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SOCIAL INCLUSION AND PROFESSIONAL FEMALE MIGRANTS IN MULTICULTURAL AUSTRALIA

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A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy

Faculty of Education and Social Work

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

This is to certify that:

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Abstract

The goal of the thesis is to scrutinise the experiences of professional female migrants in Australia. The study was undertaken in the context of the emergence of a policy focus on 'social inclusion' and 'social exclusion' in Australia and elsewhere and in the context of renewed debates in Australia about multiculturalism. *Social inclusion* refers to a policy focus on enabling the full participation of citizens in the life of the nation, including economic, social, cultural and political participation (Gillard & Wong, 2007). In turn, *social exclusion* refers to a policy focus on identifying and addressing groups whose participation is constrained, often measured along the dimensions of consumption, production, political engagement, social support and cultural life (see for example, Burchardt, Le Grand, & Piachaud, 2002; Richardson & Le Grand, 2002). This research is interested in testing the relevance of these frameworks for understanding and addressing the experiences of professional female migrants in multicultural Australia.

The thesis involved a study of twenty professional female migrants living in Sydney who participated in in-depth interviews. All respondents belonged to a highly skilled occupational group and a prerequisite was that they held a primary professional qualification before migration to Australia. Participants, who were from both English speaking and non-English speaking backgrounds provided detailed narratives of their lives and experiences since migration to Australia, and these narratives provided a window into the specificities of professional female migrants' perceptions of moving to Australia, settling in Australia and 'belonging' in Australia. These insights add to the body of knowledge on migration and social inclusion and exclusion.

The research found that the relevance of the dominant social inclusion framework for analysing their migration and settlement experiences is only partial: this is because of the prioritisation of economic participation as a route to social inclusion. The social inclusion framework, consequently, fails to recognise the cultural dimension of social inclusion by assuming that social inclusion in multicultural Australia can be achieved and maintained through the active economic participation of Australian citizens. In addition, the study found that the dominant social inclusion policy framework does not recognise an important aspect of professional female migrants' identity: transnational relationships and transnational

belonging. In terms of the specificities of professional female migrants' experiences, the thesis proposes a structure for talking about differences in experiences of inclusion that uses measures such as participation in paid work, either in mainstream or in ethno-specific workplaces; participation in social life, either in or in and beyond their own ethnic community; self-perception of being, or not being, included - a dimension that was often based on whether or not they experienced racism. Based on these factors, women's experiences could be categorised as varying between deep, borderline, marginal and shallow inclusion. The thesis also finds that although social inclusion does not equal assimilation or a transition from being a migrant, social inclusion is possible in the context of ethnic and cultural differences.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Reflecting broad changes in women's social and economic lives, women around the world have been migrating more in recent decades and, as a result, have constituted an increased share of migrant populations almost everywhere including Australia. According to the United Nations, the percentage of female migrants has risen from 47.2 in 1980 to 49.6 in 2005 worldwide (Fry, 2006, p.i). Australia is a strong example of the global trend towards greater feminisation of international labour (Piper, 2008; 2009). The profile of female immigrants to Australia has changed substantially over the past 40 years. Up until a few decades ago, the stereotype of a 'typical' migrant woman in Australia was associated with poor English, little education and lack of professional skills. This stereotype and the reality are changing. At the beginning of the twenty first century, recently arrived female migrants are not just following their husbands and families. Well educated and highly skilled, they come to Australia in their own capacities as independent applicants. Australian immigration policies that encourage admission of highly skilled and professional workers are opening the nation up to a wide range of professional female newcomers from diverse occupations. According to Leslyanne Hawthorne (1996) three significant changes should be acknowledged in relation to recent skilled female migration. Firstly, an increasing number of migrant women now migrate to Australia as primary applicants. These women bring their husbands and children as their dependents. Secondly, there is a growing tendency in recent years for skilled migrants to be selected from non-English speaking countries rather than from traditional English speaking countries. This tendency refers to male as well as female migrants. And thirdly, while the overrepresentation of women in traditional female areas such as nursing, health, education and social work is still on the rise, there has also been considerable growth in 'women's representation in higher status fields traditionally regarded as male' (Hawthorne, 1996, p.45).

Immigration has been an important source of skilled labour in Australia from the time of white settlement. The focus on skills has remained at the heart of the Australian immigration program today. Therefore, it is increasingly important to utilise the skills, experience and educational credentials of new arrivals for the benefits of all Australians. Skilled immigration to Australia is increasingly 'feminised' as women have for many years made up almost half of the skilled migrant intake (Vanstone, 2006a). Increasing numbers of women migrate independently from men as skilled professionals and primary applicants.

In spite of rich political debates around the skilled migration program there is limited research on the area of female skilled migration and the experiences of those entering Australia under this category. We thus need to know more about this under-researched group because they constitute a significant portion of Australian population. In particular, it is important to challenge the stereotype of migrant women presented in the literature as poorly educated, low skilled, lacking social power and dependant. The views of professional female migrants have not been represented nor recognised in the current debates and their voices have not been heard. Their experiences have been so invisible. In addition, immigration policies are gender blind -Australian policies have not recognised the presence or specificity of professional female migrants separately from male migrants (Goodwin & Voola, 2013). The goal of this thesis is to achieve a better understanding of the gendered experience of migration and the implications of migration policies for women. This study addresses these gaps in the research and policy literature by examining the experiences of female professional migrants living in the Sydney region.

The goal of the thesis is to scrutinise the experiences of professional female migrants in Australia. The study is undertaken in the context of the policy frameworks ‘social inclusion’ and ‘social exclusion’, which have emerged in Australia and elsewhere during the past decade. *Social inclusion* refers to a policy focus on enabling the full participation of citizens in the life of the nation, including economic, social, cultural and political participation (Gillard & Wong, 2007). In turn, *social exclusion* refers to a policy focus on identifying and addressing groups whose participation is constrained, often measured along the dimensions of consumption, production, political engagement, social support and cultural life (Atkinson, 1999, cited in Goodwin, 2003; Burchardt, Le Grand, & Piachaud, 2002; Richardson & Le Grand, 2002). This research is interested in testing the relevance of these frameworks for understanding and addressing the experiences of professional female migrants in Australia.

The study of social inclusion experiences of professional female migrants in this thesis has been a complex undertaking. This is because the Abbott Coalition Government, which came into power in 2013, scrapped the official social inclusion agenda developed under the Rudd/Gillard Labor Government (2007-2013) and dismantled the Federal Government Social Inclusion Board. The social inclusion website was closed on 14 October 2013. The Social Inclusion Unit was disbanded on 18 September 2013 (Australian Government, 2013). Nevertheless, the research design and the theoretical framework of the study provided a way

to attend to these concerns and have provided a new and innovative way to theorise social inclusion in multicultural Australia.

Social inclusion in Australia: origins, concepts and key themes

The concepts of social inclusion and social exclusion have constituted a major part of the existing debates around poverty and inequality in Australia (Baum, 2008; Gillard & Wong, 2007; Hayes, Gray, & Edwards, 2008; Horn, Scutella, & Wilkins, 2011; Scutella, Wilkins, & Kostenko, 2009; Vinson, 2007). While the concept social exclusion has been implemented as a primary organising principle for social policy in several western countries, the experience of these countries is varied and the success of the social inclusion/social exclusion agenda has been contested (Horn et al., 2011). Nevertheless, the framework remains particularly important today mainly because, firstly, the issue of social exclusion is common throughout western nations (Blair, 2007) and, secondly, it has been argued that inclusiveness is crucial for social cohesion and economic growth (Hayes et al., 2008; Levitas et. al., 2007).

In the literature, there is more than one definition of social inclusion/exclusion. As the concept of social inclusion is closely associated with the concept of social exclusion, they are often defined as opposites (Hayes et al., 2008). Definitions predominantly focus on economic, social, political and cultural factors. For the purpose of this study, the definition provided by Levitas and others (2007) has been considered useful. This definition is provided below:

Social exclusion is a complex and multi-dimensional process. It involves the lack or denial of resources, rights, goods and services, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people in society, whether in economic, social, cultural or political arenas. It affects both the quality of life of individuals and the equity and cohesion of society as a whole (pp. 8-9)

Extending this definition, Heikki Ikäheimo (2003) argues that social inclusion and exclusion are not just about resources and opportunities available to individuals, but also depend on attitudes of others:

Social inclusion and exclusion is dependent on attitudes of others- otherwise it would not be social. The attitudes of others, central for social inclusion or exclusion, are attitudes of recognition. The 'recognitive attitudes' toward persons can be divided into three species: love, respect and esteem. We 'include' each other socially by loving, respecting and holding each other in esteem (p.2)

Ikaheimo (2003, p.2) claims that one important attribute of persons is that we speak and think of them in terms of personal pronouns, such as the 'we'. To recognise someone is necessarily to think of oneself and her/him in a sense of belonging to 'a community' or as 'we'. To place this in terms of social inclusion, to recognise anyone is to include this person into a collective 'we', or community with oneself. Therefore, according to Ikaheimo's (2003) argument, social inclusion is not only what an individual does to include him/herself, but to what degree others recognise this individual as belonging to their community. This argument rightly brings the concept of social inclusion in line with the concept of belonging. However, this kind of extended definition of social inclusion has not been integrated into Australian policy frameworks, and in particular has not been applied to the consideration of the inclusion and exclusion of its citizens.

Some authors argue that the development of social inclusion policy frameworks can be traced to the late 19th and 20th Centuries. In Australia, the Federal Government introduced the social inclusion policy approach and established the Australian Government Social Inclusion Board in 2007. With relevance to the Australian context, social inclusion is defined as a complex and multidimensional process that refers to citizens' full participation in nation's life in economic, social, psychological and political terms (Gillard & Wong, 2007). According to this approach, to be socially included means that 'people have resources, opportunities and capabilities they need to:

- Learn by participating in education and training;
- Work by participation in employment, in voluntary work and in family and caring;
- Engage by connecting with people and using their local community's resources; and
- Have a voice so that they can influence decisions that affect them (Australian Government, 2009, p.3).

