at-home mothers experienced how voluntary work enabled them to shift their focus when they were facing the challenges of motherhood, housework, isolation, loss, homesickness and conflicts with in-laws. Their involvement in voluntary work enabled them to overcome some of the challenges to fostering their resilience. This was evident in the life of Kay:

... it gave me something else to do other than just staying at home and being overwhelmed with the laundry and the cooking...it was good for me, I didn't have a job but *I had*

somewhere to contribute in my community, so that was good for me, and my sanity as well.

(Kay, Northern America)

...It was taking to focus off myself...I couldn't ever at any point sit there and feel sorry for myself because I was in another country, and I didn't have my parents here, I didn't have my sister or my best friends. The focus was taken off of myself.

(Coral, Western Europe)

As seen above, voluntary work provided women an opportunity to shift their focus from being isolated and overwhelmed to feeling useful and being valued. This shift of focus contributed to the resilience of Kay and Coral, both younger mothers. Moreover, it was interesting to note that voluntary work provided women with physical tasks to do, and a role to play, in turn, this enhanced them to feel a sense of belonging in the group this a finding supported by Eshet et al. (2012). It appeared that it was a strategic choice to involve themselves rather than to focus on self. Furthermore voluntary work aided the development of social networks, it was found that benevolent behavior expanded women's social networks.

This study found that in addition to shifting focus, voluntary work helped women to construct social connections, generating a spark of friendship. It appeared that women strategically connected with organisations in order to create friendships and take on role identities. Sue, who worked from home, volunteered with English Language Partners among other organisations. Her involvement enabled her to establish additional communities and allowed her to connect with a wide variety of people, which she said greatly enriched her life and increased her self-esteem. In addition, her benevolent world view, for example seeing herself becoming a better human being, contributed to her wellbeing. The quotes below also suggest that by doing voluntary work women were able to physically broaden their geographical interactions. By extending their geographical interactions beyond that of their homes, women were able to greatly increase their social networks.

... getting out of your home or make you see other things and talk to people from other country or other experience, *help... makes us better human beings and makes us richer...doing volunteer work...*

(Sue, South East Asia)

...So [voluntary work] is helping you on a practical level it is helping me on a practical level... I'll just pop in...and do... really, little jobs that nobody else wanted to do..., *getting to know people, and I made some really close friends from there.*

(Coral, Western Europe)

As seen above, Coral established close friendships from the voluntary work that she did for a children's group. She saw voluntary work as a practical exchange of doing tasks that allowed her to establish key social networks. In addition to building key networks some women also established connections with others on a much deeper level. The role of the benevolent, aided women in constructing their post-migration identities in a foreign country. It has been found that having various role identities may allow a person to have wider access to various components of society which in turn promotes their social connectedness and mental health (Moen et al., 1989). In this study, identity re-construction enabled women to establish a sense of belonging in an alien land. One of the new identities that women took on as that of being a leader.

It became clear that leadership roles allowed women to gain confidence and connect with others on deeper levels. Han and Hong (2013), found a correlation between concern with one's own emotional satisfaction and concern for the welfare of others. This was evident in the life of Heidi. She became a youth leader in her cultural community, and found that it enabled her to establish significant social connections. Heidi described herself as shy, and said that she lost her confidence as an immigrant trying to secure employment. However, her voluntary work as a youth leader challenged her to talk in front of people. From this experience she gained an increased sense of self-esteem that helped her in her adjustment in New Zealand.

And it was also where *I grew*, because it was something that I would never do in Southern Africa... *I actually stepped out of my comfort zone*, and being part of a youth group where I actually had to speak out... say stuff alone... in front of the whole group... So that helped me too... normally I wouldn't do that... That's also something *I grew up*. [An area in which growth was experienced]

(Heidi, Southern Africa)

As seen above, Heidi experienced personal growth as she took on a new identity as a leader, this required her to add to her existing abilities by developing her public speaking skills. Her new found abilities promoted her self-esteem and over all mental health. Heidi also note that voluntary work improved her social connectedness. On a deeper level, some women found that when they took on voluntary leadership roles, they were able to connect on a deeper level with others as they endeavoured to support the team that they were leading. This created mutual benefit for both parties in the community as women could trade what they had to offer, such as voluntary work and friendship (McMillan, 1996). Some women experienced authentic relationships on an emotional level that made them feel good and made them feel more fulfilled on a humanistic level. The correlation between concern with one's own emotional satisfaction and concern for the welfare of others was also evident in in the statements that younger women such as Jasmine, Coral and Heidi made in relation to the emotional satisfaction that they gained from their voluntary work.

... [In] the international community... I felt like I could be there to listen, be there for them, and come along-side them... *I felt like I was involved in people's lives.*

(Jasmine, South Asia, Oceania)

...*it was about the care of that team* so [when] I saw somebody going through a moment of struggle, it was being able to go and talk to them... even if it was just "Actually, why don't you have a few weeks off?"

(Coral, Western Europe)

...being a youth leader was ... also a big thing. *That's where you build closer relationships* with people, like your best friends or get to know people...closer.

(Heidi, Southern Africa)

As seen above, Heidi, Jasmine and Coral were able to gain mutual benefit for their voluntary work and trade what they had to offer, (voluntary work) for the satisfaction of connecting with others on deeper levels. These authentic relationships made them feel fulfilled on a humanistic level. Research has found numerous psychological benefits of volunteering, for example greater life satisfaction and happiness (Han & Hong, 2013). Volunteering acted as a buffer that protected women against the isolation as immigrants who were stay at home mothers, had limited English or who worked from home. This finding is supported by research done by Poulin and Cohen Silver (2008) on benevolence beliefs and wellbeing. In this sense it was evident that mutual benefit was gained from volunteering in the community. In addition to deeply connecting with others, an increase of value and worth was experienced by some women.

Imbedded within the notion of volunteering is a sense of feeling valued. This study found that a sense of worth and value was derived from a benevolent role which added to women's resilience. Some immigrant women experienced a loss of self-confidence within the early years of their migration. Their benevolent roles in the community buffered them against feeling useless and worthless as they felt that they were contributing to society on a positive level, their contribution had unanticipated rewards as it enhanced their self-esteem and they sensed a shared emotional connection with others in the community.

... it makes you think you *can do things* and... you are *okay to be who you are, that helps me a lot.*

(Sue, South East Asia)

... I was involved with an international group here and I felt like I *could contribute and be myself, I felt safe and included...*

(Jasmine, South Asia, and Oceania)

... I feel *useful*, have something to give, I'm not a drain on society

(Coral, Western Europe)

... I belong somewhere and I *contribute something that people value*.

(Kay, Northern America)

As seen above, it is apparent that the involvement in voluntary work created a setting in which Sue could feel accepted and build her self-confidence. Jasmine's involvement in an international group aided her personal sense of security and attachment to a group. Voluntary work gave Coral and Kay a sense of worth and usefulness that contributed to their personal sense of value. Voluntary work is often engaged in with the motive to enhance employment opportunities, however, for these women, the motivation for voluntary work was deeply rooted in a desire to belong. From these examples, it seems that in exchange for care and goodwill in public voluntary practices, women received love, respect and friendship. In the context of their communities these acts can be seen as a strategies employed by immigrant women to gain a sense of belonging, spark friendships, achieve mutual benefit and shared emotional connections (Hogan & Sloan, 1985; McMillan, 1996). As mentioned earlier, one of the modes of coping and resilience, is through a social mode of coping (Eshet et al., 2012). This was done as women obtained support from being part of an organisation through voluntary work where they had specific tasks and roles to play. The role identities and tasks that women took on enhanced their resilience. Benevolence has been described as a feminised role as women have been found to be other centred, relational and caring (Riger, 1993). This section considered resilience from a benevolent role identity. The next section will explore resilience from the role as breadwinner.

Section Four: Resilience from the role of bread winner

An interesting findings of this study was the strong impact of the breadwinner role on the fostering of resilience. A strong feature of some of the women in this study was that they acted as breadwinners on behalf of their families back home. The role of breadwinner was held by three women in my sample. In contrast to the benevolent role, which deepened a feminised role, the breadwinner role emerged. Conventionally the breadwinner role is seen as a masculinised role however, some women who immigrated became breadwinners and stepped into a masculinised role, this is often a feature of transnational daughters. Transnational daughters can be defined as an adult women who have the potential to become financial providers due to their immigrant status (Thai, 2012). Thai (2012), states that “ international migration positions daughters as important potential finance providers, not because they are daughters but because they are transnational daughters” and have the capacity to earn more due to their immigration status (Thai, 2012, p. 216). This is an important statement; it seems that when women immigrate there is an expectation that they will become breadwinners, especially when family members are affected by poverty. Furthermore, all of the women featuring in this section were eldest daughters another common feature of breadwinning transnational daughters. These eldest daughters provided for immediate as well as extended family members regardless of their gender. These women appeared to be active agents of change. Feminist scholars believe that it is important not to look at immigrant women who are breadwinners as passive victims but to see them as social actors who consider the social political and economic power structures on a national and international level which influence their actions (Zontini, 2004).

As mentioned above, the analysis revealed that the breadwinning role can empower women as agents of change. Zontini (2004) found that women migrate to help their families of origin; they often leave their countries to escape oppressive situations. They then play a vital economic role in the conservation of their families. To sustain connections with family and to guarantee the survival of their family group, women contribute financially. As a result the role as breadwinner often results in new prestige as well as future burdens (Zontini, 2004). In addition, it has been found that transnational daughters who are

breadwinners sacrifice physical unity for preserving economic survival as well as securing a future(Zontini, 2004).

This study found that the role of breadwinner provided the women with strength as members of their families look up to them with great respect. It gave women great satisfaction to positively influence the lives of their extended families by financially providing for their education. This phenomenon featured mainly in collective cultures, but appears to come at an individual cost to the women as they work vigorously, and very often work extra shifts to be able earn enough money to support themselves and their family overseas. This section explores how breadwinners a) became agents of change, b) balanced the role of breadwinner to immediate family and extended family, c) reframed their situations from being lonely to seeing themselves as making a difference and d) accomplishing what other daughters could not achieve.

Marissa and Amanda saw themselves breaking a poverty trend by financially supporting the education of their extended families. For them, money was not only a currency of care (Thai, 2012), but it was also a currency of becoming agents of change in their families, as their funds supported education and therefore had the power to transform the future of their families. This sense of empowerment protected their resiliency when they felt lonely or isolated from extended family. Marissa, Amanda and Maria gained a sense of satisfaction, self-esteem and prestige from their roles as breadwinners a finding supported by Zontini (2004). Women were able to adapt to the demands of changing circumstances, much like the bamboo tree that displayed flexible strength by bending down during a storm and regaining its original form once the storm has passed, as explained by Berger (2009). In addition to gaining prestige and status as agents of change, the breadwinning role enabled women to maintain close family connections.

As mentioned above, resilience is linked to close family connections. For Marissa, the children of her siblings, are much like her own. As a breadwinner and transnational daughter, Marissa recognised the difference between western and non-western family relationships and the prominence of her role as provider. For her, maintaining close family connections and intimacy strengthen her resilience. She made the following comment:

...it's like a *close family ties* I think that's different from here
New Zealand.

(Marissa, South East Asia)

As seen above, Marissa identifies that western and non-western family relationships are different. She recognised that her resiliency is strengthened by maintaining intimate family connections. Moreover, it was also found being a breadwinner requires women to have flexible strength in order to balance their life as breadwinners in different settings.

According to Thai (2012), in western societies, money generally flows only within the nuclear family. However in contrast to this notion, non-western society views money as the glue that “holds a family together, and maintains bonds of intimacy and care across generations” (Thai, 2012, p. 221). This was evident in the life of Marissa who works for what she describes as a “*meagre salary*”. However for her, due to the currency exchange, the “*money is really good*”. She is very proud to be able to pay for the education of her extended family members. This has enabled her to play a significant role in the future of her nieces and nephews back home. Her ability to provide aids her sense of pride in herself.

...and now *I have already supported three of my nephews and nieces who have graduated from college...*

(Marissa, South East Asia)

Although women's stories revealed that the role of breadwinner was empowering, it was also described as a balancing act. According to Berger (2009) immigrant women have flexible strength. As mentioned earlier, Berger (2009) uses the analogy of a Bamboo tree in a storm to illustrate her point. For example, when a need arise immigrant women are able to bend much like the flexible branches of the bamboo tree until the storm passes or until they are able to meet the need. They then bounce back to their original form once the storm has passed or need is met (Berger, 2009). Marissa demonstrates resilience and flexible strength as she is able to balance her life in New Zealand as well as her role as breadwinner to extended family back home. This is seen in the tension that exists between Marissa, her husband and children as Marissa is under pressure to satisfy

the needs of her immediate and extended family. In addition to having flexible strength, Marissa also generates a sense of value from her role as breadwinner or helper which in turn enhances her resilience.

I am so happy to see them happy as well, if they are sick, they just call me "... I need money to do this" Oh my God! I don't have money, "Okay I'll send you some, I will just work some extra shifts and then maybe next week I will send you some money, don't you worry"... I don't want them to be so worried about money, when they need help they always call me, that is why my husband always tell me "Oh, there is no ending!" (Laughter)... But I'm like "Oh! That is my happiness, I am happy to help"

(Marissa, South East Asia)

... my children feel sorry for me "Mum, why are you working again? Extra shift?" "Are you not getting tired?" Well, I am. But ... *I am still helping, that is why I am still working.*

(Marissa, South East Asia)

Marissa gains her sense of self-esteem from being helpful, and doing something significant that impacts the future of her nieces and nephews back home. Marissa explains below how well she is esteemed within her communal family back in South East Asia.