The focus of the Rudd Gillard Labor government was, for example, on policies aimed at ‘creating prosperity with fairness’, with long-term prosperity to be secured by the ‘full social and economic participation of all Australians’ (Gillard 2008a, p.9). From this perspective, however, economic participation has been positioned as a key part of the social inclusion agenda. In this approach, employment is seen as an essential resource through which people create their identities, social status and economic rewards (Jamrozik, 2005) and access to a job enables people’s participation and becomes a vital part of social life and social inclusion in society. For example, as Santina Bertone (2007, p.131) states ‘employment is vital to people’s sense of well-being and social inclusion in society’. However, many scholars have acknowledged problems with the privileged positioning economic participation has had as the defining measurement of a socially inclusive society (Goodwin, 2003; Pocock & Buchanan, 2003).

Alongside governmental approaches to social inclusion, work has been carried out to develop ways of measuring social exclusion and social inclusion. The Social Policy Research Centre at the University of New South Wales has developed measures of social inclusion that are based on 27 indicators that cover disengagement from society, services exclusion and economic exclusion (Saunders, Naidoo, & Griffiths, 2007, p.18). As Peter Whiteford (2001, p.66) explains, ‘not all low-income people are excluded from society, nor do all excluded people have low-income’. There are other dimensions of social inclusion/exclusion, as outlined in the social inclusion framework. Thus, social interaction, level of social support and integration with family, friends and community have been identified as some of the fundamental features of social inclusion (UK Social Exclusion Unit, 2007, cited in Goodwin, 2011). Being able to access support has been shown to contribute to the feelings of inclusion, belonging and being part of the society. There is also a longstanding literature that suggests that social support enables participation in social life and contributes to feelings of belonging and an awareness of unity and harmony (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Bromley, 2000; Castles & Miller, 2003; Colic-Peisker, 2005, Doyle, Stillman, & Wilkins, 1997; Jaco, 1970; Ryan, 2007; Tilbury & Colic-Peisker, 2007; Verkuyten, 2005; Weinberg, 1967). Further, a strong connection has been made between social inclusion and cultural inclusion. The literature highlights the critical role of culture in the social inclusion process (Hayter, 2009; Zetter et. al., 2006). Carrie Hayter (2009, p.13), for example, argues that ‘the role of culture and cultural diversity is a critical factor in whether people are socially included or excluded’. It is well documented that culture, in

concert with language and religion/faith, sense of identity and belonging, shape social inclusion outcomes (Arnold, 1960; Ho, 2006; Jupp, Nienwenhuysen, & Dawson, 2007).

This point about the relationship between social inclusion and cultural inclusion brings the argument closer to the purpose of this research. Although the social inclusion agenda in Australia has not specifically focused on the migrant population in this country, Hayter (2009, p.7), for example, indicates that social inclusion is ‘influenced by experiences of migration, as well as economic, social, political and cultural factors’. In contrast, Raelene Wilding (2009, p.163) questions the underlying nation-state foundation of the social inclusion concept and argues that it results in ‘important limitations when considering the lives of mobile people such as migrants and refugees’. The former federal government acknowledged that social exclusion can result from being alienated by race or disability and that discrimination based on race or ethnicity still excludes Australians from participating fully in social and economic life (Gillard & Wong, 2007). Susan Goodwin (2012) argues that the social inclusion framework neglects other areas of group exclusion: for example, the exclusion that flows from gender, age, religion, and ethnicity. For example, in relation to gender, women’s access to childcare and other support for those with caring responsibilities is a significant barrier to participation, with about 10000 unemployed citing this as the main reason for their difficulty in finding work (Gillard & Wong, 2007, p.3). This also acts as a barrier to accessing more hours for those who are underemployed, with as many as 8100 (7500 of these women) citing the lack of childcare as the main barrier for accessing more hours of work (Gillard & Wong, 2007, p.3). Indeed, it has been found that gender intersects with migration as migrant women have been vulnerable to both limited childcare and limited employment opportunities.

In one of the studies undertaken in Australia on social inclusion, Michael Horn and others (2011, pp.5-6) found that immigrants experience higher levels of social exclusion than native-born Australians. It also found that social exclusion is experienced by 30 per cent of immigrants from non-English speaking countries. Moreover, more women than men are socially excluded: 28 per cent and 22 per cent respectively (Horn et. al., 2011, p.4). The study aimed to measure the extent of social exclusion in Australia using data from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia [HILDA] Survey. Drawing on Sen’s capabilities framework, the authors constructed a measure of exclusion incorporating seven domains: material resources, employment, education and skills, health and disability, social

connection, community and personal safety. The multidimensionality of the study provided the opportunity to capture variations in experience. In another study undertaken in Australia on social inclusion, Farida Tilbury and Val Colic-Peisker (2007) analysed the link between social inclusion and migration. Their qualitative research on skilled refugees in Western Australia explored the dimensions of labour market experience and overall life satisfaction and their impact on social inclusion. The authors found that unemployment and downward mobility adversely affects other aspects of social inclusion and settlement including family life (through disrupting gender and intergenerational relations), social networks (through a lack of opportunities to interact with mainstream society), feelings of belonging (through social isolation), and people's general well-being and life satisfaction- all aspects linked to social inclusion. Tilbury and Colic-Peisker (2007, p.120) identified the following facets of life satisfaction and social inclusion in Australia: employment status, job satisfaction, financial satisfaction, health status, social support, Australian networks, acculturation (cognitive aspect), and adaptation (practical aspect) in the new environment. In fact, employment has been identified as the most important pathway to social inclusion as it enables migrants to develop social networks and cultural skills vital for integration. This thesis seeks to extend on this kind of research by exploring professional female migrants' experiences of social inclusion and social exclusion from the perspective of professional female migrants themselves, and the impact of these experiences on their sense of identity and belonging. It is also concerned with exploring the factors that have been critical in shaping these experiences.

Aim and objectives of the research

The research topic for this thesis stems from my personal experience as a female professional migrant, but also from my occupational experiences as a social worker working in a multicultural society. As a social worker, I am often confronted with government and community reports which silence the position of professional female migrants in the current climate of globalisation and economic rationalism. By highlighting specific social divisions, such as class, gender and ethnicity, I start this research with the hope that it can play a significant part in social change by focusing on personal experiences of inequalities and recommending strategies for change. Social workers have a role in contributing to social policy debates related to gender and migration and gender and employment. Social workers also play a significant role in assisting women to have positive settlement experiences and

can provide a channel to ensure women's experiences inform the design of services, supports and policies.

There are two objectives of the study. The first objective is to explore the emergence of the 'social inclusion' and 'social exclusion' frameworks in Australia through existing literature and the government approach. The second objective is to examine professional female migrants' perceptions of their experiences of social inclusion in Australia, including employment experiences, social and cultural experiences and experiences of social support and support services, as well as experiences of constructing new identities. Examining professional female migrants' *employment experiences* includes the experiences of finding work consonant with professional female migrants' overseas qualifications, their sense of professional integration as well as experiences of training and retraining. Examining professional female migrants' *social and cultural experiences* includes participants' opportunities for community participation, cultural participation, *experiences of social support and political participation* as well as factors significant to those experiences. Examining professional female migrants' *experiences of identity and belonging* includes exploring how others recognise individuals as belonging to the community.

The purpose of this study thus is to provide an answer as to who the professional female migrant is and how she settles into Australian multicultural society.

Thesis outline

This thesis has been arranged into ten chapters. Chapter One has introduced the thesis by outlining the background aim, objectives, and significance of the research. The remaining chapters of this thesis build the research agenda outlined in this opening chapter.

Chapter Two reviews the relevant literature on immigration. Firstly, the chapter provides a brief history of Australian immigration and analyses the inclusive/exclusive nature of the Australian immigration program. Secondly, it outlines the milestones of the Australian immigration program and provides an overview of previous studies on female migrants in Australia. Thirdly, the chapter discusses the key themes and debates on migration and settlement.

Chapter Three explores related approaches to culture and social inclusion. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section is devoted to the concept of culture and presents an overview of definitions and theories of culture. In particular, it interrogates the differences between diverse cultures. The section analyses how cultural integration and transformation are negotiated under the impact of the migration process. The second section is devoted to the concepts of identity and belonging and discusses debates about the meaning and significance of identity and belonging for understanding and interpreting the experiences of social inclusion, migration and settlement.

Chapter Four presents concepts, ideas and debates around issues of gender, culture, occupation and social relations. It begins with an overview of gender relations in Australia and explores the position, role and condition of women in Australian sexist society. The purpose of the chapter is to provide some background to explore how experiences of social inclusion intersect with gender, culture, occupation and social relations.

Chapter Five is divided into two sections. The first section describes the methodology of the research study. It provides an overview of the qualitative methodology which has influenced the research design. It also describes the sample, data collection and data analysis and the strengths and limitations related to the sample and methodology. The second section introduces the participants and their stories. This introduction to the women is made in two ways. First, they are introduced as a 'sample' of professional female migrants through the laying out of demographic data. Second, the chapter breaks with the conventional approach to reporting and provides summary stories of the professional female migrants involved in this study. Their stories are central to bringing life and context to the analyses, findings, and recommendations. Their stories are also central to addressing the question of migrants' inclusion in multicultural Australia.

The following three chapters present the findings from the study that relate to the research objectives. Chapter Six provides accounts of participants' perceptions of social inclusion before migration. Chapter Seven provides accounts of participants' perceptions of social inclusion in the first twelve months following migration. Chapter Eight provides accounts of participants' perceptions of social inclusion in the present. The chapters represent what emerged as significant stages in the migration experience.

Chapter Nine provides accounts of participants' sense of identity, belonging and social inclusion. The chapter examines the meaning of being a professional female migrant in Australia and participants' interpretations of the meaning and relevance of social inclusion more generally.

Chapter Ten concludes the research and summarises the findings. It argues that the social inclusion policy framework, as it has been developed thus far, is not fully relevant for analysing the experiences of professional female migrants in Australia as it is blind to the multicultural nature of Australian society. However, if we could develop a framework that includes the hopes and dreams of diverse communities, then the framework would be more valuable. Recommendations to address the limitations of the existing social inclusion framework are then put forward and the implications of the study for further research are outlined.

Chapter Two: Context: Australia's Immigration Programs

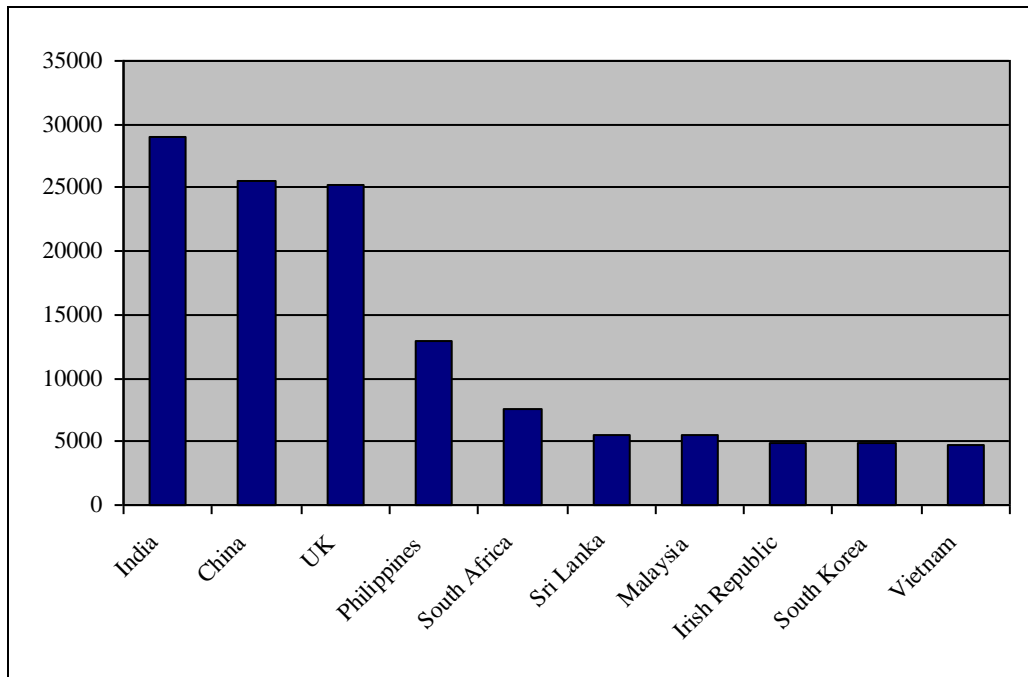
Contemporary Australian society and the experiences of those who come here can only be understood within the context of its history as a nation of immigrants except for the Aboriginal people who have lived here for 40,000 years. Since colonisation, Australia has been predominantly an immigrant state. Currently 45 per cent of Australians were either born overseas or have at least one parent who was born overseas (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2013a). Of Western countries, only Canada and the United States support such large-scale migration programs. In order to analyse the experiences of social inclusion and social exclusion of professional female migrants, it is of particular importance to frame those experiences in the context of the social, political and policy environment in which those experiences take place. This chapter, therefore, provides a brief overview of the contemporary Australian immigration program. It then provides a more detailed account of the skilled selection system with a focus on the inclusive/exclusive nature of the Australian immigration program. The chapter outlines the milestones of the Australian immigration program and provides an overview of previous studies on female migrants in Australia. Finally, the chapter analyses the most significant literature debates on migration and settlement and presents theoretical debates on migration and settlement.

The contemporary Australian migration program

The Australian migration program currently incorporates skill, family and humanitarian streams and is based on non-discriminatory principles regarding people's nationality, gender or religion. It claims that 'people can apply to migrate regardless of their ethnic origin, gender or religion provided they meet the criteria set out in the *Migration Act 1958* (Australian Government, Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2013, p.22). In 2011-12, 184,998 persons arrived in Australia planning to stay, 68 per cent of whom arrived under the Skilled Migration Scheme. Since 1997-98, the Skill Stream has been larger than the Family Stream, increasing steadily from 51.5 per cent in 1997-98 to 68.0 per cent in 2011-12. The proportion of females in the Migration Program varies depending on the visa stream. For example, in 2011-12 the proportion of females in the program was 51.6 per cent, while in the Skill Stream it was 46 per cent and in the Family Stream it was 63.5 per cent (Australian Government, Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2013, p.28). The numbers of visas as well as the balance between different types of visas approved every year

may vary considerably from year to year. The ethnic character of migrants has considerably changed with more settlers arriving from Asian and Middle Eastern countries as shown in Table 1. Historically the United Kingdom was positioned as the main source country to Australia. However, since 2006-2007 India has become the largest contributor of immigrants to Australia.

Table 1: Top 10 Citizenships of Migrants, 2011-12



Source: Australian Government, Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2012a, p.5

The characteristics of immigrants within different streams of the program vary significantly. There are necessary requirements for different migration categories outlined in *Australian Migration Regulations* (Commonwealth of Australia, 1994). The Family Stream program is designed to assist migrants sponsored by their relatives in Australia. The program offers immediate family members of Australian citizens or permanent residents to migrate permanently. The Humanitarian Program targets refugees and other migrants with strong humanitarian needs. The scheme allows resettlement and operates beyond the obvious economic benefits to Australia. The Skill Stream Program is designed to attract skilled and professional people able to integrate readily and contribute immediately to the Australian economy. The program relies on a points system as the primary approach for managing the skilled immigrant intake. To be admitted under the Skill Stream, immigrants must satisfy a points test, hold required qualifications and skills or have business skills and substantial capital to operate business of benefit to Australia. The skilled category gives preference to

those who possess skills or education that are relevant to the Australian labour market. A more detailed analysis of the skilled migration category will be presented in next section.

The shift to skilled migration

The immigration program the Liberal/National Coalition Government inherited in March 1996 was dominated by family reunion migrants and was growing in size. In 1996, migrants born overseas made up 23 per cent of the Australian population and an additional 18.6 per cent of the population had at least one parent born overseas. The program was also becoming increasingly unpopular. During Labor's thirteen years in office the immigration portfolio had seen seven different ministers and the program's relevance to the national economic objectives had been questioned (Betts, 2003). Although the shift from White Australia to Multiculturalism has been a most fundamental change in the history of Australian immigration policy, the Howard Government did not embrace the official commitment to multiculturalism. The Office of Multicultural Affairs and the Bureau of Immigration Research were closed and the term 'Multiculturalism' disappeared from official government documents (Jamrozik, 2005).

The Howard/Ruddock immigration reforms were characterised by reduction in family reunion intake, greater emphasis on Australian economic objectives and restriction of new arrivals' access to social services and welfare payments. Opposition to immigration reached its peak level in 1993 but by 2004 was at its lowest level over the past fifteen years. Amanda Vanstone (2006b) argued that immigration policies had won increasing levels of community support. She claimed that in 1993, 67 per cent of the public said immigration had gone too far or much too far, and by 2004, it was only 30 per cent (Vanstone, 2006b). The general tendency of the shift in the immigration program from the 1990s has been to improve the 'human capital' of new arrivals and to ensure migrants are not a burden on society. Public pressure for the government to minimise spending on migration resulted in the implementation of the program targeting only 'job-ready' and 'productive immigrants' able to immediately contribute to the Australian labour market. In 1996 the majority of new migrants were Asians arriving under the family reunion plan. The Asian-born population increased from 6.5 per cent of the overseas-born population to 21.9 per cent in 1991 (Garnaut, Ganguly, & Kang, 2003, p. 4). However, by 2001-02 skilled professionals from the United Kingdom, South Africa and Asia (India, China and Indonesia) were far more

noticeable (Lack 2003). The Federal Government began to increase emphasis on labour market skills and abilities of new citizens.

In the late 1990s, the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) established minimum age, skill and English language requirements known as the points test (Boucher, 2007; Richardson, Robertson, & Ilsley, 2001). The pass mark is the total number of points the primary applicant needs to be eligible for a visa. Additional points are offered if the primary applicant's spouse also meets the minimum age, skill and English language criteria or if the primary applicant obtains an Australian degree. Given the relevance to this thesis, the points test is discussed in more detail in the following section.

These changes in the selection criteria were combined with changes in the Australian welfare policy significantly limiting migrants' access to the income support programs. All immigrants arriving in Australia after January 1993 were subject to a twenty-six week waiting period for access to unemployment benefits.¹ From March 1996, all new migrants (except for Humanitarian arrivals) were excluded from accessing welfare income benefits during the first two years after arrival. Access to the Special Benefit payment was also abolished (Betts, 2003). In addition, the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs introduced personal interviews in making decisions about the application of skilled and professional immigrants who wanted to settle in Australia (Richardson et al., 2001). Thus the shift to skilled migration was also a shift to an enforcement of economic self-reliance.

Skilled migration: The selection systems

In 1983 the Labor Government implemented a policy on the recruitment of skilled migrants. In 1984-85, the government replaced the non-targeted skilled migration program with an 'Occupational Shares System' [OSS] scheme (Birrell, Rapson, & Smith, 2006). The OSS scheme restricted the admission of skilled migrants to those who possess skills undersupplied in Australia. Applicants in the designated occupations were required to have qualifications recognised in Australia and be fluent in English. The number of migrants recruited under the OSS program was limited to about 3000 per year until the program was

¹ However, many family reunion migrants would have been eligible to income-support payments based on their Australian partner's entitlements. The Special Benefit payment (a discretionary payment of last resort) was also not subject to any waiting period.

abolished in the middle of 1989. The OSS program lost its focus as the government initiated the intake of skilled migrants through other categories such as the points tested Concessional Category and the points tested Independent Category that was first introduced in the 1986-87 program year (Birrell et al., 2006). The selection system advantaged young, skilled and tertiary educated migrants. However, the pass-mark was not difficult to obtain and many migrants with qualifications not recognised in Australia or with poor English language skills were recruited under the scheme. In addition, no consideration was taken on whether the applicant's skills were in short supply in Australia. Although the government introduced a new selection process for the Independent and Concessional Category migrants which emphasised the migrant's possession of qualifications and skills recognised in Australia and the possession of an adequate English skills level, it was only in 1992 that independent applicants were required to pass a professional English test. Prior to 1992 the level of English skills was in most cases self-assessed by a primary applicant (Hawthorne, 1994). Consequently, thousands of skilled migrants arrived to Australia without having their credentials and English assessed prior to immigration (Birrell & Hawthorne, 1996). Many of these migrants came from countries where professional education and accreditation were very different from those in Australia.