When I get home (to South East Asia), I can see the changes in their lives.... "Okay, you are having your job now", and they are so happy to see me... Yeah, every time we come home, they always support me there. "... what do you want? ... They always entertain us.

(Marissa, South East Asia)

From the above quote it is apparent that Marissa is well-regarded by her extended family in South East Asia, as seen by the treatment that she receives from them. Marissa noted that her extended family entertain her and provide her with everything she needs during her stay. Her family members go out of their way to look after her. This treatment may be an expression of respect and

gratitude and an attempt of reciprocity by family members in South East Asia. Moreover, the breadwinner role can also empower women despite the separation from their families.

Amanda contrasted her feelings of loneliness and missing family to the benefits her family enjoys because of her role as a breadwinner. Amanda as well as Marissa's role as breadwinners enabled them to reframe their identities from being lonely or separate from their families to being agents of change. The role of breadwinner often results in new prestige despite the separation from family (Zontini, 2004). Amanda's ability to be future focused provided her with the opportunity to see her as securing her family's future. This outlook buffered her against loneliness and strengthened her resilience.

... sometimes I would think *their life got better by me being here*, because I could send them money. I could manage to go to uni [university] because you have to pay... my brother they could afford, because I could sent them money, for the uni fees, which made me happy, *because, breaking that poverty trend which is good, even though I felt lonely but thinking, okay, I am lonely but giving my family a better life, it made me feel much better...* if I didn't come to New Zealand it means maybe they would not have gone that far.

(Amanda, Southern Africa)

Amanda saw herself as an agent of change, an identity that empowered her. Amanda acknowledged the significant impacted she was able to have on the future of her siblings through financing their education, this made her feel happy and content, and gave her power to change negative situations, which in turn strengthened her resiliency.

... I didn't think...that I would be able to... *change the way my family live ...* until I moved to New Zealand and I thought *"I can change this... I can change that ..."* and it makes me *happy to see them living better.*

(Amanda, Southern Africa)

Amanda admitted that she made significant personal sacrifices to enable her siblings to finish their education. For Amanda, her siblings needs were seasonal, she was future minded and concluded that with education her siblings would be able to help themselves in future, consequently she will not have to as an agent of change but she also empowered her family members to take hold of their own futures.

... if you are selfish and you don't help them out it will mean that I will be helping them for the rest of my life... But if I sacrifice, maybe for three years, maybe it means *they will be able to care for themselves...and I don't need to worry anyone...*

(Amanda, Southern Africa)

From the quote above, it seems that Amanda carries a burden for the provision of her family. This is not uncommon as the role of breadwinner can burden women with extra responsibilities and commitments as noted by Zontini (2004). It is interesting to note that “young single migrant women remit on average more than double their male counterparts” (Zontini, 2004, p. 1116). According to Zontini (2004), not having children of their own women contribute financially to other members of the younger generation to accomplish their family commitments and simultaneously invest in possible support from them in future. In some cases the moral responsibilities towards relatives are so strong that older migrant women still send considerable payments home towards nieces and nephews (Zontini, 2004). However, the role of breadwinner can set some daughters apart from others.

An interesting finding was that the role of breadwinner enabled a transnational daughter to accomplish what an ordinary daughter could not do. Maria was sponsoring her family to live in New Zealand on a short term basis, her mother lived with her and her family. She recently paid for her family to holiday in New Zealand, all expenses paid by her. She did not grow up in poverty and explains that she was “very pampered” and got everything she wanted as a child. Maria did not disclose whether she was supporting family back home, however

she gained much status, for being able to bring her parents to New Zealand. This increased her sense of self-worth and pride. For her, playing the role of transnational daughter was a big accomplishment as “not every daughter can do that”. Maria was proud of her capabilities as a transnational daughter. This was a status that she could not gain in her home country.

I have always wanted to *make them proud*, and when I was able to pay for their fare to come to New Zealand, provide accommodation and give them enough money so they can buy stuff to take home, *it's such a big accomplishment for me...*

Yes, I really felt proud of myself, because... not every daughter can do that... it's a big, big thing in the bag...

(Maria, South East Asia)

Maria's comments above elucidate that her contributions enabled her to make her parents proud which in her opinion was a big accomplishment. Maria, who grew up in an affluent family drew strength from the status that she gained as a transnational daughter in her family. For her, having the ability to provide all-expenses paid holiday was a triumph and secured her standing as a very special daughter. While Maria became a breadwinner, out of a sense of benevolence. Marissa and Amanda also engaged in this kind of behaviour but for quite different reasons. For them it was about their families being in poverty, they acted out of necessity in contrast to Maria. As already seen, Marissa and Amanda saw themselves as having the ability to break the trend of poverty in their families by financially supporting the education of their extended families, henceforth empowering them. For them, the role of breadwinner did not only provide them with the currency of care and securing intimate family connections but provided them with the opportunity to become agents of change in their families. They therefore had the power to transform the future of their communal families. Marissa, Amanda and Maria gained a sense of satisfaction, self-esteem and prestige from their roles as breadwinners as also found by Zontini (2004). They were well able to adapt to the demands of changing circumstances as breadwinners. Maria, Amanda and Marissa were all from non-western countries. Because women are not seen as breadwinners in some non-western countries with patriarchal values and rigid traditional gender rules, the role of a female

breadwinner was very significant. For a male, the immigration process would enable him to be a breadwinner, automatically continuing an existing role, however, for a female this role transition is transformative because family members look to her for financial provision, which gives her decision making power. This finding is reinforced by Zontini (2004) who noted that “Due to migration, gender roles are slowly affected, since women become main income generators of their families” (Zontini, 2004, p. 1141). Moreover, eldest daughters are more likely to take on breadwinning roles as transnational daughters, and provide for male and female siblings as also found by Thai (2012). It appears that there is a gendered expectation of eldest daughters to become breadwinners when they immigrate (Thai, 2012). In terms of cultural differences, there seemed to be dissimilarity between the experiences of women from western countries and women from non-western countries. Women from western countries found it easier to transition to another western country whereas for women from non-western countries the transition may be much more substantial. In addition, western women may be familiar with their nuclear family and an individualistic approach to resources. Furthermore, there may be an expectation of non-western women from collective cultures to provide for the collective wellbeing of their extended family. Some women experienced tension between their responsibility of being a breadwinner for family overseas and their responsibility as a wife and mother in New Zealand. These tensions, cultural and gendered concepts will be discussed in more detail within the conclusion chapter. This section investigated resilience from a breadwinner role. The next section will focus in resilience through spirituality and religious beliefs.

Section Five: Resilience from communal spirituality

This section will focus on spirituality as a collective experience as women seem to draw on networks generated from their communal involvements. As it happened women who participated in this study were all members of Judeo Christianity, more specifically from Roman Catholic and Pentecostal backgrounds. Given this, it is not surprising that the church community was part of their coping and resilience. It may not be the same for women in other communities; therefore this particular finding is not generalisable to immigrant women in general. This section highlights that women did not easily talk about their spirituality and reveals the psychological support that women received from their belonging and involvement in coffee, prayer and music groups at their churches. Moreover, the participation in physical activities such as communal singing also proved to lift depressive moods and aided women in expressing their negative emotions. It was clear that women's communal spiritual participation yielded some psychological benefits. I will address a sense of security and emotional outlets such as prayer and meditation as individual subjects in the next chapter that focus on the individual constructs of resilience.

This study found that immigrant women utilised spiritual coping strategies that strengthened their resilience. These spiritual coping strategies are now being recognised in academic literature and religious beliefs have been found to aid coping and growth in the face of loss and change (Ramsey, 2012). Studies done within the field of gerontology and geriatrics that include subjects of biology, sociology, and psychology by Blieszner and Ramsey (2003) and Ramsey (2012) found that spirituality plays a constructive role in the lives of older adults. Women's involvement within faith communities were important as part of their integration into New Zealand society as their involvement aided the establishment of social networks and enhanced a sense of community. However, according to literature reviewed, non-religious immigrant women may access resiliency by having a positive outlook on themselves and their circumstances (Carver, 1998). This finding is supported by Maddi (2005) who established that resilience is positive perception of reality also known as a hardy attitude. Furthermore, Berger (2009) found that immigrant women, regardless of religious beliefs possess qualities such as optimism and determination. Likewise, non-religious women,

have been found to access familial sources which adds to their inner strength (Berger, 2009).

However, women in this study emphasised the public aspect of their spirituality as being integral to their resilience; hence belonging to a church organisation was seen to be important. One of the most fascinating and deeply felt reasons for belonging to a church expressed by the women was that communal support that they received that strengthen their personal resiliency .However, during the interviews, some women were hesitant to speak openly about their spirituality. They seem to feel that talking about their spiritual involvement or practices in the context of this research, was not appropriate. This may be due to their perception of faith being non-scientific, and the interview being in a secular setting. This was a potential barrier. However, women opened up about their spiritual lives in conversation with me because I was perceived to be an insider, as I acknowledged the impact of spirituality on people’s lives. I validated that their spirituality played an integral part in their lives especially in terms of their resilience.

“I don’t know if I am allowed to speak like this [spirituality] for your [psychology study] ...”

(Jasmine, South Asia and Oceania)

“I mean for your study this [spirituality] will probably not make any sense. It will probably not mean anything to anyone else...”

(Coral, Western Europe)

“Am I allowed to say? [Talk about spirituality]...”

(Sue, South East Asia)

The quotes above highlight that women found it difficult to talk about their spirituality, and felt more comfortable to disclose such information to someone who acknowledge the role of spirituality in people’s lives. Because of the rapport that I was able to establish with the women they were willing to open up to me regarding their beliefs and practices.

It was evident that two major themes emerged in this study. Firstly spirituality helped women to establish themselves within community and

secondly, spirituality highlighted the importance of relationships in their communities. The church provided women with a space that nurtured and sustained their resiliency as they were able to join coffee groups, church bands and study groups. Spirituality was found to function in both collective as well as individual settings. As mentioned earlier, this section will focus on collectivistic nature of spirituality, while individual spirituality will be discussed in Chapter Two.

This section focusses in the community related concepts of spirituality. Women in this study articulated that finding a spiritual community to belong to was one of the first things they did to strengthen the bonds of their resilience. Locating a church community offered women a communal space in which they can feel comfortable in. In some instances where women joined specific cultural establishments, their church enabled them to nurture relational connections to their home country. Being able to establish relationships with others with shared beliefs in their faith communities strengthened their resilience and their sense of belonging. Heidi joined an Afrikaans church in her town and had the following to say:

In terms of church... It plays such a big role in your life... And *if you immigrate you need to find the perfect church for you... and you need to get involved* and that's what I did...

(Heidi, Southern Africa)

Find a church, *make that a priority...*find a place to [belong], people to share your life with ...

(Kay, Northern America)

Many women spoke about the importance of having a faith community, when asked to explain what was meant by faith community, it became evident that the term embodied a sense of belonging, networking and friendships, this was also found by Blieszner and Ramsey (2003).

The analysis revealed that networking and friendships were key aspects that added to women's resilience in communal spiritual settings. The church was described as a collective space for establishing friendships. These friendships and

connections were generally fostered in what was described as small groups that met regularly, these small groups created an environment where women could connect with other women and process their problems. This relational support aided women resilience as they regularly had opportunities to interact with other women, much like informal therapy sessions. For example, women joined mothers groups and band practices which strengthened their sense of communal support. The church community nurtured their spiritual beliefs that sustained the resilience as it provided on-going psychological support as the people in the group sustain one another. This is not surprising as religion has been found to act as a source of psychological support (Gozdziak & Shandy, 2002). For many immigrants religions aids their identity formation and provides them with a space to gather for emotional as well as material support (Gozdziak & Shandy, 2002). This was evident in the life of Kay who experienced the psychological support that her coffee group provided her.

...that dynamic [parents in law] was very hard and that was something that... *I could talk about and process* with the women in my small group in church or coffee group.

(Kay, Northern America)

...going to church really helps me... I have a Christian group organisation and every week we meet... *it helps me a lot.*

(Maria, South East Asia)

As seen above, attending regular women's groups and coffee groups provided Kay and Maria with a space in which they could verbally process their struggles in a group with friends and receive support from them. It appears that their coping was facilitated in a community setting.

The analysis revealed that communal coping was a significant factor in women's resilience. This study found that worshipping or singing songs of devotion to God in a communal setting can provide women with inner strength. Worship was described by Jasmine and Coral as an opportunity to engage with stress or loss, and release it through the music. Jasmine specifically noted a sense of peace during and after the worship experience, confirming that spiritual coping is often practices to find inner peace, a finding supported by Lee and Chan (2009).

A study done by Lee and Chan (2009) found that although spiritual coping is particularly understudied, it was found to be rooted within values, faith and beliefs of immigrant groups. Religion and spirituality seemed to be a significant factor in providing effective coping strategies for groups of immigrants (Lee & Chan, 2009). A quote by Jasmine illustrates this point:

...we sing songs that are praise songs to God... more recently I heard someone say about how *praise lifts your spirits* ... actually at a very low point I remember doing it and *you feel like you get into a different space*...[Afterwards, I feel]... a sense of *wholeness and a sense of peace*...

(Jasmine, South Asia and Oceania)

Worship or singing songs to God in a communal setting was said to promote a sense of peace. This was evident as Coral who, a member of her church band, went through significant loss due to a series of disappointing fertility treatments. For Coral, worship was a way to express pain, when she did not have the words to communicate her emotions. Coral's approach to coping was not surprising as spirituality was found to be a protective factor as well as strategy for immigrants to cope with life's challenges (Lee & Chan, 2009). It was also found that "emotion and faith are deeply intertwined" and that women's "rich emotional lives are interwoven with and crucial to their spiritual lives (Blieszner & Ramsey, 2003, p. 41). The quote below illustrates how Coral coped with her personal challenges in a communal setting.