Since 1996, the focus of the skilled migration policy has been highly utilitarian: to attract migrants who can quickly contribute to the economy, labour market and budget (Birrell et al., 2006). The growth of skilled migration was based on the perception that 'skilled migration poses fewer economic burdens on the state than family migration' (Boucher 2007, p.4). Australia has been positioned as a major winner as a result of international skilled migration. Skilled migrants, governments argue, are critical to maximising the potential for economic growth in the world where human capital is a vital element to the success of any nation (Ho & Alcorso, 2004). Without the immigration program the growth in the Australian workforce would decline soon after 2010 (Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, 2006). Australia has been successful in attracting migrants of different professional categories, the largest being accountants, engineers and computing professionals (Birrell et al., 2006). There is also significant increase of nurses and doctors. These areas represent remarkable skill shortages in contemporary Australia. The numbers of managers and administrators immigrating to Australia, however, decreased after its peak in 1998-99. In 2011-12, Australia's skilled migration target was 125,755 people, out of a total migration program of 184,998 people (Australian Government,

Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2013, p.5). Major source countries for 2011-12 applicants have been India (23%), China (20.3%), United Kingdom (20%) and Philippines (10.3%). From the top 10 source countries in 2011-12, there were slightly more females (63,952) than males (62,086) (Australian Government, Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2013, p.30). Migration quotas are subject to an annual change depending on the labour market demand.

The current skilled migration program has adopted highly selective recruitment criteria focused on the applicant's age, qualifications, work experiences and language abilities. The primary policy objective of immigration reform remains to increase the Australian labour force through admission of highly educated and skilled migrants able to gain secure employment in the early period of settlement. The skilled migration scheme is a large component of the Australian migration program the main purpose of which is to:

- recruit skilled migrants to strengthen Australia's economic benefits,
- fill acute skill shortages,
- offset an ageing population (Australian Government, Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2013).

Today the Australian skilled migration program is managed according to a points system assigned as of July 2012 (Table 2). The online skilled migration selection register, *SkillSelect* is a major change to how the skilled migration program is managed 'to give the Australian Government greater control over the composition and quality of skilled migrants' (Australia Government, Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2013, p.5). All applicants must be able to satisfy the Age, Skill and English language requirements. Intending migrants firstly need to record their details such as their personal information, skills and attributes against a points test through an online expression of interest (EOI). Intending migrants may then be invited to apply for a visa. The points tested skilled migration visas have currently a points test pass mark of 65 points, and the pass mark is subject to change in response to Australian labour market (Australian Government, Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2014). Migrants' ability to satisfy the points test mark does not guarantee an invitation to apply for a visa. The table below provides details of the Points Test:

Table 2: The Points Test in the Australian Skilled Migration Scheme (assigned as of July 2005)

Factor	Description	Points
Age, at time of invitation	18-24 (inclusive)	25 points
	25-32 (inclusive)	30 points
	33-39 (inclusive)	25 points
	40-44 (inclusive)	15 points
	45-49 (inclusive)	0 points
English language competency level, at time of invitation	Competent English- IELTS 6 / OET B	0 points
	Proficient English- IELTS 7 / OET B	10 points
	Superior English- IELTS 8 / OET A	20 points
Overseas skilled employment in nominated skilled occupation or a closely related skilled occupation, at time of invitation	At least three but less than five years (of past 10 years)	5 points
	At least five but less than eight years	10 points
	At least eight and up to 10 years (of past 10 years)	15 points
Australian skilled employment in nominated skilled occupation or a closely related skilled occupation, at time of invitation (Note that the maximum points awarded for any combination of overseas and Australian skilled employment is 20 points)	At least one but less than three years (of past 10 years)	5 points
	At least three but less than five years (of past 10 years)	10 points
	At least five but less than eight years (of past 10 years)	15 points
	At least eight and up to 10 years (of past 10 years)	20 points
Educational qualifications, at time of invitation	Doctorate from an Australian educational institution or other Doctorate of a recognised standard	20 points

	At least a Bachelor degree, including a Bachelor degree with Honours or Masters, from an Australian educational institution or other degree of a recognised standard	15 points
	Diploma completed in Australia, trade qualification completed in Australia, or qualification or award of a recognised standard	10 points
Australian study qualifications, at time of invitation	One or more degrees, diplomas or trade qualifications awarded by an Australian educational institution and meet Australian Study Requirement	5 points
Other factors, at time of invitation	Credentialed community language qualifications	5 points
	Study in regional Australia or in a low population growth metropolitan area (excluding distance education)	5 points
	Partner skill qualifications	5 points
	Professional Year completion, for a period of at least 12 months in the four year period immediately before the day on which the invitation was issued	5 points
Nomination/Sponsorship, at time of invitation	Nomination by State or Territory government (visa subclass 190 only)	5 points
	Nomination by State or Territory government or sponsorship by an eligible family member, for residing and working in a specified/designated area (visa subclass 489 only)	10 points

Source: Australian Government, Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2012b, p.2

The skilled migration program prefers younger migrants over older ones. Migrants over 50 years of age cannot apply. The applicant's qualifications and skills attract a significant number of points. Work experience must be in the area of the applicant's nominated

occupation immediately prior to lodging the application. The maximum of 20 points for English ability is only awarded for 'superior English' assessed by the International Testing System (IELTS) test. Native English speaking migrants are visibly advantaged by this assessment as they are not required to sit a test. Understandably, certain nationalities do significantly better under the skilled stream migration due to their English language skills. Applicants can also include family members in their application for migration however, as discussed previously, additional points are offered if the applicant's spouse meets the minimum age, skill and English criteria. For this reason a distinction is often made between different types of 'skilled migrants': *primary* applicants and *dependent* applicants or *principle* and *non-principle* applicants. The vast majority of primary or principle applicants are male, and the vast majority of dependent or non-principle applicants are female.

Announcing the 2012-13 Migration Program, the Federal Government asserted that it was delivering the largest skill stream program in Australia's history at around 129,200 places (Australian Government, Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2013, p.5). The growth in size of the skilled migration program comes at a time of significant skills shortages in some industries particularly in regional Australia and of growing attention to and concern about the long-term consequences of the Australian ageing population. Whilst there has been much attention paid to the relationship between skilled migration and skill shortage and other human capital issues, less attention has been paid to the gendered dimensions of skilled migration.

Gender and the Australian skilled migration policy

Although increasing numbers of women migrate independently from men as skilled professionals and primary applicants, the significance of gender and the implications of skilled migration policies for female applicants have received limited attention. Skilled immigration to Australia is increasingly 'feminised' as women have for many years made up almost half of the skilled migrant intake (Vanstone, 2006a). In 2011-2012, the proportion of females in the skilled program was 46 per cent (Australian Government, Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2013, p.25). What has changed in the last few decades is the gender ratio of primary applicants. In the 1990s, women made up less than 28 per cent of primary applicants (Vanstone, 2006a). The figure has risen to 36 per cent in

the past decade (ABS, 2010a). This section of the chapter acknowledges the gendered character of Australia's skilled migrant selection scheme and presents arguments about the significant and direct effects of the policy on potential female applicants.

At first glance this would appear to be a simple task as Australia's policy makers and its implementers proclaim that Australia now has a discrimination-free immigration program. As stated in Fact Sheet Number 1 issued by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (2006), Australia has a non-discriminatory immigration policy, which means that anyone from any country can apply to migrate regardless of their ethnic origin, their gender, colour or religion. From a practical perspective, however, the effects of the policy are quite complex and depend on a number of interrelated factors. Numerous writers (Boucher, 2007; Cobb-Clark, 2001; Fincher, Foster, & Wilmot, 1994; Fincher, 1997; Ho, 2004; Iredale, 2001, 2005; Kofman & England, 1997; Kofman & Raghuram, 2006; Oishi, 2002) address gender issues in the Australian skilled migration scheme and argue that far from being neutral, immigration policies are gendered: state policies treat men and women differently.

Existing literature on female skilled migrants

In this section a description of existing studies of female skilled migrants in Australia is presented. During the past two decades, several investigators, using different methodological approaches, have assessed the experiences of this target group. The contributions of these studies are described in detail below, as they are highly relevant to the study undertaken for this thesis.

Fincher, Foster and Wilmot (1994) in *'Gender Equity and Australia Immigration Policy'* is a notable contribution to the study of gender issues in immigration. The work analyses gender equity in immigration by examining material from the Australian and international literature, from policy documents and government files and from statistical and interview data. The authors aim to reflect on 'how government policies have intended and unintended gendered effects in migration and settlement' (1994, p.xiii). The study evaluates Australian immigration policy against two criteria of gender equity and gender justice drawn from contemporary feminist theory. Fincher and associates (1994) have selectively reflected on the migration experiences on skilled migrant women in Australia and have reached the

following conclusions.

Firstly, the authors claim that migration flows are gendered. Masculinist definitions of skill have a strong impact on the selection judgments and, therefore, present difficulties for women applicants. The exclusion of women from skill-based entry (reflecting sexist views of who is skilled and why) is significant. Fincher et al. (1994, p.56) argues that women's skills are not valued highly and 'the "ideal immigrant" has been and remains male because males best fit the selection criteria of physical capacity or skill'. Furthermore, Australian employers are mostly selecting from the overseas male-dominated labour market.