Some people can express, inwards exactly all the feelings and the emotions that they are going through and I can't do that. I can certainly do that on the trumpet, I can certainly do that singing, and that is why I do , *it's just literally what's inside of me pouring out* ... sometimes I don't have words, sometimes it's just a line of music, that you just literally coming from an ache within, ...some of it just comes from a *real deep, ache and a real deep hurt, to just be able to express it* ... and you get a release emotionally from being able to express yourself.....quite often [afterwards] there is a peace....

(Coral, Western Europe)

As seen above, Coral participated in communal worship and used it as an opportunity to express her negative emotions. This aided her coping during a significantly difficult time in her life. The present chapter has focused on the communal resilience that immigrant women practise. Although women left their collective cultures, it appeared that they reproduced their communal strategies. It became clear that an essential element that strengthened women's resilience in a communal spiritual setting was their connectedness to others who shared their spiritual and religious beliefs. In some cases, it was evident that women were able to connect with church members who were from their home countries, thus strengthening their sense of belonging. In addition, some women felt that they could contribute to their communities, for example by being in the band and participating in coffee groups, consequently strengthening their sense of belonging and connectedness. Moreover, it was interesting to note that women engaged in physical activities such as singing, playing the guitar or physically visiting the church building to meet with their groups. This indicated that women had a conscious agency and that they made specific choices as to the activities that they engage in. In effect, women were consciously establishing their role identities. It was clear that the church provided a space for support, friendship and belonging. Research has identified multiple pathways to spiritual resiliency, among various factors the most important factor was found to be "rootedness in a healthy spiritual community" (Blieszner & Ramsey, 2003; Ramsey, 2012). Berger (2009) also found that spirituality is used as a coping strategy among immigrant women, enhancing their resilience in immigration related situations such as isolation.

Conclusion. It became clear that the communal roles immigrant women take on such as mother, co-madre, the benevolent feminised role, and the breadwinner along with spirituality and religious beliefs, provided women with coping strategies that enhance their resilience. These roles gave women an identity that promoted social recognition, social connectedness, identity and enhanced mental health, a finding supported by Moen (1997). Role identities have been found to characterises overall identity (Graham, Sorell, & Montgomery, 2004). Women in this study established their identities within their communal roles and drew much strength from the benefits that their role identities offered them. It appeared that women in this study subconsciously established role

identities in order to cope with their sense of alienation as immigrants. They made conscious choices to find co-madre's, go to church and volunteer. It seemed that women established these role identities by means of their conscious agency to create a sense of belonging in New Zealand.

A thought-provoking finding was that all roles related to gender in some manner, the roles were either gender specific or gender neutral. The fluidity of gender roles have been found to be both a source of strength and strain by Littlefield (2004). This study found that the gender-specific role of motherhood was an engine for resilience. Children were central to the resilience of mothers, regardless of culture, context of upbringing and age. Co-madre relationships were utilised by younger women as this provided them with a surrogate mother or older sister especially in cases where the absence of biological mothers were deeply felt. The co-madre relationship was mainly sought out by women from collective cultures. It was a gendered role as it was solely a female to female relationship. On one hand, the benevolent feminised role appeared to be a gender neutral role as women engaged in various capacities of volunteer work which involved interaction across gender lines. Yet, on the other hand, it can also be described as a gendered role as women were 'other centred' and took on caring or nurturing roles. The gendered nature of the breadwinner role was also clear. I observed that eldest daughters, irrespective of age, took on this role, regardless of the presence of a father or brother in their country of origin. This new role was transformative because as women became breadwinners, due to their immigrant status they became well esteemed, respected and looked to for financial support. Another interesting feature of the highly contextualised breadwinner role was that only women from collectivistic cultures featured as breadwinners, highlighting the fact that that women from collective cultures are more group orientated, other focused and take on interpersonal responsibilities rather than focus on individual needs and rights (Dwairy, 2002). The role of the breadwinner has a deeply contextualised meaning in this study as it involves transnational daughters.

I observed that women irrespective of age and culture utilised spirituality in communal settings. Women who participated in this study re-established some of the communal roles that they played in their home countries in New Zealand for example, the role of mother. However, some women also took on new

communal roles that enabled them to build their personal resilience as well as their family's resilience, for example the breadwinner role. Overall, I found that women connected with their children, close confidants, extended family members, community members as well as their spiritual community through the roles that they took on. This in turn enabled them to generate personal resilience.

It was interesting to note that women either took on a surrogate family role such as the role of mother or breadwinner or sought out surrogate family relationships in different areas of their lives such as a "work mum" in their workplace. It was evident that the loss of family motivated women to establish surrogate family relationships within their cultural groups as well as across the host cultures. These surrogate relationships seemed to create a sense of steadiness and security within their immigration environment. A further examination in relation to the age, gender and cultural orientation of these roles will be presented in the final conclusion chapter. This chapter investigated resilience from collective roles such as the role of mother, co-madre, the benevolent feminised role, the breadwinner and the role of communal spirituality and religious beliefs. The next chapter will focus on the individual constructs of resiliency such as individual spiritual practices, paradigm shifts and new identities.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESILIENCE THROUGH INDIVIDUAL CONSTRUCTS

As seen in the previous chapter which focused on resilience through communal roles such as family and extended relational networks, stressful circumstances are often experienced within social groups and coping often emerges as a blending of individual and group efforts. While the previous chapter illustrates that women strengthened their communal roles, it was also apparent that women felt a desire to break away from the communal and explore the individual self. Although this seemed contradictory, the women appeared to feel relieved to break away from communal roles and expectations. This chapter investigates how women coped with significant life events and life problems on an individual level. This chapter focuses on the individual constructs that emerge in relation to how women acquire resiliency and is divided into three sections: a) individual spirituality, b) the emergence of contemporary paradigms and c) establishing new identities of independence and empowerment.

In contrast to collectivism, the characteristics of individualism is the independent and autonomous functioning from 'in-groups'. Personal goals are given precedence over the goals of the 'in-group' and behaviour is primarily based on attitudes as opposed to the norm of their 'in group' (Dwairy, 2002; Triandis, 2001). Traditionally, psychology has focused on individual mastery or coping and its highest value was placed on the emphasis of autonomy and separation over relationality (Riger, 1993). A critical review of the literature related to immigrant women and resilience revealed that individual qualities such as optimism and hardiness are commonly investigated to explore resiliency, often neglecting relational elements. However, some studies are now proving that there is a certain duality in human existence. Concepts of personal agency as well as relationships are no longer viewed as bi-polar opposites or independent dimensions but are seen as co-existing within one person (Riger, 1993). Both concepts of community and individualism have been found to be integral to human wellbeing and well-functioning communities (Riger, 1993). However, as pointed out by feminists the two domains are not equally valued in society (Riger,

1993). Individual mastery or coping is highly valued in society and is usually accepted as success.

I focus on the individual constructs of resiliency because the context of the host country, New Zealand as an individualistic society impacts on immigrant women's post-migration identity construction. Though the definition of what constitutes individualism is helpful, it is limited in its suitability for immigrant women who live in dual realities. I found that immigrant women are able to function within the dichotomy of collective and individualistic world views and sample from both collective and individual constructs to strengthen their resilience. For the women, brought up in individualistic cultures the immigration process seemed to be a smoother transition, whereas the women who were brought up in collective cultures, the transition offered significant challenges. It was evident that women from collective cultures became aware of their individual selves, and began to explore new independent identities that helped them to participate within New Zealand culture. However, the acquisition of independent identities or more contemporary paradigms caused women to experience much tension within their family groups. Clearly the complexity of the dichotomies was often bridged through various means, one of which was individual spiritual practices.

Section One: Resilience through individual spirituality

Individual spirituality is a private aspect of spirituality that builds individual resilience as opposed to the public aspect of spirituality that enhance a sense of community, mentioned in the previous chapter. Women from both collective and individualistic cultures were found to engage in private spiritual practices that enabled them to gain the strength they needed to face life's challenges. The seven women in this sample all dealt with life problems such as conflict with their in-laws, fear of the future, separation from their families and managing major life events without their mothers. It appeared that private spirituality reinforced a sense of calmness and inner peace and aided women to adopt a positive frame of mind, which strengthened their resilience during challenging times, a finding supported by research from Eshet et al. (2012). Individual spirituality took on different forms and was enacted in different ways such as prayer, journaling and meditation. Moreover, spirituality aided women to sustain their inner strength. This section explores how individual spirituality provided women with a sense of security and emotional outlets such as prayer, reflection, journaling and meditation that strengthened their resiliency.

It became clear that spiritual beliefs provided women with a sense of security. Some women felt a sense of divine protection and provision during uncertain times, as immigrants in a foreign country. They relied on God to provide a sense of security as they felt the loss of family who made up their security or support system when all else fails. They relied on their belief in God when everything around them seemed to fall apart. They saw God as having the ability to provide for them and support their survival. This belief gave them a hope to hang on to during hard times, thus strengthening their resilience.

This is well illustrated by Coral, who projected feelings of vulnerability because of the loss of the safety and security that she had experienced with her extended family, who had lived nearby before she immigrated. Coral found that God is her security, someone who is always there for her.

...I know I have a Higher Being that is looking after me, *I am still gonna be okay*, so... you can put your trust in that, so when you don't have your family around you and everything that you know around you, ... *if everything falls apart there is*

still this [God] around you So for us, our faith is quite a big deal for us.

(Coral, Western Europe)

Similarly, Lydia accepted that her inner strength came from her belief in a Higher Being. Because of her past, Lydia, trusted that God would provide for her and her family's survival as she drew from past experiences of God's provision. Similarly, Jasmine's upbringing enabled her to see God as someone whom she could ask for help.

... I was brought up in a Christian-boarding school, so that has convinced my heart *that there was somebody out there who I could ask for help.*

(Jasmine, South Asia and Oceania)

... My strength comes from God... I believe so much in God because *if I look back at what God has done for me, it is just amazing.* Just even to be here, even just back home, my survival even in those hard times, I mean we had hard times but I tell you, it could only have gotten worse without, you know, the Lord *I always get my strength from God because in the end of the day God provides for everything, he has plans for us.*

(Lydia, Southern Africa)

Like Lydia and Jasmine, Sue gained a sense of hope from her belief in God, strengthening her resilience during challenging times.

I have a hope ... God promised us there is a hope in Him. So even I don't see any hope, in near future, in this situation, *I could hang on to the hope that He will bring a few years later...and that helped us a lot.* There are still a few things that we hang on to. And from time to time, there is some discouragement that happens, we have to *remind us of that hope and it will keep us going.*

(Sue, South East Asia)

Likewise, Heidi believed that there was a way out of her distress. She asserted that during some of the most difficult times during her immigration experience, she just had to believe no matter what.

L: What did you believe?

H: That *a better day is coming*...that this too shall pass...

(Heidi, Southern Africa)

For Heidi, it was a sense of belief that her current negative situation will change that brought her through her most challenging moments in her life, which in turn strengthened her resilience. It appeared that spiritual beliefs provided women with a sense of securing, positive thinking and hope. Women also engaged in spiritual coping behaviour that aided their emotional expressions such as prayer, reflection and journaling as well as meditation. Prayer was a manner in which women could unburden themselves emotionally.

Kay, age thirty four, described prayer as an emotional outlet. Her individual connection with God gave her an opportunity to release her negative emotions and unburden herself; this in turn strengthened her resilience.

I would tell God exactly how I felt, I would swear, I would cry I would say, "I want more than this! I want better... relationships, I want healthy things and I am annoyed that that's not happening" And just having that place, that relationship where I could unload.

(Kay, Northern America)

As seen above, Kay's story reflects that a strong connection exists between emotions and spirituality, this has also been found by Blieszner and Ramsey (2003). Similarly Maria, age twenty nine, also utilised prayer as an emotional outlet and allowed herself to cry and pray simultaneously. In addition Maria used prayer as an opportunity to develop courage.

Being a mum ... it's crazy! Honestly and every night I pray, for my baby. *And I also pray for strength, because it's hard.... Sometimes, sometimes I just cry, and of course I always pray...* When I pray for strength I try to keep my mind open that the Lord will not give me strength but he will lead

me in a situation, where in I will develop that strength ...

(Maria, South East Asia)

In contrast to Kay and Maria who processes their emotions verbally in prayer, Jasmine found a quiet and contemplative outlet for her emotions. By engaging in reflective practice as well as journaling women were able to process their thoughts. Consequently, their engagement in these practices allowed them to express their feelings.

For Jasmine, journaling her prayers was a channel through which she could process thoughts, emotions and questions. Journaling did not make her feel better instantly, but was an emotional outlet.

I am very ... reflective person, I am always journaling so [prayer] looks like me saying "Oh God... this situation made me feel bad". I would always trust that He read my journals and He knew... *I think that is the best way of me describing my prayer life is my journals of, of every feeling or that I am going through...*

L: Would you say that it was an outlet for you?

J: Yeah, fully, fully....

(Jasmine, South Asia and Oceania)

Journaling and reflection enabled Jasmine to express her feelings and connect with a Higher Being who she felt knew her and could be trusted with her private thoughts. Jasmine also played uplifting spiritual songs on her guitar in order to regain focus especially during times when she experienced stress and anxiety. She mentioned that it "lifts my spirits" and puts her in "a different space".

Similarly, for Maria listening to spiritual music affirmed her spiritual identity and beliefs; she found this very calming on tough days. The meditation provided Maria with a coping mechanism in order to deal with difficult situations. Similarly, Jasmine experienced a sense of enlightenment and peace as she engaged or meditated on religious literature that addressed her problems.