Secondly, this work demonstrates that male occupations are more often considered as 'highly skilled' and attract more points than female occupations resulting in more males applying for skilled migration and coming to Australia as principle applicants. They found that a similarly skilled and trained couple is more likely to migrate on the basis of his points test allowing his wife to enter Australia as an 'accompanying' dependant. After investigating the employment prospects of female skilled migrants, Fincher and colleagues reached the conclusion that immigrants, if their class, ethnicity and gender are unlike those of their employers, may experience discrimination or reduced employment prospects.

Finally, the study confirms that immigrant women 'may bear disproportionately the inevitable social, economic, physical and emotional disruption of the immigration process' (Fincher et. al., 1994, p.79). Of course, these women are giving up their familiar, social and occupational networks, their culture and language to face the unknown in the place of destination. As the authors reveal:

...many women reported utter personal devastation. They felt great resentment at the information they had been given before arrival in Australia, about the prospects for professionals here. They also felt that they had little hope of achieving a suitable job in Australia when employers were permitted to call for 'local experience' before appointing someone for a job (p.102)

In addition, access to English classes and child-care services seem to be of critical importance to settlement for all immigrant women.

Considered together, this study provides strong evidence that immigration and the settlement of immigrants are gendered processes. Women are disadvantaged because they spend so much time settling their families in the early months and years, combined with difficulties with the recognition of their professional and educational credentials and limited access to language and child care services.

Leslyanne Hawthorne (1996) examined the type of non-English speaking background of women who are seeking to enter employment in Australia in increasing numbers and in positions commensurate with their skills in the last decade. In the article *'Reversing Past Stereotypes: Skilled NESB Women in Australia'* the author, by utilising existing data and analysing previous research, notes that:

the large numbers of female engineers, economists, administrators, programmers, etc. are listed as 'not in the workforce' or 'home duties' apparently because they happened to have been wives and mothers at time of application, married to men defined as 'principle applicants' (p.43)

The author focused on three tendencies in relation to recent skilled female migration. Firstly, an increasing number of women were entering Australia as principle applicants. Secondly, a growing number of skilled migrants was migrating to Australia from non-English speaking background rather than traditional English speaking background regions. Thirdly, there was a significant rise in females occupying higher status jobs traditionally regarded as male. Hawthorne also drew attention to the barriers to employment for skilled non-English speaking background women despite high qualifications and professional skills some of which were:

- level of English,
- lack of recognition of professional qualifications,
- knowledge of the appropriate job-seeking culture,
- lack of Australian experience.

The author concluded that despite the difficulties, many skilled non-English speaking background women will secure professional work within twelve months of seeking it-frequently through public sector employers with equal employment opportunities in place. Many NESB women arrive with a high level of English and strong cross-cultural skills.

Such women, Hawthorne argues, experience few significant problems in employment. However, many NESB migrant women face difficulties with informal socialising at work that is particularly important to personal acceptance and professional mobility. Many describe lack of childcare as a critical issue. To summarise, Hawthorne (1996, p.51) concludes that many NESB women 'succeed impressively in the Australian workforce-confronting linguistic and labour market barriers, and triumphing over them'. Many are challenging Australia's traditional stereotype of the NESB woman. In the future they have the potential to provide Australian women with role models of exceptional career progress.

Christina Ho (2004) conducted her study *'Migration as Feminisation: Chinese Women's Experiences of Work and Family in Contemporary Australia'* focusing on Hong Kong and mainland Chinese female migrants who represent the largest Chinese migrant population in Australia. Ho aimed to explore the complexity of their lives in Australian society. The author was particularly interested in researching the impact of gender, ethnicity and culture on Chinese female migrants' employment opportunities and prospects independently of human capital measures.

Two methods of data collection were employed to investigate the experiences of the target group. Qualitative data for the study was collected through in-depth interviews. Forty four women, twenty two from Hong Kong and twenty two from the People's Republic of China (PRC), were interviewed by the researcher. The participants were aged from 29 to 54 at the time of the interview. Thirty-four women were married or in a de-facto relationship. The sample followed different paths of entering Australia including skill stream, family reunion or student migration. Those entering Australia under skill stream were more likely to be spouses of primary applicants. Fourteen participants did not possess any post-secondary qualifications.

The study showed that human capital is not automatically transferable and is culturally specific. Migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds experience greater difficulties with the recognition of their qualifications, skills and experiences compared to migrants from the English speaking world. The following conclusions were reached by the author. Firstly, migrants' employment experiences are highly gendered. Male migrants are more likely to be the family 'primary worker' and, therefore, have higher labour force participation rates and higher status occupations. Secondly, migration itself is gendered as

the emphasis on skills in migrant selection and the definition of skills privilege the entry of men as primary applicants. Many women continue to migrate as dependant spouses or 'tied moves'. And, finally, migrant's settlement experience is gendered as men and women adopt different roles in meeting their work and family responsibilities. While male migrants often become the household's breadwinners, female migrants accept increased family and domestic responsibilities as their families face challenges associated with settling in a new country. Ho (2004, p.250) concludes that 'migration in Australia can only genuinely constitute a 'success story' when policy discussions and research overcome the extraordinary belief that economics can explain the world'.

Robyn Iredale (2005) evaluated policies for selection of skilled migrants over a range of immigration countries including Australia, the United Kingdom, Germany, and the United States by analysing material from empirical work, professional reports and other literature on the situation facing migrant professional women. According to Iredale (2005, p. 156) 'immigration selection policies and occupational entry are critical for the understanding of gendered experiences of migration for skilled migrants'. In her article '*Gender, Immigration Policies and Accreditation: Valuing the Skills of Professional Women Migrants*' Iredale asserts that professional female migration is affected by many factors including:

- migrant women more often enter Australia as dependants rather than principle applicants leading to difficulties with skills recognition and ineligibility to settlement services,
- emphasis on recent work experience and the inclusion of specific occupations in skilled migration selection likely to further disadvantage women's experience of migration,
- on-arrival opportunities for work placement, language classes and training programs have been reduced in recent years and are mostly available on a fee-for-service basis that even further limits women's employment prospects.

The author suggests immigration policies become 'not only gender neutral but more importantly that they are gender sensitive to the needs and special circumstances of women' (2005, p.165).

Anna Boucher (2007) has offered an analysis of Australia's and Canada's skilled migration schemes in her paper '*Skill, Migration, and Gender in Australia and Canada: The Case of Gender-Based Analysis*'. Concerning what gender inequality and equality represent within the context of skilled migration, the author refers to contemporary Australian and Canadian immigration schemes.

Arguing that the focus in the skilled migration program on 'occupational skill' and labour market experience make it more difficult for women than for men to satisfy the selection criteria, Boucher has shown that the two countries migration schemes reinforce gendered roles between male and female applicants. Firstly, male migrants are more likely to be primary applicants than female migrants reinforcing any dependency that might already exist within the relationship.

Primary applicants, since they have their credentials assessed, have higher chances of gaining employment post-migration than their spouses. In 2003-04, only 1.2 per cent of primary skilled applicants to Australia were either unemployed or not in the labour force, while 65.8 per cent of secondary skilled applicants were in this position (Boucher, 2007, p.13). Besides these differences, dependency is reinforced by the requirement that the secondary applicant remains in the relationship with the primary applicant for at least two years after arrival. Additionally, the overall understanding of 'skill' is structured by gender and class. Under both schemes, work experience in paid employment attracts a significant number of points, while neither scheme includes unpaid domestic or child care experience. Work experience must be more than part-time and it must be gained immediately prior to lodging the application. Additionally, a strong emphasis on language proficiency neglects how ethnicity can further influence immigration prospects. The points assigned for language skills are high and the language test is difficult to pass. Women's access to language training is generally more difficult due to their family responsibilities and economic circumstances.

The author acknowledges that the Canadian immigration system is more attune to issues of gender equality than the Australian for the following reasons. In Canada, the new legislation passed in 2002 removed an occupation-based selection system, the current model in Australia, replacing it with a more general points test. Under the new system, migrants are assessed on general skills such as work experience and language proficiency rather than

specific professional skills. Further, under the Canadian immigration scheme, work experience includes equivalent part-time employment in one or more occupations that recognises the likelihood of women involvement in part-time jobs.

Overall, the paper concludes that skilled migration selection still contributes to gender inequalities and disadvantages female applicants through its construction of economic independence and 'skill'.

As outlined in this section, the recent academic literature on this topic is relatively sparse and focuses mainly on analyses of female skilled migrants' workplace and economic participation. The study undertaken for this thesis seeks to further develop this work by extending the analysis to experience beyond the workplace. This thesis is distinctive as it aims to recognise the lived experiences of professional migrant women beyond the workplace and to explore how the migration experience constitute and are constitutive of women's wider social realities and identities.

However, the thesis fits with an international literature on skilled professional migrants that is emerging in the social sciences. One distinctive new trend that is being researched is the recruitment of professional female migrants in particular fields, such as nursing. Thus, Louise Ryan's studies of Irish nurses in the UK provides a useful addition to the experiences of professional female migrants in Australia. In one of her studies on how migrant women access and sustain social networks, Ryan (2007), drawing upon social network theories, found that migrant women are not only involved in transnational relationships and kinship networks, but also form 'weak ties', dyadic relationships and strong ties within local communities. Most of Ryan's participants quickly established new circles of friends with their neighbours, work colleagues, fellow students. The extent to which these new networks were ethnic-specific depended largely upon the ethnic makeup of the area they lived in. In addition, as skilled professionals, most women formed 'weak ties' with other professionals outside their immediate social circle. Ryan (2007) argues that any study on migrant women's support and social networks needs to combine a study of their transnational network with a consideration of local post-migration 'weak and strong' ties they establish within their local neighbourhoods. It is to this kind of detailed knowledge of contemporary women's experiences that this thesis seeks to contribute.

Debating immigration: Who benefits?

As discussed, ever since 1788 immigration has played an important part in Australian social, economic and demographic development. The impact of immigration has been so obvious because Australia has such a small population base. It has done so in a number of different ways, and many of these have been scrutinised in a vast body of recent literature. Immigration is everyone's business. Every Australian has a strong interest in who the immigrants are because immigration has changed this country and will continue to do so. Immigration has been an important source of skilled labour in Australia from the time of white settlement. The focus on skills has remained a centrepiece of Australia's immigration program. Nevertheless, this element of the immigration program has been controversial and the literature reveals a diversity of opinions and conflicting recommendations. From 1980s immigrants' presence in Australia was so recognisable and so diverse in its birthplaces that many policy makers and academics started to ask whether Australia needed immigrants at all. It is not the intention of this work to analyse the economic arguments put forward to support migration, but a few of the more commonly made points might be repeated.

It has been a common assumption in a variety of publications that an immigration program with a high proportion of skilled entrants is to be preferred over one with a low proportion. The Fitzgerald report that came out in 1988 and was called '*Immigration: A Commitment to Australia*' focused its attention on economic aspects of immigration policy and recommended an intake of about 150,000 migrants per annum. The report emphasised that skilled migrants with business experience and high level of education should be preferred (1988, cited in Jupp, 1998). Advocates of high levels of skilled migration have suggested that skilled migration stimulates aggregate demand, addresses skills shortages, enhances prospects for economic growth and provides much needed flexibility in the labour market (Betts, 2003; Clarke, 2007; Cobb-Clark, 2000; Garnaut et al., 2003; Hawthorne, 2008; Richardson, 2002; Vanstone, 2003). For example, official government literature (Vanstone, 2003) contended that economic development can be effected only with an increased labour supply from overseas. The argument was that skilled migrants create jobs and new business opportunities as they bring ideas and new technologies to different areas of the labour market such as industry, business and medicine. Migrants are also seen to bring new skills which are not taught or are in short supply in Australia, and their understanding of different cultures, languages and lifestyles as well as how overseas business works, help local

companies compete within Australia and overseas. As a former Minister of Immigration noted, skilled migrants with business expertise and money create, on average, six new jobs and invest millions of dollars in the economy (Vanstone, 2003). The government is convinced that Australia requires skilled workers to overcome skill shortages and rejects the argument that retraining of the unemployed and apprenticeship programs should replace an intake of skilled workers. The training option is seen as too long-term and too expensive in a time of reduced government spending. Similarly, most economists would accept the proposition that an immigration program focused on skills will produce greater economic benefits (Clarke, 2007; Garnaut et al., 2003; Richardson, 2002).

Supporting the argument for the economic and social benefits of the skilled migration program, Clarke (2007) and Jamrozik (2001) have noted that unless this program is maintained, Australia will experience an inability to develop a productive economy and an adequate internal market to maintain economic stability. This situation will make Australia increasingly vulnerable to any changes in the world market. In addition, those who support the program point out that unemployment rates appear to be significantly lower among skilled migrants compared to their family reunion and refugee counterparts. For example, Hawthorne (2008) argues that 60 per cent of independent principle applicants work in high-skilled positions within six months post arrival.

In support of the immigration program, Graeme Hugo (2004) asserts that although there is a tendency for Australia to be considered as a clearly immigration country, it is also a country of significant emigration. According to Hugo, with an increase in the skill profile of migrants, Australia can expect an increase in settler loss since skilled migrants have a greater prospect of remigration than family migrants. The country is also witnessing a new tendency of increasing out-movement of Australian residents. In recent years, departures on a long-term or permanent basis have been very significant in relation to new arrivals (Hugo, 2008).

In spite of the fact that much research supports the current skilled migration program, arguments against this initiative have abounded (Betts, 2010; Birrell, 2006; Brown, 2008; Carr, 2002a, 2002b; Giesecke, 2007; Healy, 2009; Minchin, 2010). James Giesecke (2007), for example, asserts that a skilled migration program reduces relative wages in targeted occupations. He argues that the program causes the economy to be larger, however the skill

effect remains small. Further, Ernest Healy (2009, p.23) warns that in the current sluggish economic climate, ‘the combined competitive pressure within the Australian labour market from increasing labour force participation by older people and historically-high net overseas migration will continue to diminish and downgrade the employment prospects of younger Australians’. In addition, the former NSW Premier Bob Carr (2002a, 2002b, cited in Withers, 2003, p.18) argues that Australia ‘in fact does not have an ageing population and that, globally, population expansion produces poverty, misery and environmental degradation’.

Recently, concerns about the environmental impact of increased population have entered the debate. As more than half of the Australian population increase has come from immigration, it is argued that the world is not only faced with physical degradation caused by excessive pollution but also with an almost irreversible population explosion (Jupp, 1998). The stabilisation and preferably the reduction of the Australian population can only be possible by ending immigration altogether and ensuring the number of people coming to Australia is the same as the number of people leaving. For example, the former Treasury Secretary Ken Henry (2009, cited in Walker, 2010) argues that Australia is not well placed to address environmental challenges caused by increased population:

With a population of 22 million people, we have not managed to find accommodation with our environment. Our record has been poor and in my view, we are not well placed to deal effectively with the environmental challenges posed by a population of 35 million (p.39)

There is also a growing concern that the immigration program is losing public support. Katharine Betts (2010, p.61), for example, claims that ‘most Australians want stability and very few find the old populate-or-perish argument compelling’. Betts comments that Australian people dislike the argument that Australia should take the skilled workers from other countries and nearly half of people point to the damage that population growth is doing to the environment. Seventy two per cent of voters think that Australia does not need more people (Betts, 2010, p.36). Betts also comments on the relationship between gender and attitudes to growth stating that ‘women are much more pro-stability than men’ (Betts, 2010, p.25).

Among the reasons often given by those who disagree with the skilled program is that in spite of the significant numbers and diversity of human resources of high quality imported from overseas, the skilled migration program has failed to use these resources effectively. For example, Jamrozik (2001, p.86) perceives the program as a ‘supplementary labour force’ since skilled migrants continue to fill the places at the bottom of the occupational ladder. Underutilisation of skills obtained overseas is often associated with a lack of the recognition of overseas qualifications and experiences, and because of the significance of this factor for the success of the program and of the resettlement of migrants, I have devoted a separate section to it.

Skills assessment and recognition process

Since recognition of overseas qualifications plays a vital role in the ability of migrants to enter the Australian labour market, it remains a point of debate and has continued to be discussed widely in a large body of literature. The gap between migrants pre-existing qualifications and experience and their employment opportunities in Australia has been well-documented (Birrell, 2001; Birrell et al., 2006; Tilbury & Colic-Peisker, 2007; Hawthorne, 1996, 2002; Iredale, 2005; Kell, 2005; Shah & Long, 2004; Wagner, 2003; Wagner & Childs, 2006). Regine Wagner (2003), for example, in her publication *“Recognition of Prior Learning in Higher Education and the Australian Labour Market”*, emphasises difficulties skilled migrants face when attempting to enter the Australian labour market at a level commensurate with the work they performed prior to migration. It is well known that many skilled migrants are wrongly located and inappropriately rewarded in the Australian labour market. There are many professional migrants who have formal qualifications and often have many years of experience in their field of expertise but who remain unable to practise these in Australia:

...skilled migrants are kept standing on the doormat of professional work, not invited in. Instead of an open door, ‘narratives of exclusion’ reflect the daily experiences of migrants as they go about their often frustrating attempts to be recognised as professionals. Their exclusion is subsequently characterised by skills atrophy, downgrading of qualifications (by universities and professional bodies) and a failure to obtain employment commensurate with their skills and experiences (Wagner & Childs, 2006, p.51)

The literature suggests that, in general, the skill level of immigrants has been higher than that of the resident Australian population, however, problems with skills recognition and skill utilisation influence migrants' actual occupational and skill outcomes. Recognition has been a serious problem particularly for migrants from non-English speaking countries:

Within one to five years of arrival, just 30 per cent of degree-qualified migrants were employed. However, few diploma holders had found work in any profession, and select non-English speaking background groups were characterised by acute labour market disadvantage (Hawthorne, 2002, p.55)

The employment outcome is significantly poorer for skilled migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds. Birrell (2006, pp.3-4) emphasises that non-English speaking migrants have significantly lower chance to be employed in their profession than English speaking migrants. Qualifications gained overseas, particularly in non-English speaking countries are often downgraded or discounted by the Australian labour market and/or higher educational institutions. According to Wagner and Childs (2006) the likely reason for the lack of recognition of overseas qualifications is the resistance to cultural diversity inherent in core institutions, discrimination and the defensive attitudes of trade and professional organisations aimed at protecting of status quo and their self-interests:

The underlying subterranean racisms likely to impact on formal and informal recognition processes provide some explanation as to their resistance to change. The exclusion of skilled migrants' professional expertise from well-paid, white-collar, privileged, white Australian professions reflects a more general malaise in the capacity of institutions to take knowledge gained outside Australian institutions seriously. It appears to be the case that university and labour market gatekeepers find it difficult to value the professional knowledge and skills of skilled migrants as they enter and manoeuvre within the Australian labour market (Wagner & Childs, 2006, p.61)

Wagner and Childs (2006) found that skilled migrants are often advised that in order to practise in their profession, they must undertake a new course of study or training to bridge the qualification or technology gap. They must 'buy Australian' (Wagner & Childs, 2006, p.57).

Adam Jamrozik (2001, p.91) takes a different tack and suggests that there is a possibility that specific skills are less transferable to the Australian labour market, or it might be that the Australian system simply provides a better education and training in certain areas. However, even when the professional skills are relevant to the Australian labour market, some overseas qualifications are not accepted in Australia. Many migrants with professional backgrounds (such as engineers and doctors) still face licensing and recruitment problems, mainly due to the policies of employers and professional associations. Jamrozik (2001) asserts that even if qualifications are eventually recognised, migrants may be unable to enroll and complete appropriate bridging courses as well as gain work experience, which will increase their opportunities of gaining employment in the field for which they have been trained. Many become unemployed or compete with others for employment in jobs requiring lower levels of skill.