Reading scriptures and *having a sense of enlightenment or peace* when I read things that were appropriate for the situation

that I was going through.... [I] sing songs [with my guitar]
that are praise songs to God...praise *lifts your spirits ...at a
very low point I remember doing it and you feel like you get
into a different space...*

(Jasmine, South Asia and Oceania)

... there are times when...I had a tough day, I will go to bed
and just listen to spiritual music, it really helps me, *it helps
me... to focus again...* it reminds me of what I should be.

(Maria, South East Asia)

The examples above illustrate that spirituality played a significant role in women's lives not only on a collectivistic level but also on an individual level. This study found that immigrant women engaged in spiritual practices such as prayer, reflection, journaling and meditation as coping strategies during difficult times. These coping mechanisms allowed women to express their emotions and to release their anxieties and frustrations. These strategies may not have helped women to feel better instantly but provided an emotional outlet for them, thus aiding their coping and building their resiliency. Studies done within the field of gerontology and geriatrics by Ramsey (2012), found that a mature and emotionally rich relationship with God has been identified as a pathway to resiliency with older adults. The role of religion and spirituality in improving cognitive and emotional support in migrants tends to be neglected by both researchers and policy makers (Gozdziak & Shandy, 2002). Faith and spirituality has been found to help immigrants cope with the challenges that life offers (Lee & Chan, 2009). It has also been found to aid immigrants dealing with trauma as it provides psychological support (Gozdziak & Shandy, 2002). Moreover, religion and spiritual beliefs has been found to have a stabilising effect on immigrants who deal with transition, hence the importance of spiritual beliefs in coping with transition often extends into the country of settlement (Gozdziak & Shandy, 2002). I found that women regardless of collective or individual cultures engaged in private and individual spiritual practices that aided their coping during very difficult times. A small body of literature supports that spirituality is connected to immigrant women's resilience, this is insightful and can be further explored in

future studies. The next section focuses on how immigrant women draw resilience from entering onto more contemporary paradigms.

Section Two: Resilience from a new paradigm

In striking contrast of the collective element of women's resilience a strong desire for individual agency and wanting to break free from a traditional life is observed. The emerging into a new paradigm presented women with challenges, this offered them the opportunity to break free from a traditional life. This transition involved them realising their voice and having people listen to them. However, it was clear that tensions arose from women's articulation, because of their family's traditional outlooks. This required women to negotiate between different paradigms. Some of the comments made by women in this study elucidate a transition as they stepped into a new cultural paradigm where they had to learn new skills such as voicing or articulating their thoughts, needs and noticing that others will listen to them. In some instances, these skills were learnt out of necessity and surprised women that they could speak up. Women expressed happiness about their personal growth. Their growth however did not come without any consequences and women expressed what seemed to be resistance from family members, due to their new found power of articulation. Younger women from non-western cultures feature strongly within this section. This may be due to their migration to western countries that enabled to step out of rigid traditional gender roles. It may be that these women discovered a sense of self as immigrants outside of their collective norm.

The difficult circumstances that they faced provided them with opportunities for growth; they recognised the need to negotiate between their two worlds. The comments of the women appear to transition between a traditional paradigm and a contemporary paradigm. It seemed as though within a traditional paradigm women were subject to the authority of their parents. Women described their relationships with their parents as "controlled", they could be "scolded", "didn't have the right to answer back", they were used to "being quiet" and having to "please" their parents. However, in a more contemporary paradigm adult women were expected to "say their thoughts", "can do things", "share their knowledge and people will listen", "have confidence" This may be a more egalitarian paradigm, that is perceived by women as less restricted.

For instance, Amanda, who grew up in non-western setting and was familiar with a communal culture, described herself as a quiet and shy person. She

however spoke of having to learn to speak up, in some occasions out of desperation. Amanda experienced personal growth as she was able to gain the necessary skills she needed in a more contemporary paradigm where she had to speak up for herself, thus protecting herself from depressive moods.

... you just gain some characteristics, not because... you are...that person, it just comes with the situation, that... *if maybe you are not a vocal person, people say that maybe, you end up learning to...to voice... otherwise, you will be depressed...*

(Amanda, Southern Africa)

For Amanda it was important to vocalise her needs, especially in difficult situations, this in turn strengthened her resilience. Likewise, Kay confirmed this feeling of having to voice her needs. Kay, grew up in an individualised western culture and described herself as an extrovert. Yet she asserted that she needed to raise her voice in order to be happy. Kay was able to speak up for what she wanted, thus strengthening her happiness. Kay incorporated proactive coping, by speaking up in order to fulfill her needs, thus protecting her happiness and reducing her level of stress.

...sometimes it is awkward and sometimes people misunderstand ... *but if I never voiced what I want I would be miserable.*

(Kay, Northern America)

Similar comments elucidated this experience. Women used metaphors to explain their experiences, such as coming out of a box, a shell, and fighting. In Heidi's case she used the metaphor of a box, to describe the notion of the expansion of a paradigm. By climbing out of her box, Heidi was able to see herself differently, she learnt that she is strong and capable.

... I think it [immigration] helped me to be the person that I am now. There are a lot of things that I *discovered about myself and that I learnt about myself through this whole thing [immigration] and I have become a much stronger person... I think if I had stayed with my family I probably wouldn't have*

seen all those things about me... I just got really stronger, just the personality that I got out of that is just, every time my family says when I go back, I am like another person "...what do you call it? "Klim uit jou boks uit"? (Climb out of your box) Because I was always a quiet person or mostly quiet in my country of origin but when I got here, I had to talk to people.

(Heidi, Southern Africa)

From the quote above it, it appears that a more contemporary paradigm enabled Heidi to expand her worldview and embark on a journey of self-discovery. This journey enabled her to learn more about her personality. She discovered that she has a voice and that she is not quiet. It appears that in this more egalitarian paradigm she encountered situations that required her to step out of her comfort zone. Through her learning she experienced growth and liberation. Heidi noted that she experienced being freed from a constraint, due to living overseas far away from her family and their traditional views. The metaphor of the liberation from a box was reinforced by Lydia who denoted the emergence out of the traditional paradigm, through self-discovery. This emergence enabled her to see beyond the traditional paradigm that she was used to. Lydia acknowledged her need for growth as she realised that she was unable to "see" while she was still in that shell. Once she was able to acquire the skills needed to speak up against the racial discrimination she experienced in her workplace, she was able to "see". Lydia expressed relief after confronting a colleague at work about her offensive conduct and attitude. After the confrontation Lydia felt free, her confidence was boosted because she learnt that she could change a situation that left her feeling oppressed by using her words. She noted that her colleague's negative attitude changed after the confrontation. This encouraged her to be liberated out of the traditional paradigm and to be happy. She no longer felt that she had to quietly endure her colleague's offensive behavior that trapped her in a place of darkness, she spoke up and entered a place of "seeing" where she could be "happy".

... when you discover that you have that confidence [to speak up for yourself against discrimination] it's building up... then you start seeing things... seeing thing is the most important

*thing, but you don't see them whilst you are still in that shell...
because you have got so much that is going on ...but you will
eventually progress... come out of it [the shell], and be happy.*

(Lydia, Southern Africa)

Both Lydia and Heidi's metaphors denote a gradual emergence which enabled them to grow and have more insight into certain situations. In contrast to Heidi and Lydia's gradual emergence into a more contemporary paradigm, Maria noted that her emergence was a stark realisation that she needed to take a strong stand. She needed to adjust from being compliant, shy and quiet to being assertive and fight for what is right for her. This awareness may be due to the considerable adjustment that she had to make, from her upbringing in a non-western environment with communal cultural norms and the need to function within an individualistic western environment. She was able to acquire the new skills she needed to function within a new contemporary paradigm, which in turn strengthened her resilience as a modern-day woman in New Zealand.

*I have no one to protect me, I have to protect myself...for me I
have to fight, not fight like go against them [family in New
Zealand], fight [speak up] for what I think is right for me.*

(Maria, South East Asia)

The metaphors above are symbolic of a newly gained freedom; it is an image of a struggle, and of emergence from a dark and constrained place like a box or a shell that prevented women from "seeing". These metaphors are symbolic of the on-going conflicts that they face as they become holders of the two different paradigms and negotiate between the two dichotomous paradigms. These comments appeared to be rooted in the conventionalities of the family and culture they have come from and demonstrate their emergence into a new society with different conventionalities. Perhaps Maria was able to describe this transition into a new paradigm more clearly due to her cross-cultural marital relationship with a New Zealand citizen and through her experience at the university which required her to express her opinions.

*...I can say now what is in my mind, before then I just keep
quiet...even at work, because you know, people from my*

culture are very polite...and we try, we tend to be quiet... but I have noticed with me, I'm not. If something's wrong I will say it. Even at work, there were times where there were issues at work... I really will make sure that ... I have said my thoughts...I have learnt that I can do things... when I came to New Zealand I was...really shy... but when I went to uni, I learnt these things you know, I learnt that... I can talk...I can share what I think...it made me realise that I can share my knowledge and people would listen.

(Maria, South East Asia)

As seen above, Maria identified that women in her culture are “quiet” and “polite”, however she was also able to recognise that she is different. She asserted that at university she learnt that she “can talk”, that she is knowledgeable and that people can listen to her. The quote above demonstrates Maria’s emergence into a contemporary paradigm in New Zealand where there are less restricted and rigid rules for women compared to the traditional rules set out for her as a woman in South East Asia.

Similarly, Heidi noted that she learnt to do things that are not accepted by her parents, for instance gaining her residency permit with the help of an agent. For her it is a constant struggle, she notes that in some areas she is still submissive and acknowledges her need for adjustment and growth in that area.

I would always give in...Like I am a real people pleaser. So, sometimes, I'm just like “Yeah, I'll do that” ... but I am still...sort of a people pleaser but not in terms of that [being influenced by her parents to return to her home country] anymore.

(Heidi, Southern Africa)

As seen above, Heidi transitioned between a traditional and contemporary paradigm, and was in the process of negotiating her stance in relation to the expectations of her family members. It was clear that women experienced tension as they negotiated between the two paradigms.

More specifically, tensions appeared to arise when women expressed their voices and views. The emergence out of the traditional paradigm was not always received with open arms. Family members of the women resisted the women's transition into apparent unconventional behaviour. For instance, Maria who grew up in a collective culture, experienced conflict with her traditional mother, due to voicing her opinions, something she says she has learnt in New Zealand society. This individual behaviour was interpreted by her traditional mother as being rude and offensive, as Maria was perceived to prioritise her-self over her communal responsibilities.

...my parents are here and for South East Asian... family... parents have the right to scold you... you don't have the right to answer back... you just have to accept it. *But now, here, sometimes I get in conflict with my mum, because, she would say something to me and I will reason out. ... and she doesn't like it. She gets offended because maybe she thinks that I am being rude to her...* [Voicing an opinion] is just something that I have learnt over time here in New Zealand.

(Maria, South East Asia)

Although conflicts with parents' perceptions or traditional paradigms were stressful, it provided women with opportunities for growth. Some women expressed feelings of being much stronger than before they came New Zealand, due to gaining new skills, in particular the ability to voicing their opinions.

L: Do you think that you are stronger?

M: Yes, definitely... Because... I can talk now. I am very shy before... just how I handle myself... *I have confidence that I can do it, yeah that things will work out no matter what, yeah,* before I am very shy and like "Oh, I'm scared..."

(Maria, South East Asia)

However, not all women shared this feeling of being stronger after their immigration experience. For Kay, Coral and Jasmine it was also a very difficult journey. They did not necessarily feel that they were stronger or resilient due to qualifications not being recognised, anxiety and the loss of self-confidence. Coral

who strongly identified herself as a musician, experienced a sense of loss as some of her qualifications as a music teacher were not recognised. It appeared that this loss left her feeling insignificant as she lost a major part of her identity from which she drew her confidence. It seemed that all the women were in different places in their immigration journeys, and that resilience was experienced over different life stages.

... they [New Zealand government] don't recognise the honours of my degree, they don't recognise the teaching qualifications of post-grad, *so I feel a little knocked back*, ...I have found that whole process, having my qualifications looked at, them accepting parts of it and rejecting parts of it *I find that really difficult...*

(Coral, Western Europe)

L: Do you feel stronger?

K: [not sure]... I feel more self-aware ...I can identify things that were making me feel anxious, whereas when it all hit the fan I was anxious ... I know that about myself now. *I just talked about this huge change [immigration] like it was hunky dory but... I struggled and I would think twice before doing it again.*

(Kay, Northern part of America)

... I am not exactly the... person who I would call the boldest or the most resilient or most determined, or know exactly what I want to do... *I do get knocked back...*

(Jasmine, South Asia and Oceania)

As seen above, not all women felt stronger some felt more self-aware and others acknowledged that they felt “knocked back” Kay on the other hand did not feel stronger but became more self-aware⁶. She gained the ability to become an objective evaluator of herself and her behaviour. She was able to learn what her strengths and weaknesses were and became skilled in discerning her emotions,

⁶ Self-awareness is one of the steps towards personality development. It can be described as becoming more aware of one's needs, wants and desires and understanding ones strengths and weaknesses as well as adopting a rational attitude to events around oneself (Kumar, 2010).

more specifically which situations caused her to experience anxiety. On a surface level Kay appeared to be thriving, yet she experienced inner turmoil and revealed that the process of personal growth and discovery has been very challenging. Moreover, Jasmine appeared to compare herself to an ideal of what she perceived to be the highest levels of boldness, resilience and determination. She measured herself against those ideals and concluded that she falls short. This type of upward comparison appeared to lead to lower self-esteem, however it has also been found that upward-comparison⁷ can provide positive instances for self-improvement and achievement (Collins, 1996). It could be that Jasmine, measured herself to an ideal in order to evaluate herself and to improve where possible. From Kay's quote above it is observed that the outcome of resilience is not necessarily triumph. It appears to be a gradual process of trial and error that results in growth.