The Australian government, on the other side, expressed an alternative point of view in regard to the recognition of overseas qualifications. The Productivity Commission Research Report (2006, p.184), for example, reveals that ‘compared with other countries, the Australian regime for assessing and recognising overseas skills and qualifications is generally regarded as well-developed and successfully achieves its goals’. Another opinion expressed in the literature is that qualification assessment is not an important process in the settlement process (Cobb-Clark & Chapman, 1999, p.33). Cobb-Clark and Chapman state that only a small proportion of new immigrants cite the lack of qualification recognition as a problem in finding a job. This suggests that these immigrants have been successful in finding employment that utilises their training in spite of the fact that their qualifications have not formally been recognised. Given the relationship between skill recognition, employment and social inclusion, the relevance of skill recognition to the employment experiences of professional female migrants will be explored.

Theoretical approaches to the migration-integration process

Having looked at migration in general terms and at Australian immigration policies, it is important to also refer to those areas of theory which are of particular relevance to the present study, especially those that describe the reasons for and the stages of migration and the integration process.

It appears that the analysis of Ravenstein (1885, 1889, cited in Lee, 1966) remains the starting point for work in much migration theories. Ernst Georg Ravenstein was a geographer who worked at the Royal Geographical Society in London. Ravenstein (1885, cited in Lee, 1966) comments on his motivation to research the migration processes:

...migration appeared to go on without any definite law, which first directed my attention to the subject (p.47)

Based upon the British Census of 1871 and 1881 and data from more than twenty countries in 1889, some of Ravenstein's laws of migration are summarised below:

- Migration and Distance- 'Migrants proceeding long distances generally go by preference to one of the great centres of commerce and industry'.
- Technology and Migration- 'Does migration increase? I believe so! Wherever I was able to make a comparison I found that a development of manufactures and commerce have led to an increase of migration'.
- Dominance of the Economic Motive- 'Bad or oppressive laws, heavy taxation, an unattractive climate, uncongenial social surroundings, and even compulsion, all have produced and are still producing currents of migration, but none of these currents can compare in volume with that which arises from the desire inherent in most men to 'better' themselves in material respect' (Ravenstein, 1889, cited in Lee, 1966, pp.47-48).

In the more than a century that has passed and while there have been thousands of migration studies meantime, Ravenstein's theories of migration are still relevant and have been widely referenced in current literature.

As migration can be defined as a permanent or semi-permanent change of residence, every migration movement includes an origin and a destination. Although there is no universally accepted definition of a 'migrant', and the use of the term in public debate varies significantly, migrant can be defined as a foreign born or a person who leaves one country to settle permanently in another (Anderson & Blinder, 2015). The theoretical approaches associated with various forces at both ends of the migratory journey are often known as *push- pull* theories. In 1938, Rudolf Herberle argued that migration is caused by a series of

forces that impel an individual to leave one place (push) and attract an individual to another (pull). For example, if individual needs are not met at the place where they live, then the migration to somewhere else may be considered. In addition, it is also possible that in spite of being satisfied with their current situation, promising information about greater opportunities elsewhere may encourage the individuals to immigrate (Lewis, 1982). Push and pull factors usually include a broad range of socio-political and environmental factors as well as economic ones. Donald Bogue (1969) outlined some of the push and pull factors as follows:

Push factors:

- A decline in the national economy of a country, or a severe downturn in an individual income level;
- Political changes that may be unwelcome or dangerous for an individual in a country;
- Unemployment- inability to secure a permanent position or the unlikelihood of gaining such a position;
- Alienation from the family or the wider community;
- Natural catastrophe- earthquake, floods, fire, drought, epidemics.

Pull factors:

- Better employment opportunities, better income;
- Better climate;
- Opportunities for career advancement;
- Self-improvement;
- Greater educational opportunities;
- Family relationships;
- Appeal of new activities (cultural, recreational and intellectual).

Siew-Ean Khoo, Graeme Hugo and Peter McDonald (2011) conducted a factor analysis of the reasons indicated by European skilled migrants for coming to Australia and identified four main factors: employment related reasons, Australia's lifestyle, adverse conditions in the country of origin, and social networks. Although a majority of immigration policies assume that skilled migration is driven predominantly by salary, job and career opportunities, Khoo, Hugo and McDonald (2011) found that the motivations of skilled migrants are much more complex. European migrants, for example, are more likely to

indicate Australia's lifestyle as an important reason for migration due to Australia's lower population density, more housing space, lack of pollution, and a warmer climate. However, better employment-related prospects elsewhere, dissatisfaction with conditions in Australia and the lack of social network, including the view that it would be better for the children elsewhere may facilitate migrants' return or remigration.

Everett Lee (1966) in the late 1960s offered a general scheme of people's spatial movements. Analysing existing literature on migration and population (Bogue & Hagood 1953; Duncan, 1956; Kirk, 1946; Stouffer, 1960; Thomas, 1938;), Lee concludes that migration is a complex phenomenon and involves a set of broader and more nuanced factors which include factors associated with the area of origin, factors associated with the area of destination, intervening obstacles, and personal factors. There are countless factors which attract people to some areas and repel them from other areas. For example, a good climate is attractive to most while a bad climate is unpleasant to nearly everyone. Factors associated with the area of origin may include long-term acquaintance with the area, social network, family ties, culture and language, friends, identity and social status. Factors associated with the area of destination may include improved educational and professional opportunities, economic and welfare benefits, changing environment. Intervening obstacles are usually those of the immigration laws of receiving countries, costs associated with movement, language barriers, and so on. Personal factors such as personal contacts, available information and awareness of conditions elsewhere also play a decisive role in people's determination to change their lives. Some personalities welcome change for the sake of change while others resist change whether of place, residence or other changes. Interestingly, Lee (1966) highlights that the decision to migrate, while it may result from a comparison of factors at origin and destinations, combined with various obstacles and personal elements, is never completely rational, and for some persons the rational component is much less than the irrational. Knowledge of the area of destination is usually highly limited combined with great uncertainty associated with integration into a new environment. In addition, not all persons who migrate reach that decision themselves. Children, wives who accompany their husbands and people forced to leave their countries are usually excluded partially or fully from the decision-making process. Expanding on this argument, Lee (1966) concludes that migration is selective and migrants cannot be considered a random sample of the population of origin.

Another relevant theory of migration is that of Myrtle Reul (1977, cited in Cox, 1980) who sees migration as a *process* and not as a simple act. He divides the migration process into four stages. These four are making a decision, breaking with the past, a transitional period, and an adjustment period. Each stage is extending over a variable period of time and presents its own challenges. Reul (1977, cited in Cox, 1980, p.11) argues that if the decision is inadequately made this will increase the possibility of dissatisfaction with the new life. It also seems that, unfortunately, many immigrants do not have a sufficiently clear understanding of their country of destination to make such a significant decision. Breaking with the past is Reul's second phase. For most people it is hard to sever bonds with relatives and friends left behind. During this time immigrants may experience some degree of separation anxiety that can negatively affect the integration process. The transitional stage Reul sees as a period of uncertainty and a time when the new migrant is prone to impulsive decision making such as returning to their homeland. This period, according to Reul, may be a dangerous one and can jeopardize the on-going integration process. For this reason, it is very important that facilities and services are available to assist migrants during this stage. The final adjustment period begins when the immigrant decides to create a satisfactory life in their new country and accepts that life is an on-going process of adaptation to changing circumstances. There is a further and additional set of factors which might be said to shape adjustment to the migration experience and these are individual factors: on these depend how successfully each individual is able to move through the stages of the migration-integration process (Reul, 1977, cited in Cox, 1980).

In contrast to Reul's view of the immigration process which assumes that integration or adjustment is possible, Castles and Davidson (2000, p.153) argue that minorities within the population, such as various ethnic groups, can no longer be assimilated because 'of the speed and volume of migration, because of population mobility, the cultural and social diversity among migrants, the ease with which they can remain in contact with the society of origin, and the situation of rapid economic and cultural change'. According to Castles and Davidson the notion of the immigrant who comes to stay and can be assimilated as an individual into a relatively homogeneous society is no longer viable.

In relation to the significant shift in global movement, its complexity and diversity, there has been an associated principal change in migration theory beginning with the work of Basch, Schiller and Szanton Blank (1994) who argue that traditional migration theories do

not effectively capture the new reality in which migrants identify and commit to more than one nation-state. Thus, *transnational theory* emerged focusing on the linkages between origin and destination rather than on definitive resettlement at the destination country (Faist, 2000; Hugo, 2006; King, 2002; Levitt, 2001). As Graeme Hugo (2008) points out, traditional analysis of countries usually dichotomised nations as being either origin/destination or sending/receiving and these dichotomies are increasingly inappropriate in contemporary global migration. It is, therefore, important to analyse countries in pairs for which there are movements in both directions. Transnationalism has been defined by so called ‘hyperconnectivity’ between migrants and their home communities, meaning that ‘migrants are now connected instantaneously, continuously, dynamically and intimately to their communities of origin’ (Dade, 2004, p.1). This is a fundamental break from previous eras of migration. As Hugo (2008) asserts permanent and return migration are only the tip of the iceberg of a picture of international movement. Complexity, circularity and reciprocity have become the fundamental aspects of the migration system. The migrant’s initial move may be just the first in a chain of moves which migrants intend to make. Theoretical approaches to migration thus provide a range of conceptual questions to be explored.

Integration of skilled migrants in Australia

There is a general assumption, particularly in the literature produced by government that immigrants can and will find their own way. This has been especially the case in relation to immigrants who came to Australia as independent applicants. The former Minister for Immigration, Amanda Vanstone (2003) suggests that business and skilled migrants ‘quickly obtain jobs and /or invest in businesses’. Bertone and Casey (2000) support this contention arguing that professional and highly skilled migrants from non-English speaking countries have found that doors are opening for them in those sectors which are expanding- business services, finance, accounting, IT, media and the Internet. They stress that these migrants are ‘winners out of the process of globalisation and eagerly sought by many countries, including Australia’ (Bertone & Casey, 2000, p.40).