The women's views did not fall plainly into the traditional paradigm, nor did it show a clear preference for the contemporary paradigm which signifies more egalitarian norms, thus alluding that some women may feel comfortable to be in an inter-paradigm, or liminal space.

Younger women however tended to prefer the contemporary paradigm. The majority of women in this study tended to unconsciously transition between the two paradigms. This phenomenon of duality was also recognised by Berger (2009). She describes duality as "the split between the here and there, then and now, the external and internal world, inside the family and out in the world" (Berger, 2009, p. 188). She found that women had their roots in two cultures, or paradigms as I have described it, hence creating the sense of duality (Berger, 2009). Berger (2009) acknowledges that this experience may become more complicated when the paradigms are conflicting. She acknowledges that some immigrant women live in this duality on a day to day basis. She found that women feel both liberated and intimidated by the experience of duality (Berger, 2009).

The metaphor of a shell opening, applied to the experiences of some women in this study as they felt freed from a constraint. This realisation required much personal growth and was recognised by a process of self-discovery. As the

⁷ Upward-comparison can be described as the comparison of self with the abilities and attributes of others that are better than the self (Collins, 1996).

shell opened up women were able to identify hidden abilities they had to speak up and be listened to, much like finding a precious pearl inside an opened shell. Although the desire for individual agency is in striking contrast of the collective element of women's resilience discussed in the previous chapter it is confirmation that as human beings we are complex and due to such complexity it appears that we contradict ourselves. Building on the notion of stepping into a new paradigm in a more egalitarian society such as New Zealand, it was evident that women discovered new identities. The next section will explore the establishment of new identities of independence and empowerment.

Section Three: Resilience from establishing new identities

This section builds on the previous section that focused on the emergence out of traditional paradigms into contemporary paradigms. This is done by investigating the new roles and identities that women take on in a more contemporary paradigm or liberated environment. This section focuses on the establishment of new identities of independence and empowerment. It became clear that the immigration experience offered women the opportunity to negotiate new identities. Women either constructed new identities in new environments with different rules, re-established and extended their old identities in the new environment or transitioned between the two.

Most women who participated in this study reported having experiences of personal growth. Immigration allowed women to encounter new challenges and allowed them to take on new roles different to the familiar roles that played before their immigration. Women had to come up with creative ways to solve their problems by taking different avenues to what they were accustomed to. Although the women noted that this was a very difficult process, they also expressed feelings of liberation. These experiences of independence and empowerment were captured in ever day life events. The acquisition of new skills to navigate their new found independence seems to enhance their self-confidence, in turn strengthening their resilience. This section will discuss how women discovered independence and empowerment in a contemporary paradigm and the tensions that they experienced between their new and old identities.

Some women in this study discovered their independent identities. For instance, Heidi discovered a new opportunity to be herself, she assumed a new role and identity, very different to the role that she played in her family. Heidi found that she could be there for herself, contrary to the need for community and belonging mentioned earlier.

...In Southern Africa we are so family orientated...I would have still been living with my parents ... and here... there is no mum or dad, *I had to do everything on my own... I don't think I would have gotten that if I was still in Southern Africa.*

Because it is another sort of independence...you know actually moving to another country...

...moving out from my cousins [in New Zealand] was a big one, because then... I could actually stand on my own feet. Because, while I was living with him...I relied on him.... But when I moved out, I was like yeah...it's alright I can do this without you... I can do it without my family... It just made me realise that you can actually be there for your-self; you don't always have to rely on other people... I got really independent.

(Heidi, Southern Africa)

Younger, single women such as Heidi, mentioned above, were excited to arranging their own accommodation, gain driver's licenses, own cars, all which they may not have had the experience of in their home countries. For instance, Heidi added the following:

...I knew that something good was gonna start and I could actually start living and do my own thing... that gave me the chance just to get out...see what life is all about ... grow up....

(Heidi, Southern Africa)

As seen above, Heidi describes her development from dependence to independence. She interprets the rite of passage of growing up as having financial and emotional independence, and is excited about taking responsibility for herself. Similarly, Amanda found her independence in being able to gain a driver's license and own a car. Amanda made the following comment:

I was learning how to drive...by myself...And because it was from, mainly... to drive... to...having my first car... it was... my biggest achievement, my biggest asset! ... Because back home, I would have not dreamt of owning a car...

(Amanda, Southern Africa)

Amanda grew up in a non-western country with collective values in Southern Africa. For Amanda, having a car and license was a sign of autonomy. This was a new found concept compared to her perception of her identity being located within her wider family group. Amanda attributed her possession of a car

as her biggest achievement, focusing on herself as an individual rather than focusing on her communal responsibility to her family. This was not the case for all women who participated in this study. There seems to be a variation in the experiences of western and non-western women's adjustment to an individualistic society such as New Zealand. Kay from Northern America noted that she saw herself as having an advantage because of her ability to speak English and drive.

"I was fortunate... I speak English, I read English... I can see that could be very difficult for others, I could drive... I have those advantages so I used them".

(Kay, North America)

Kay's quote, gives the impression that women from western cultures have an advantage, as their adjustment to New Zealand may not be as challenging compared to women from non-western cultures. However, women from non-western cultures may have a greater opportunity for re-identification in a western and individualistic society. It could be that they develop dual identities broadening their world views. It appeared that this duality presented women with multiple challenges and created tensions within themselves and in their relationships with other family members.

The existence of tension between the old self and the new self was evident in women's stories. Younger women found it exciting to move out from their family home. They learnt how to negotiate the details of their day to day lives, such as accommodation and transportation as independent women. They expressed that "it wasn't easy" and made sure to convey that there were many growing pains involved in their immigration experience without the support of their families. Heidi noted that the thrill has come at a great cost to her, as her parents pressured her to return to Southern Africa, to live with them. She found this especially difficult to cope with during difficult times in her life.

I applied for my visa, I didn't get it and my parents was like "Come home, this is a sign... you need to come home". *I'm like "NO, I'm NOT!"* ...there are other doors around that open... *I got an agent*, he said, yes, he can get it for me... I just felt like this is not gonna keep me... or make me not push

though. I got my agent and I said: “You need to do this for me because *I need this*”. Yeah, and it was really hard for my parents, especially my mum *to think like that... think the same way that I did...*

(Heidi, Southern Africa)

Above it is observed that Heidi’s mother wanted to her to think communally and return home. Heidi however expressed an individual need and desire, she took individual action contrary to what her mother believed was the right thing to do. Heidi noted that it was very difficult for her parents to accept her individuality. She was not the only woman who expressed a need for independence from parents. Women who married New Zealand citizens reflected on their early days as immigrants in New Zealand. They mentioned that being financially and emotionally independent from their parents in law was a relief and improved their marital relationships. Kay and Maria also noted their need for independence as seen below.

... I guess, just getting on my own two feet and *not needing help. Not needing ...my husband’s parents...*

(Kay, Northern America)

... It’s good if you have your own place...we moved to the city...we *learnt to be on our own...* to budget everything because we have no other to depend on...we learnt, we get to know each other more, so, *things are definitely better.*

(Maria, South East Asia)

Furthermore, their new found independent role was also a matter to fight for as they voiced that they have had many intensive arguments with their in laws in New Zealand. Maria and Kay seemed to feel more vulnerable with their New Zealand in-laws, as experts of the country as well as asserting parental control over their sons. Kay found her relationship with her in-laws incredibly difficult and Maria felt the need to fight for what she believed was right for her.

...There was my in-laws, my in-laws which *that’s a whole other story.* Yeah, with my in-laws *that was hard. That was a*

hard time.

(Kay, Northern America)

There were times ... when I would have an argument with Jordan [husband] and his mum would always interfere... I felt ... I have no one to protect me, *I have to protect myself,...for me I have to fight, not flight like go against them, but I have to fight for what I think is right for me.*

(Maria, South East Asia)

As seen above, Maria and Kay both shared experiences of survival, and triumph through the struggles they experienced with their in-laws. It is interesting to note that Kay, from a western upbringing and Maria from a non-western upbringing both express the desire for independence from parental control. Both Kay and Maria wanted to stand on their own two feet and they fought for their independent rights despite conflict. Contrary to Kay and Maria's fights against parental control, Coral found her independence in the absence of parental control. This experience greatly empowered her.

Being a first time mother in a foreign country without the help of her mother and older sister provided Coral with an opportunity to explore her identity and find her own way. She reflected on her family scripting⁸ and realised that as the youngest daughter she allowed others to do things for her, that she could do for herself, "... if I had been in Western Europe, *I would have allowed other people to do things for me that I wouldn't have done for myself...*" This is what Coral had to say about her old role in her family of origin:

.... I was the baby of the family... and the fact that...there is no one to call and say "Oh, this has gone wrong" *I actually had to stand on my own two feet, and just do it, and that was actually really good for me... I was empowered...* I think there

^{8 8} Family scripting can be described by using the metaphor of a drama or family scenes that are part of family life. Within the drama the actors or family members all have specific roles to play (Byng-Hall, 1985). The function of a family script is to provide guidance for action. Many of the family roles are played out without much thought and negotiation and helps the family to function efficiently (Byng-Hall, 1985). It is important to note that "Family scripts link with shared belief systems. The family's experiences will create a set of beliefs about its members and their reciprocal patterns of behavior" (Byng-Hall, 1985, p. 302)

was a part of me that lived my life up to that point and I have to think “What would Jess [older sister] do in this situation?”... *So it was quite empowering for me*, I didn’t have to think how would mum do this, or how would Jess do it... *it allowed me, to become a little bit more me...* I think as the baby of the family the youngest one, quite often *you allow, people to baby you. ... in some ways you are not as independent as you know you can be. So, this has allowed me, it was my opportunity to say actually I can be independent...I can do this*

(Coral, Western Europe)

Coral’s comment, seen above explicates that her family-scrip bestowed upon her the role of “the baby”. Coral’s mother and sister took on the role of the assertive and the responsible women in the family. It seems that the beliefs of Coral as the baby of the family disempowered her to be independent. She was casted in the role of the “baby” who constantly needed help, advice, assistance and assurance. When Coral immigrated and left home so to speak, she realised that she could no longer rely on her mother and sister to help her problem solve. This allowed her to experiment with a new identity. She discovered that she no longer had to take on the role of “the baby” and realised that her new identity is to be “empowered”, “independent” and “a little bit more me”. On the contrary, Sue an older woman was not only able to discover a new identity but ascertained a dual identity.

The analysis revealed that some women were able to establish dual identities. The phenomenon of holding two identities is noted by Berger (2009) who found that identities can co-exist. She recognised the ability to have a “fluid identity” and found that immigrant women demonstrated their ability to join two identities and feel “proud and at home in both” (Berger, 2009, p. 195). This study found that in addition to holding a dual identity, immigrant women also experienced a sense of freedom from their post-migration identities. Sue noted that being an immigrant woman enabled her to discover a post-migration identity that allowed her to be more self- assured. This in turn enhanced her sense of inner calmness and strength. Sue makes a clear separation between her pre-migration

identity and her post-migration identity, suggesting that her immigration has been a liberating experience from familial obligations and expectations.

“definitely *I am stronger*. ... *I feel... I'm okay for who I am...* In South East Asia, I was trying to be somebody I am not... I felt I was expected to be something high and I tried to achieve that one, and I was always pretending... I didn't have peace before, but now, *I know...who I am... I can be who I am*, and nobody can... I don't need to... meet somebody's expectation, and *that makes me feel better and stronger* in my position...and through all the difficulties, I think I... will not be frightened for small things, for now, *I am okay*”.

(Sue, South East Asia)

As seen above, Sue felt liberated from not having to live up to the expectations of her family any longer, she now is free to be herself, and to live up to her individual expectations. It has been found that women's identities can be anchored in familial obligations and expectations (Park, 2009). It has also been found that immigrant women can take on multiple identities enabling them to divide familial expectations and obligations (Park, 2009). This was evident as Sue was able to negotiate her identity in order to divide her obligations to her mother in South East Asia as well as herself and family in New Zealand. This allowed her to have her feet in two places as also noted by Park (2009).

“...when I went back to South East Asia, to see my mum, I went by myself... my mum's friend questioned me, “Are you abandoning your mum? Are you not coming back?” *And I could not answer her*. Probably from her point of view, I am abandoning my mum, letting her to live on her own, and there is no sign of me coming back...to live with her. That is not possible for me to go back to live with her for good, if she becomes sick, I am happy to go home and care for her as long as I can, *but it doesn't mean that I will quit everything here and be with her all the time, I... have life here... So probably, I have to choose, from that point of view, life here, or life over there. And we choose to live here...*

Sue made a choice to live in New Zealand despite the disapproval of her mother. She negotiated a fluid and multi layered identity that allowed her to be

herself in New Zealand and also allowed her to go back to South East Asia and fulfil her obligations to care for her mother. It appeared that having a dual identity enabled her to have the best of her two worlds. However, Sue was not the only woman who experiences liberation of parental obligations, Lydia experienced emancipation from her obligation to be an obedient daughter. For Lydia, the migration experience was an opportunity for growth. She noted that it was a chance to explore a new identity and to gain life experience. These experiences may have been due to her defiance of her father's "control" and disapproval of her immigration to New Zealand.

I remember way back, I applied here [New Zealand] and my father had said, "No, no one is going overseas" *and during that time, our parents had more control over where we would go...*

(Lydia, Southern Africa)

Although Lydia did not reveal the details of her immigration against her father's will, it appeared that as the political situation in Southern Africa deteriorated, her father became more accepting of the prospect of her immigration. Lydia expressed that she grew on a personal level and gained life experience since moving to New Zealand. She took up a different role from her original family scripting, a more independent role as a woman who is no longer subject to her father's control. In contrast to her traditional communal family scripting that casted her as the obedient daughter, Lydia was able to establish a new identity as an independent woman in an individualistic western society.

I can now, compare where I came from to what is happening here, and I have got stories to tell... and I believe that, even if I have to move one day, I am *very confident I am not gonna be the same person, as you know, what I was when I first came to New Zealand.*

(Lydia, Southern Africa)

As seen above, Lydia makes a clear distinction between her country of origin and her life in New Zealand. In contrast to her pre-migration identity, Lydia asserts that in her post-migration identity she is that of being "bold" and

“confident”. This suggests that prior to her immigration and emergence into a new role and identity she perceived herself to be uncertain, and compliant.

As seen in this section, the immigration experience appeared to provide women with the opportunity to explore different roles and identities, also found by Berger (2009). This study found that women discover identities of independence and empowerment in more contemporary countries such as New Zealand, as they stepped out of the traditional role expectations of family and in-laws. It could be that immigration offers women the opportunity to re-cast themselves into different roles such as Coral, Heidi and Lydia or enable women to hold multiple identities such as Sue. It became evident that some women encountered opposition to their desires to be re-casted into different roles to what they played before their immigration. Women had to deal with disapproving parents and disapproving in laws and felt that they had to fight for what is right for them. It is interesting to note that younger women from collective cultures featured strongly within this section, this may be because they are seeking alternative identities within individualistic societies. It is also interesting to note how an older woman like Sue was able to hold dual identities. It appeared that individualism and empowerment were gendered concepts within this context as women from non-western countries felt liberated in New Zealand as they did not have to subscribe to strict gender rules and expectations of women in their countries of origin. A key resilience building component for women across diverse ethnic groups has been found to be exploring gender, ethnic and cultural identities. These explorations have been found to strengthen women’s ability to be resilient in the face of adversity (Clauss-Ehlers et al., 2006). This section investigated the new roles and identities that women took on in more contemporary environments. The following will conclude Chapter Five that focused on resilience from the individual themes.

Chapter conclusion. Within this chapter, I have discussed the individualistic constructs that emerged for women who have located themselves within new identities and contemporary paradigms to that of their collective families. These constructs were individual spirituality, negotiating between traditional and contemporary paradigms, and negotiating new identities of independence and empowerment.

These constructs enabled women to become empowered in an individual sense. This was evident as women dealt with life stress by establishing God as their protector and provider. Women participated in individual spiritual practices such as prayer, journaling and meditation that enabled them to release negative emotional feeling and to refocus themselves. It was interesting to note that spirituality was practiced by younger as well as older women, despite the specific focus of literature on the spiritual practices of older women.

Younger women from collective cultures were also found to step out from the traditional rules projected on them as women. This was mainly done by raising their voices and speaking up for themselves. Some women perceived that the egalitarian paradigm in New Zealand was less restricted. They also learnt that as women they were knowledgeable, articulate and capable. This notion was observed within the second section of this chapter that focused on women's emergence into a more contemporary paradigm.

Building on the concept of living in a contemporary paradigm, it was observed that some women were able to establish new identities of independence and empowerment. It is interesting to note that mainly younger women from non-western upbringing featured in this section, however older women also featured. These independent identities were developed through everyday life events such as finding accommodation and driving. Identities of empowerment were developed by the absence of parental control and new career opportunities.

The tensions that women face between their old selves and their new selves were also discussed. It was observed that women re-established old identities, established new identities or negotiated between the two identities. It was found that women are capable of being comfortable with dual identities. It appeared that the notions of independence and empowerment were gendered in this context. Women were able to establish nonconventional identities in New Zealand a more egalitarian society than in their more traditional countries of origin.

This chapter revealed that immigrant women in this study were able to adapt to their environments and show flexibility as they are able to acquire new skills, practices and identities needed to function in different paradigms. As

mentioned earlier, research has found that there is a link between resilience and identity construction (Clauss-Ehlers et al., 2006). The resiliency process is positively influenced by exploring and learning about ethnic and gender identities (Clauss-Ehlers et al., 2006). The following chapter presents the overall conclusions of this study and comment on their relevance in terms of gender, culture and age. In addition an outline of the limitations and possible directions for future research is provided.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

This research explored the experiences of nine immigrant women in relation to what enhanced their resiliency. The analysis revealed that women's resiliency was enhanced on a collective as well as an individual level. It was found that collective roles such as the role of mother, co-madre, the benevolent feminised role, the breadwinner and communal spirituality had enhancing effects on the resiliency of women at different stages of their lives. It was also found that women cope with significant life events and life problems on an individual level. Themes such as individual spirituality, the emergence into contemporary paradigms and the establishing of new identities of independence and empowerment were found to feature as factor that enhanced woman's resiliency on an individual level.

Immigrant women have been socially constructed in earlier research as vulnerable, and at risk of various mental health problems. Previous research on immigrant women has been criticised for using deficit models, which has led to research that focuses on issues such as psychological disorders, social challenges, and barriers to help-seeking. Furthermore, historically, research on migration was predominantly focused on the experience of male immigrants, such research has been criticised and found to be biased and therefore does not represent female immigration (Ip & Liu, 2008). Henceforth, the experiences of women as immigrants in a patriarchal society have largely been absent in literature (Johnson-Bailey, 2004). In addition, research on immigrant women have been said to use inadequate empirical support and include ethnocentric bias (Buijs, 1993). Therefore, the methodology employed to investigate the resilience of women was integral to the study. It was essential that a qualitative feminist method was employed, as collecting women's stories is a method that enables the realisation of the social experiences of women who have been silenced (Letherby, 2003). Asking the women to share their experiences in relation to where they drew their strength from to deal with the challenges they face as immigrants allowed women to share some insights of their lives.

Key findings and goals. My first objective was to explore the factors that women in this study perceived to either help or hinder their resiliency. The

women's stories about hindering factors to their resilience revealed that the immigration process is stressful and challenging, especially in the early years, as was also found in prevalent research on women's migration (Melias et al., 2012). Women faced challenges as they endeavoured to juggle multiple roles, faced discrimination as members of minority groups, experienced the loss of family support and sacrificed personal goals and aspirations for the sake of their children, findings supported by relevant literature (Casanova, 2012; Moen et al., 1989; Zontini, 2004). However, despite these challenges women noted that the immigration process with all its difficulties provided them with opportunities for development and growth, a finding consistent with literature that suggests that migrants can be resilient and healthy despite immigration related health threats (Berger, 2009; Buijs, 1993). One of the most significant findings of this study was that adversity can lead to growth in the lives of immigrant women. It was found that women who experienced high levels of adversity experienced either substantial levels of personal growth or an enhanced sense of self awareness. However, adversity in itself did not guarantee growth; much of the outcome depended on the way that women respond to adversity as also noted by Maddi (2005). The ability to find meaning and beauty in the midst of difficulty was evident in women in this study. They displayed characteristic of a hardy attitude that suggested that resilience is a positive perception of reality, as pointed out by Maddi (2005). Women in this study were able to structure the way in which they see the world in order to gain the motivation to do difficult things that enabled them to turn disruption into opportunities (Maddi, 2005).

As women endeavoured to overcome the challenges of immigration they discovered transformative pathways to self-actualisation, a sense of purpose, self-worth and of belonging in a new environment. The initial analysis revealed that five key aspect contributed to boosting women's resiliency. These were learning to voice opinions, desires and concerns. Their individual independence was enhanced by having to arrange personal accommodation, purchasing vehicles and moving out from parental dependence and control. Volunteering emerged as a strong factor in enhancing a sense of belonging and contribution in the community which built women's sense of worth and value. Another strong feature that emerged was gaining resilience from surrogate families. Younger women sought out older women as a support system. In addition, it became clear that women

drew strength from their spiritual beliefs, practices and spiritual communities. A deeper investigation of the above findings revealed that women drew strength from two distinct concepts, collective roles and individual agency.

Resilience from communal roles. My second objective was to explore the roles that women took on that enhanced their resilience. I found that women discovered resiliency enhancing pathways through the communal roles that they took up. It appeared that women in this study participated in communal coping, this meant that stressful circumstances were experienced in groups and coping emerged as the blending of individual and group efforts, as noted by Lyons et al. (1998). It has been found that communal coping enhance the resilience of groups dealing with stressful life events (Lyons et al., 1998). The communal coping of women in this study took on the form of roles. These role identities allowed women to have wider access to various components of society which supported their social connectedness, a finding supported by Moen et al. (1989). It was clear that different role identities enhanced women's prestige, power, emotional gratification, social recognition and amplified their sense of identity, also found by Moen et al. (1989). In turn, these roles provided women who participated in this study with a sense of worth and meaning.

A key finding in this study was that the resilience of immigrant women is a seasonal concept. Casanova (2012) acknowledges that women experience resilience throughout their life journey. Women appeared to be resilient in different stages of their lives and did not portray themselves as always being strong, also found by Berger (2009). This was especially evident when women entered new stages of life that offered new challenges such as moving out of their parental homes, being new immigrants, cross cultural marriages, motherhood, and caring for elderly parents from a distance. Each season offered new challenges and offered women opportunities to rise to new levels of resilience. Despite fear, the women prepared themselves to face challenges. It seemed that once they mastered a challenge, they drew strength from their achievements, which fuelled them and gave them confidence to face the next obstacle, much like a cycle of the seasons that we have in our natural world. Some seasons are more difficult than others to endure, however there is anticipation that the next season will offer relief and show what learning and growth occurred during the difficult seasons.

It seemed that immigrant women exhibited proactive coping behaviour. Proactive coping can be defined as the efforts individuals undertake in advance of stressful experiences in order to prevent or to modify it before it transpires (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997). Immigrant women who participated in this study can be likened to a squirrel that instinctively knows that the winter season is approaching and that resources need to be accumulated in order to sustain it. Women in this study recognised potential stressors and actively took steps to safeguard and accumulate relational resources that would help them to cope. These relational resources were their church support groups, community groups where they volunteered, the success and future of their children, mentoring relationships such as having a co-mother and strengthening familial ties with family overseas, as well as empowering extended family members to transform their lives.

In addition to the above findings, immigrant women were found to derive strength from caring roles such being a close friend, volunteer, mentor or co-madre, breadwinners and a member of a spiritual community of care. Women appeared to be able to tap into an internal resource of care and invest their care into different people and areas. Their investment returned benefits such as friendship, belonging, respect, love and admiration. It appeared that women invested love and care in order to receive love and care in return; these relational investments were made and cultivated, and supported women during difficult times. The behavioral expectations associated with caring has been found to be a gendered concept as women are more likely to take on greater levels of involvement and responsibility in caring. Women “are socialised to place a higher salience on role identities related to personal identities than men” (Marks, 1998, p. 953). In effect, this gendered socialisation made women more vulnerable to the negative effects of caring than men (Marks, 1998). A large body of literature suggests that caring can be associated with burden, depression and poor health (Marks, 1998). However, extensive research on the structure of psychological wellbeing has found that both positive and negative dimensions of wellbeing are related, this means that although a caring role may increase worry and distress it may also provide an individual with meaning and pleasure, purpose and personal growth (Marks, 1998). It is evident that caring has consequences for

both “positive psychological wellness as well as psychological distress” and further exploration is necessary in this field (Marks, 1998, p. 953).

Another key finding in this study was that the immigration process empowered women to become agents of change, which in turn enabled them to empower extended family members as the next generation. Women saw themselves as being able to change the destinies of their children, by means of education, a better quality of life and citizenship that provided passports for increased mobility and opportunities in the world. In addition to empowering their children, African and Asian women who were transnational daughters were also able to empower their extended family members overseas by means of funding education. These women derived a sense of worth, accomplishment and purpose from their ability to be agents of change in their families, a finding supported by Zontini (2004). This sense of empowerment enabled women to be resilient in difficult times as they had a reason to journey through the challenges and knew what the purpose of their hardship was. They realised that the return on their investment would be significant in the future of their children and extended family members. The portrayal of immigrant women, more specifically ethnic immigrant women as powerful agents are absent from the literature as the practices of ‘ethnic’ women have been described to be oppressive, henceforth pathologising ethnic immigrant women (Buijs, 1993). A number of white feminists have come under fire for presenting the cultural values of Asian women as oppressive neglecting to take account of them as active agents (Buijs, 1993). Non-white socialist feminist have pointed out to ethnocentrism and lack of understanding of the race and class dimensions of Asian and African women’s lives as well as the diversity of their experience in the diaspora (Buijs, 1993). African and Asian women are commonly and persistently represented as “politically inactive, shy and powerless”(Buijs, 1993, p. 100). Within this study, it was evident that African and Asian women took up the roles of breadwinners, and became agents of change transforming not only their immediate family but also that of their extended community.

Duality and tension. My third objective was to explore the individual constructs that emerged within the stories of the women and to contrast the collective roles and individual constructs. It was clear that immigrant women have

the ability to function within the dichotomy of collective and individualistic world views. As mentioned above women are able to have different communal role identities. Moreover, women also utilised individual coping strategies when facing adversity, which in turn enabled them a certain duality in terms of coping behaviour.

One of the most significant findings of this study was the ability of immigrant women to negotiate new identities in a new society. It has been found that the act of immigration brings about disruption to identities as it transplants women into a new society where they experience unfamiliar class and labels (Park, 2009). The act of migration also brings about a change in women's day to day life and social networks. It is not surprising that immigrant women experience a gap in between their pre and post-migration identities (Park, 2009). Some women experience a sense of social demotion as they struggle to speak English and often don't have their qualifications recognised in New Zealand. In addition women loose important social ties that they had before migration. However, immigrant women meet the challenge of perceived social demotion and up rootedness with resilient strategies to rebuild and renegotiate their identities (Berger, 2009; Park, 2009). Identity re-negotiation provide immigrant women in this study with opportunities for emancipation from their pre-migration identities. It became clear that women from collective cultures renegotiated their communal identities and integrated individualistic identities, creating dual identities. As mentioned earlier, duality can be described as "the split between the here and there, then and now, the external and internal world, inside the family and out in the world" (Berger, 2009, p. 188). Discrepancies between such dichotomies can be confusing and painful even if one moves from restricted to more egalitarian norms (Berger, 2009). However women can make meaning from dual identities and benefit from it (Berger, 2009).

Some women from collective cultures, became more aware of their individual selves, and began to explore new independent identities that helped them to participate within New Zealand culture. The acknowledgement of the self as important and distinct from a group offered women a pathway to coping on an individual level. They were able to discern that their ideas, opinions and identities can be different from that of a group. The self, as a separate entity to that of a

group, appeared to be an emancipating experience for women. Berger, (2009) found that immigrant women are fast-adapters and can transition between divergent identities and paradigms according to the context they find themselves in. This capability to hold multiple identities and to adapt to different environments permitted women in this study to function within the complexity and duality of their lives, enabling them to be resilient to face challenges, a finding also supported by Berger (2009).

Although women were able to function within their dual identities, they also experienced tension between their collectivistic values and the individualistic values. These tensions created significant stress for women. However despite the subsequent stress, women yielded positive benefits such as personal growth and liberation. This phenomenon is described by Carver (1998) as a resilient characteristic. Tension was evident in women's relationships with family members such as parents, in-laws and daughters. This dynamic revealed that the tension existed mainly between the different generations of women. Some women who participated in this study experienced a resistance to their individual values from women or family members from an older generation. It appeared that immigrant women from more conservative communal backgrounds encountered resistance to their autonomy from traditional parents. This resistance was expressed specifically when women articulated their views, opinions or made decisions contrary to the wishes of their family.

However, although women sought to strengthen their independent resiliency by making autonomous decisions they also sought to strengthen their collectivistic resilience by joining community groups and finding "co-madres" who acted as surrogate mothers to them, the notion of a "co-madres being like family is supported by Silverstein (2013). Women also found strength in playing the breadwinner role and providing for extended family, negating their desires for independence, a finding supported by Zontini (2004). There seems to be somewhat of a contrast between the desire to draw strength from a collectivistic sense of wellbeing as well as drawing strength from an individualistic sense of wellbeing. It appeared that women were able to function within the dichotomy of their values, enabling them to embrace a duality. It seemed that women positioned themselves on different continuums in relation to their independent values and

their collectivistic values. They were able to move themselves along the continuum, depending on their environment.

A difference was observed in the roles that younger and older women took on in order to enhance their resiliency. It was evident that younger single women, without dependent children gained strength from employment that they perceived as meaningful. This work enabled them to gain a sense of purpose and gave them the ability to achieve upward mobility and status. Their achievements created a sense of optimism which boosted their resiliency. Although older women may have also experienced work as a source of resilience, they did not mention this in their interviews. Resilience has been found to increase as individuals find meaning and purpose in their employment, this in turn enhances job satisfaction and a sense of fulfillment (McEwen, 2011). It could be that younger single women without children realised that they have opportunities to reach their professional goals and derive satisfaction from meaningful work as opposed to deriving a sense of fulfillment from a more traditional role as a mother.

In addition, it was found that independence played a significant role in younger women's lives. Women in their late twenties and early thirties from communal cultures, experienced the liberation from moving out of parental homes and finding independence in everyday life situations. However, juxtaposing the notion of independence, younger women from communal cultures expressed a strong desire to establish surrogate families in New Zealand. They specifically sought out co-madre relationships that enabled them to establish strong female bonds with other women. Women from communal cultures connected with co-madres from the cultures in which they grew up in. It was evident that their need for extended surrogate family was deeply felt as the immigration experience can leave an individual feeling stripped of close family ties. Women from communal cultures had a more fluid concept of what family is and found it easier to adopt surrogate family members in New Zealand. In contrast, women from more individualistic culture had more specific definitions of what constitutes as family and as friends. There appeared to be a greater separation between the two concepts which inhibited some women from establishing intimate connections. Literature specific to the establishment of surrogate family in relation to the

immigration context was difficult to attain, which suggests that this may be an area for further investigation.

On the other hand older women appeared to be able to function in their dual identities with less distress than their younger counterparts. This could be due to a level of maturity that younger women have not attained yet, or it may be due to being more passive during conflicts. Although older women experienced the expansion of identities, the emergence into more contemporary paradigms was less prominent. In contrast, it was found that younger women from more communal cultures expressed strong interests in establishing themselves within a more contemporary society such as New Zealand. New Zealand may have been considered as a less restricted environment where younger women experienced less constrained gendered expectations. The contrast between traditional and contemporary paradigm was more strongly acknowledged by women from communal cultures.

Role and gender identities. The role of breadwinner featured strongly among women from communal cultures. This may be due to the different conceptualisation of family and responsibility towards family in western and non-western countries, a finding supported by Thai (2012). The role of breadwinner enabled women from communal cultures to become the matriarchs of their families as this role enabled them to be well esteemed and rendered women as powerful by family members back home, a finding supported by Zontini (2004). The role of breadwinner was transformational as a traditional role of provider usually played by a male was taken over by a woman.

Motherhood was a significant source of resilience and appeared to be a unifying experience for women regardless of age and culture. Women gained resilience from their roles as mothers, this finding was supported by research that found that motherhood is a source of power (Berger, 2009). It has also been found that children's role as protective factors may function as an advantageous mechanism to strengthen women's resilience in diverse contexts (Brodsky et al., 2012). Furthermore, the role of benevolence was significant for women. The benevolence role appeared to be an 'other centered' role as well as a caring role, this role was evident among women of different ages and cultures and appeared to strengthen women's wellbeing. This finding is supported by research asserts that

benevolence beliefs are important for wellbeing (McEwen, 2011; Poulin & Cohen Silver, 2008). This study found that altruism or selflessness lies at the heart of a women's role and personal needs can be contented by means of satisfying the needs of others, a finding supported by (Browner and Lewin (1982); McEwen, 2011).

It appeared as though the roles that women took on were either gender neutral or gender specific. The role of mother and co-madre for example are very gender specific as it involved only female relationships. The role of breadwinner was also a gender specific role that enabled women to be empowered as they took on a role that traditionally was reserved only for men. In some cases women broke out of the molds of traditionalism and emerged into more egalitarian roles in New Zealand society.

By presenting the resilience of immigrant women through collective roles and individual identities, I challenged the notion of immigrant women as being vulnerable and at the risk of mental health, isolation and displacement, as portrayed within the literature. I have highlighted the tensions that arose for women as they moved between their collectivistic roles and their individualistic identities. These tensions were evident in the resistance that family members projected towards women and their new individualistic identities. Women were able to function in the duality of their collectivistic self as well as their individualistic self, thus enabling them to draw resilience from multiple sources in different contexts.

Contribution of this research to key theoretical and conceptual issues.

This research challenges western perceptions of resiliency that is rooted in individualism. This is done by revealing the communal elements of resiliency, such as the gendered roles that immigrant women take on that enhance their resiliency. As outlined within the literature review, the resiliency models *Responses to adversity: the domain of possibilities* by Carver (1998) and *Metatheory of resilience and resiliency* by Richardson (2002) neglects to recognise the importance of gender identity as well as the collective elements within human resiliency. This study challenges the applicability of the above models to the lives of immigrant women in New Zealand, and has found that the notion of gender identity, community involvement and relationships are key

elements to the resiliency of immigrant women, as also found by Clauss-Ehlers et al. (2006). This study also suggest that the third wave of resiliency enquiry by Richardson (2002) could be extended to include aspects from collective cultures, such as the importance of extended relationships and extended networks as well as gender identity as motivations for driving a person forward.

This research confirms the model of coping and resilience by Eshet et al. (2012) and adds that immigrant women in this study utilised three main coping modes. a) It was found that immigrant women in this study relied heavily on a social mode of coping. It was clear that they obtained their support from belonging to a group, being part of an organisation and having a task or role to play. b) Immigrant women in this study utilised beliefs and values as a model of coping. They relied on their religious beliefs and spiritual practices to provide them with opportunities for communal coping. Women also relied on their personal spiritual practices to strengthen them during difficult times. c) Immigrant women also relied heavily on affective modes of coping, by establishing close co-madre relationships. These relationship enabled them to employ an emotional coping mode to express themselves by talking with a surrogate mother or sister about their feelings. Some women also engaged in non-verbal methods of emotional expression such as meditation and journaling.

Limitations. Limitations exist in all methods of collecting and interpreting data (Berger, 2009). The method that I used for this research is not exempt from that fact. The feminist qualitative approach is useful as it is able to inform us of the distinctive aspects of immigrant women's experiences of migration and resilience. It however lacks the ability to look at the specific experiences of women from specific contexts as it groups together immigrant women from diverse ethnic, social, cultural and political backgrounds (Berger, 2009). Ethnographic research would be better suited to gain such specific information as it focusses on exploring in detail a particular group or culture from the perspective of someone who are part of the group or culture (Berger, 2009). An example would be, studying the immigration experience of Spanish, Dutch or Lebanese women and so forth. However, such a method may fail to reveal the commonalities such as gender specific aspects of immigration that surpasses cultural background (Berger, 2009). In addition to the above limitation, utilising

in depth interviews limits the practicality of collecting data from a large amount of women which in turn limits diversity (Berger, 2009). This study included women who migrated in various ways; some by themselves, others with their families, some to marry cross culturally and others for procreation. The women interviewed in this study were all women who generally ascribe to Judeo Christianity, therefore the findings cannot be generalised to women who have other or no religious affiliation. A further limitation of this study is that it did not include participants from different sexual orientations. At the time of interview women interviewed all had tertiary education and seemed to be financially secure. This study appears to be representative of middle class immigrants.

Possibilities for future research. This research has revealed several new pathways to resilience in an urban New Zealand context. This research was conducted within an urban area where women could access friendship and community organisations. Future research could explore resiliency pathways that women access in rural areas with small populations, perhaps limiting friendships and involvement in large community groups.

A significant finding, among mothers in this study was the protective role that children played, thus strengthening their mothers' resilience. Little research has been done to investigate the phenomenon of motherhood resiliency among immigrant women. Future research could examine this notion more in-depth and explore how mothers and children can be better supported through the immigration process.

In conclusion, I sincerely endeavoured to capture the women's stories in a respectful manner, where historically their status as resilient women has been taken for granted. It is my hope that the findings of this research on resilience will encourage researchers to incorporate a strengths perspective when exploring the complex lives of immigrant women. My hope is also that this thesis will inspire people to challenge stereotypical discourses as they consider the lives of immigrant women.

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APPENDIX ONE: RECRUITMENT MATERIAL

Bulk e-mail to friends

Dear friends

Hope you all are doing well. As some of you may know I have embarked on some further study this year. For my study I am designing a research project. I know this may sound boring, but I am lucky enough to be able to design it according to my own interests and experiences. This makes it worthwhile!

So, I have decided to look at my personal experiences as an immigrant woman in New Zealand. I have designed my study to ask other immigrant women such as myself where they have been able to draw their strength from in order to adjust and live life in New Zealand.

I would like to invite you all to participate in the study. I will be very easy, and only require a one on one conversation between us, that I will record with your permission.

If you would like to find out more about the study, just click on the attachment to this e-mail and if you are interested to be part of the study, you can respond to this e-mail and let me know.

Take care

Lucinda

APPENDIX TWO: INFORMATION SHEETS FOR IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN NEW ZEALAND

Hi there, my name is Lucinda, I am originally from South Africa. I have been living in New Zealand for the last nine years. I'm a Masters student doing a thesis in Community Psychology at the University of Waikato.

In my time in New Zealand I have had to go through a lot of transitions before I really felt like New Zealand was my home. There were many ups and downs in my journey. My experience as an immigrant woman has been a very valuable one.

I often wonder how immigrant women such as myself do it.

Where do we find the strength to go through challenging situations? That is what my study will focus on. Resilience is the ability to bounce back or recover from difficult situations and change. I would like to find out where immigrant woman, like myself, draw their strength from.

What will we talk about?

I will ask you to share your stories about different times in your life when you had to deal with the challenges of being an immigrant woman and how you managed to take care of yourself during those times.

What will it involve?

You will be involved in an interview which is a discussion between you and me. This will last for approximately one and a half hours. Our discussion will be recorded, and we will meet at a time and place that suits us both.

What will happen to my information?

Our discussion will be recorded. The recording will be kept secure and confidential. Copies of transcripts from the interview will be sent to you to view via e-mail after the interview. You are welcome to make comments and changes or remove any information you want to have taken out for up to two weeks after I have sent out the transcript to be checked by you. I am currently doing my Masters in Community Psychology at the University of Waikato and the interview will provide the basis of the written report of the research.

Will readers know who I am?

To protect your privacy, all identifiable information such as your name or any other identifiable information will be kept anonymous.

What are my rights as a participant in this research?

The right to refuse to answer any particular question(s)

- The right to ask any questions about the research that come to mind during your participation in the research.
 - The right to withdraw any information that you have provided up to two weeks after receiving the transcript.
 - The right to withdraw from the research at any time without question up to two weeks after receiving the transcript.
 - The right to access any information about yourself that I have collected.
- The right to complain if you feel your trust has been abused. (You can contact the convenor of the Research and Ethics Committee Dr Nicola Starkey Ph: 07 838 4466 ext. 6472 E-mail: nstarkey@waikato.ac.nz)

There are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers – I am interested in hearing about your experiences as you want to tell them.

Because this may be a sensitive topic for some it may be a good idea to plan an enjoyable activity after the interview. You are also very welcome to bring a supportive friend along.

Please note that I will be asking you to share about your personal life and that there is a possibility that you may feel upset. Please carefully consider this before volunteering to take part in the study. If our discussion brings up any issues that you would like to discuss further, counselling services are available at Rosetown Counselling Centre.

Please also note that you have the right to decline to be interviewed.

Phone: (07) 871-3977 all hours for appointments, ask for Emily Yeh

Community Helpline Freephone 0800 211 211 and ask for Rosetown Counselling Centre

Text them on 021 203 6354

Fax: (07) 871 3907

General enquiries, appointments and accounts

reception@rosetowncc.org.nz

What if I change my mind?

You have the right to withdraw from the research at any time up until you have checked and approved your transcript of the interview.

What if I have other questions?

If you have other questions, please feel free to contact me or the following supervisors:

- Dr Cate Curtis: Senior Lecturer, Deputy Chairperson & Convenor of Graduate Study
Ph:+64 7 838 4080 ext 8669

E-mail: ccurtis@waikato.ac.nz
- Dr Rachel Simon-Kumar: Senior Lecturer, International Student Advisor
Ph:+64 7 838 4080 ext 8255

E-mail: rachelsk@waikato.ac.nz
- Dr Nicola Starkey (Convenor of Psychology Research and Ethics Committee) for any ethical issues in this study or if there are any ethical issues in this study you feel need to be raised.
Ph: 07 838 4466 ext. 6472

E-mail: nstarkey@waikato.ac.nz

If I want to be involved, what do I do next?

If you want to be involved, you can phone or text me on 027 327 0720

or e-mail me at lv12@students.waikato.ac.nz so we can arrange a time for an interview.

Please feel free to ask me any more questions you may have about the research.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Lucinda

APPENDIX THREE: QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION SENT TO WOMEN BEFORE INTERVIEWS

Questions

1. Can you give me an example of a good time in your life here in New Zealand? Why was it so good?
2. Can you think of times where you faced difficult situations in New Zealand as an immigrant woman? Now looking back, what do you think would have helped you to make it easier?
3. What do you think the most important things are that made you feel better during hard times?
4. What qualities or attributes do you think is important for immigrants to have in order to cope well with settling into New Zealand?
5. If a friend of yours immigrated to New Zealand, like you did, what advice would you give her when she is going through a hard time, to make her feel better / happier?

APPENDIX FIVE: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

An investigation of the resilience of immigrant women in New Zealand

Introduction:

In the initial stages of the interview I will engage in small talk with interviewee/s and explain the research project. I will also:

- Explain the overview of the interview structure.
- Explain the intention of this research: to investigation of resilience factors of immigrant women in New Zealand.
- Inform the participant of my personal experience as an immigrant, and how this has shaped the research question.
- Ensure that interviewee/s have understood the theme of this research.
- Explain the measures that the researcher will take to protect interviewee/s: use of pseudonyms; omitting or disguising names and any other identifying information.
- Inform interviewee/s that they will have an opportunity to review a draft transcript of the interview and that the researcher will use it only if interviewee/s approves it.
- Inform interviewee/s that they do not have to answer any questions if interviewee/s do not want to, that interviewee/s can end the interview at any stage and that interviewee/s have the right to withdraw from the research at any stage up until interviewee/s have checked and approved their transcript of interview.
- Inform interviewee/s that interviewer will reconfirm their participation for the research after interviewee/s has checked their transcript of interview.
- Gain consent for the interview to be audio taped and the verbal consent to be audio taped.

Profile questions:

- How long have you been living in New Zealand?
- What country did you immigrate from?
- Did you immigrate by yourself or as a group?
- Do you have any children? If any, how many?
- May I ask what your age is?
- Have you immigrated before?
- What was your main reason for immigrating to New Zealand?
- Who was the principle decision maker to immigrate to New Zealand?
- Who do you live with?
- What is your occupation?
- Would you like to receive a summary of the findings of this research? If so may I have your contact details?

Main interview questions:

1. Did your life change when you immigrated, if so, how?
2. For some people, life as an immigrant can be challenging at times. Can you tell me a story about a difficult time in your life as an immigrant? What did you do during that time to restore yourself? What gave you your strength in that time?
 - What did you do / believe / feel / access that helped you?
 - Why did you think you were able to do those things?
 - What was helpful to you in that situation? Why do you think it was helpful or not helpful?
3. Can you tell me a story about a challenging time in your life, where you found it difficult to draw strength from anywhere, what made it so hard for you, what stood in your way?
 - Why do you think it was so difficult to do / believe / feel / access those things?
 - You have mentioned (i.e., caring for your parents and children) as being a problem, could you tell me more about this?

- Could you expand on that?
- 4. Can you tell me a story about a really great time in your life; why do you think it was so good for you?
- 5. What key aspects in life do you find gives you courage and strength in your life (for example, friends, spirituality family, personality)?
 - How did you find out that it was helpful?
 - How do they / it offer you support?
 - Why do you find that to be so supportive?
- 6. Is there anything that could make being an immigrant woman easier for you?
- 7. Where do you see yourself in five years-time? What do you think will help you get there?

Recommendations:

- 8. If you had your time over again, what, if anything, would you do, differently?
 - What advice would you give other immigrant women, about recovering from challenging times in their lives?
- 10. What do you think are the key sources from which immigrant woman draw their strength from?

Closing:

In this part of the interview, the interviewer will:

- Check if there is anything else the interviewee/s wants to add.
- Negotiate safe and convenient arrangements for reviewing the transcripts of the interview.
- Ask permission for further communication opportunities in order to clarify comments made during the interviews or in order to receive more information from interviewee/s.

I will talk the participants through their interview experience to minimise the risk of any ill effects, I will ask the participant if they feel ready to go on their way (Curtis & Curtis, 2011).

APPENDIX FOUR: VERBAL CONSENT INFORMATION

Verbal consent to be audio recorded

I have received an information sheet about this research project and the researcher has explained the study to me. I have had the chance to ask any questions and discuss my participation with other people. Any questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in this research project and I understand that I may withdraw at any time. If I have any concerns about this project, I may contact the convenor of the Research and Ethics Committee (Contact details provided in information sheet).

APPENDIX SIX: INTRODUCING THE WOMEN.

A total of nine women took part in this study. What follows is a description of the nine women.

Heidi

Heidi is a single woman who immigrated by herself from Southern Africa approximately five years ago. She moved to New Zealand to secure a full time working position and to live in safer environment. Initially she moved to New Zealand to visit her extended family, and to scout out any prospects of employment. To her and her family's surprise, she secured employment and decided to stay in New Zealand against her family's wishes. Heidi describes her immigration as an opportunity for personal growth and as a journey into independence. She firmly established herself within her cultural and faith community which helped her when she faced some significant relationship problems with friends and what appeared to be symptoms of depression. Heidi has now moved back in with her mother and father in her country of origin, due to her parent's continuous requests for her to return home. However, she is grateful for her experiences in New Zealand. She keeps her future options open, as she now has a New Zealand passport which makes her more mobile.

Coral

Coral immigrated from Western Europe about seven years ago with her husband while she was pregnant. They immigrated as part of an employment scheme, and always wanted to immigrate as a couple. Some of Coral's most significant challenges in New Zealand have been facing several rounds of unsuccessful fertility treatment. She and her husband have decided to discontinue the treatment, and she is now transitioning into the workforce after her time invested as a stay at home mum. She grew up as the youngest member of her family and describes her immigration process as an opportunity to become more independent, especially after managing being a first time mother without the help of her mother and sister. She describes herself as a determined woman with a strong sense of resolve. She is involved in various music communities in her town and enjoys volunteering in various capacities. She is now embarking on the new

challenges that her career holds in store for her despite some of her qualifications not being recognised in New Zealand.

Amanda

Amanda is a single woman who immigrated from the Southern Africa, approximately six years ago. She trained as a health care provider and came to New Zealand with a group who had found employment through an agency. Her decision to immigrate to New Zealand was highly influenced by the perilous political conditions of her country of origin. She describes her immigration to New Zealand as ‘quite lonely’ but sees the benefit of her being in New Zealand as worth the separation from her family. As the eldest daughter in her family she contributes to the educational costs of her two siblings. She is proud of herself for being able to break the “poverty trend” in her family. She is achievement orientated and speaks of her immigration experience as an opportunity for gaining her independence. She is currently working full-time and is upgrading her qualifications, and has plans to move to abroad in future.

Kay

Kay first came to New Zealand as a tertiary student for one year, and returned to her country of origin upon completion. During her study in New Zealand she met Jordan. He later came to visit her in Northern America and they eventually married. When Kay unexpectedly became pregnant two years later they decided to immigrate to New Zealand in order to secure a safe lifestyle for their growing family. Kay is determined to provide her children with the childhood she never had. They have been living in New Zealand for seven years. Kay completed a degree and has devoted her time and energy as a stay at home mum to her two young sons. Kay is heavily involved in the lives of her children as well as in different parenting communities. She is the initiator and leader of a community action group for parents. Her main struggle in immigration was being a first time mum without having the support from her family and having some significant relational problems with her in laws. Being firmly established in her faith community and accessing the help of a mentor helped her during this time.

Marissa

Marissa immigrated about seven years ago from South East Asia with her two daughters. They joined her husband who initiated the move to New Zealand and immigrated a year earlier. Her husband then moved to Australia to pursue a better income while Marissa stayed in New Zealand for the education of their daughters. Marissa, sacrificed her career to provide her daughters an opportunity to be educated in New Zealand. She now works in the health care sector and is very proud of her daughters who are “very studious”, with about to graduate as a doctor. Marissa is well known in her cultural community as a caretaker of newcomers. She gains happiness from being able to financially support the education of her extended family back in South East Asia, regardless of the overtime she puts in at work to do so. She is a very well respected member of her family back home and draws strength from the fact that she is making a positive impact of the lives of her family members.

Jasmine

Jasmine is a single woman, who moved to New Zealand eleven years ago to join her family after the completion of her studies in Northern America. She grew up, in various parts of the world (Africa, Oceania and South Asia,) due to her father’s transitional occupation. She describes herself as not having a clear identity in terms of where she is from, as she has lived in different places during her upbringing. She has been heavily involved with voluntary work within various international groups, and cross cultural studies and enjoyed working in a supportive working community while in New Zealand. She is deeply spiritual and describes herself as a very reflective person. Her hardest time in New Zealand was related to the breakup of a significant friendship that resulted in her feeling isolated from her community. During that time she gained her strength from her family members, and spirituality. She is currently living abroad with her sister and embarking on a new life working for a cause that she feels passionate about.

Maria

Maria met her New Zealand husband on an internet dating website while back in her home country in South East Asia. They visited each other back and forth and eventually Maria was persuaded to move to New Zealand and they married. She has lived in New Zealand for about six years. In those years, she completed her studies at the university, became a first time mother and now has a position in a prominent organisation, and profession that she is very proud of. Her most challenging times in New Zealand were missing her family and going through significant life events, without the support of her family, to whom she is very close. Another challenge was learning and growing together as a couple in a cross cultural marriage. Her relationship with a mentor and close friends from her cultural community helped her during those times. She described her immigration experience as an opportunity for growth, especially her New Zealand university experience, as she is now able to speak up for what she believes in and what is right for her.

Lydia

Lydia immigrated five years ago from the Southern Africa, as a health care provider who found employment in New Zealand through an agency. She initially moved as a transnational mother, (without her husband and five children), to secure employment and organise immigration paperwork on the behalf of her family unit. This was a very challenging time for her as she was separated from her family for one year. Lydia felt the heavy responsibility of creating a new life, where her children could gain the education that she so highly prize for them. Lydia's most challenging time in New Zealand was being separated from her family and facing discrimination in her place of employment. For Lydia, her strength and focus come from creating a better future for her children. She is very proud of her children, especially her two daughters who are enrolled at university. She has been promoted in her job and recently purchased a property and is working hard, to provide stability for her family.

Sue

Sue immigrated with her husband and two young children from her home country in South East Asia. Their hopes were to live a slower paced life and enjoy the perceived lifestyle that New Zealand had to offer as well as establish a small business. Sue's husband made the immigration decision, and Sue often second guessed his decisions which lead to marital tension as well as tension within their co-owned business. The early years of their immigration were very difficult as they had limited English and were isolated as they ran a struggling business from home. Sue and her husband found a purpose in being in New Zealand. According to Sue having a sense of purpose changed her outlook on life in New Zealand and improved her relationship with her husband and they found comfort and support from their faith community. Sue describes herself as a hopeful person and says that she always hangs on to hope despite what her circumstances may look like. She is involved in her wider community and reflects on her immigration journey as being a journey of becoming stronger, much stronger than she was before.

Lucinda (Researcher)

My interests in the resilience of immigrant women stemmed from my personal experience as an immigrant woman myself. I left my country of origin, South Africa when I was 19, due to the increasingly unsafe environment that I found myself in, as well as limited educational and work opportunities. I made my way to America, where I worked as a full time in home childcare provider for a wealthy family. This experience opened my eyes to a different world that existed beyond that of complex context of post-apartheid South Africa. My contract as a nanny was only 12 months long, but my mind started to wander, and I dreamt of a different life. After my contract finished, I immigrated to New Zealand, to join my father, mother and sister who immigrated six months earlier. My dream to go to university was realised and I encountered many different views to what I was accustomed to in my home country. I slowly became aware of restricted life that I led in South Africa. The opportunity to immigrate and to attend New Zealand University offered me an opportunity to discover a new reality and to identify with different views. This enabled me to realise that I have a voice and I can express my opinions. My journey of immigration has not been an easy one as it has been filled with the tension of belonging and displacement, the new me and

the old me. But my journey has been an opportunity for growth it strengthened me and has broadened my horizons. In many ways, my journey parallels the struggles and triumphs of the women represented within this study.