However, Bertone & Casey (2000, p.57) identified migrants’ lower levels of English language skill as contributing to the higher unemployment rates, lower earnings and overrepresentation in lower skilled occupations. This finding reflects workplace changes

which emphasise team work, flexibility and communication which may be viewed as barriers to non-English speaking migrants' capacity to communicate and adapt. Indeed, the vast body of research has proposed that skilled migrants fare less well in the Australian labour market than 'equivalent' Australian-born workers, although the gap is much less for those from English speaking background than for those from non-English speaking backgrounds. According to the literature on this subject, the factors preventing immigrants from reaching their full potential in the labour market and therefore negatively affecting their experiences are: lack of fluency in English, lack of recognition of qualifications, prejudice and discrimination on the part of employers as well as personal and situational factors (Birrell, 2001, 2006; Birrell et al., 2006; Wagner, 2003; Wagner & Childs, 2006). There is also growing evidence (Hawthorne, 1994; Jones & McAllister, 1991; Watson, 1996 cited in Bertone & Casey, 2000) that employers discriminate against job applicants on the basis of accent, race, ethnicity or class.

Settlement

The literature on immigration and immigration policies can be divided into two distinctive parts: one part dealing with 'intake' issues including the numbers, composition and selection process, and the other part dealing with 'settlement' issues that focus on the process of settlement and the role of settlement services. Australia has had migrant settlement programs from colonial times, originally pioneered by Caroline Chisholm in the 1850s which involved a range of settlement services, although they have been reduced in recent years.

The concept of settlement in its broadest sense involves 'securing a permanent footing in a new country' (Wooden, Holton, Hugo, & Sloan, 1990, p.324). Cox (1985) has broken down the migration process into four stages: pre-movement, transition, resettlement and integration. The settlement part of this process can be further broken into stages. For example, Benyei (1960) posited three phases: resettlement: that is finding the first job and accommodation, reestablishment: that is acquisition of more permanent accommodation, and integration: that is where identification with the new country is strong enough to lead to naturalisation.

The policy structure for the settlement process has placed its emphasis on the priority of full

social integration into Australian society. The issues of settlement, therefore, became strongly linked with the issue of what it means to be integrated, and how best to secure the integration outcome. In the first of the major settlement reports - the Galbally Report (Galbally, 1978) in 1978 - settlement was defined as:

...the complex process of adjusting to a new environment following migration. It is a long-term process affecting all immigrants, and particularly those coming from cultures different from that dominant in Australia, or without a well-established ethnic group here. Its end point is the acceptance by and the feeling of belonging to the receiving society. It implies change both in the individual migrant and the host society (p.29)

Developing this definition, Shergold and Nikolaou (1986) in their report to ROMAMPAS (The Review of Migrant and Multicultural Programs and Services), claim:

... the fact is that the 'settlement process'- perceived as the movement toward full participation and equitable access to Australian society- is determined by far more than length of residence. The extent of settlement over time depends on the conjunction of the migrant's life cycle (age and family status at the moment of migration); individual characteristics (sex, education, occupation, wealth, language and culture); and Australia's economic cycle (labour market demand, availability of housing, business opportunities, price movements and the supply of welfare benefits) (pp.62-63)

It has been argued that in the mid-1960s the assimilation policy, sometimes referred to as 'Anglo-conformity', failed as migrants were unwilling to assimilate and lose their original cultural identity. High return rates of immigrants, coupled with growing apathy and general unhappiness, led to the emergence of a 'milder' form of assimilation, called integration (Jayasuriya, 1985). This more liberal position towards migrant settlement emphasised the tolerance of cultural differences and a diversity of lifestyles.

It followed from this analysis that the settlement process is not an inevitable process of integration which is finally completed after two, five or ten years. Adverse economic conditions coupled with personal characteristics and inequalities in access for jobs and

resources, may present long-term obstacles for full participation, leaving integration and settlement as an unfinished and incomplete process. For some immigrants the integration process may last a life time.

More recently, Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2003) proposed a typology of settlement styles that hinged on ‘activity’ and ‘passivity’ in order to capture the experiences of refugees who arrived in Australia in 1990s through to 2000s. The authors argue that the ‘choice’ of a settlement style primarily determined by refugees own resources combined with policies that inform the resettlement support in Australia. Active settlers have a positive outlook on their migration experience: they learn English, study, look for a job, or are in paid employment. They tend to be goal-oriented and future-oriented, and are involved with mainstream society through work, local community, or social networks. For these people, their occupation or profession tends to be the central aspect of identity and abandoning it would result in not only a loss of income and status, but also a loss of identity (Colic-Peisker, 2002). Passive settlers, on the other hand, see their pre-migration experiences as irreparable. Passive settlers are nostalgic about their previous life and tend to be loss-oriented. They live in social isolation from the mainstream society networking predominantly with family and friends for emotional and practical support. Many passive settlers are unemployed or underemployed in jobs below their qualifications. Research on ‘settlement’ has been important in identifying differences and distinctions in migrants’ experiences.

Support services

Numerous writers point to the important contribution of support services, of high quality and ready availability, to a positive settlement experience (Baker, Sloan, & Robertson, 1994; Jamrozik, 2001; Jupp, 1998). In 1978, the Galbally Report formulated principles concerning the right of immigrants to equal access to mainstream services and general community resources, but also acknowledged that, during the process of settlement, immigrants might need special services and provisions.

A range of the most important services that have attracted discussion and evaluation include:

- On-arrival information services;

- English language provision;
- Labour-market programs;
- Social welfare services (for example, Migrant Resource Centre);
- Translating and Interpreting services.

Over the period following 1947, the emphasis in settlement provision shifted to what became known as non-English speaking migrants. Financial support has been provided in forms of grants to ethnic and community groups, including Migrant Resource Centres to help new migrants settle quickly and become part of the Australian community. However, as previously discussed, after 1998, newly arrived skilled migrants were not allowed to access welfare until they had been in Australia for at least two years. Yet this period is the most difficult of all and the time when support -financial, social and emotional- is needed most acutely. Jamrozik (2001) found that for the majority of migrants, not having access to such supports has meant that this period of adjustment has been extremely painful and difficult.

Conclusion

In summary, immigration has undoubtedly been one of the most important strategies used by the Australian government to meet economic and demographic objectives by increasing labour supplies from overseas. The current immigration program has been characterised by reduction in family reunion intake, greater emphasis on Australian economic benefits and restriction of new arrivals' access to social and welfare services and payments. The primary policy objective of the program remains to increase the Australian labour force through admission of migrants with high level of human capital able to gain secure employment in the early period of settlement. The greater part of the migration literature demonstrates that migrants' settlement and employment prospects post-arrival have been uncertain and inconclusive. Confronted with a complex process of adjusting and integrating into a new environment, many skilled migrants have found themselves unemployed, or employed well below their skill level. Underutilisation of skills obtained overseas is often associated with the recognition of overseas qualifications and experiences. Recognition has been a serious problem, particularly for migrants from non-English speaking countries. In addition, migrants from non-English speaking countries are considered to be at particular disadvantage because they are more likely to lack fluency in English as well as having to

adjust to the different social norms, attitude and values associated with a new culture.

Despite the extent of research and debate about the presence of different kinds of migrants, the area of professional female migration and the experiences of those entering Australia under this category has been studied extremely partially. Existing literature acknowledges the ethnic and gendered patterns of women's employment and settlement experiences. Migrant women's settlement experiences result in significant changes in their values, priorities and identity. Unable to continue their careers, women are forced to accept their lives as mothers and wives. The difficulties encountered by migrant women seem to be greater than those experienced by men. This has prompted the researcher to ask: How has the migration experience and settlement been both constituted by, and constitutive of, professional migrant women's wider social realities and identities. How does living in Australia affect this target group in cultural, identity and status terms? What determines their life chances, employment prospects, and feelings of economic and emotional integration into the broader community? Do professional female migrants feel included in the Australian community? Do they want to be included? What does social inclusion mean for them?

Chapter Three: Culture, Identity and Belonging: Concepts, Ideas and Debates

This chapter explores related approaches to culture and social inclusion. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section is devoted to the concept of culture and presents an overview of definitions and theories of culture. In particular, it interrogates the significance of cultural difference between diverse cultures. The section analyses how cultural integration and transformation are negotiated under the impact of the migration process. The second section is devoted to the concepts of identity and belonging and discusses debates about the meaning and significance of identity and belonging for understanding and interpreting the experiences of social inclusion, migration and settlement.

Migration and culture

The first section of the chapter is devoted to the concept of culture mainly for the following reasons. Firstly, the role of culture and cultural diversity remains a critical factor in whether people, and migrants in particular, are socially included or excluded (Hayter, 2009). According to Jupp and associates (2007), cultural uniformity is essential to achieving and sustaining a socially inclusive and cohesive society. One of the major challenges to social inclusion policies in Australia is ‘a greater and deeper diversity among new residents’ (Jupp et al., 2007, p.6). Secondly, culture plays a central role in constructing people’s social identity, patterns of behaviour and their lifelong view of the social world. Culture gives people identity (Liffman, 1981, cited in Jamrozik et al., 1995). Thirdly, many social scientists and theorists argue that living in increasingly multicultural, multiethnic, multireligious environments presents opportunities and risks to many generations of both majority and minority citizens (Bader, 2001). Is social inclusion possible in such multicultural societies? Some are convinced that integrating an increasing diversity of migrants from all over the world in the Western countries demands fundamental rethinking of critical concepts like culture, ethnicity and identity. Fourthly, the social inclusion experiences of professional female migrants are strongly influenced by their original culture, as well as migrants’ changing sense of identity and belonging as they negotiate their integration into a new Australian culture. Therefore, this section presents some definitions and theories of ‘culture’ and, in particular, interrogates the significance of cultural difference between diverse cultures. It also analyses how cultural integration and

transformation are negotiated under the impact of the migration process.

What is culture?

The concept of culture is a widely discussed subject in many disciplines and multiple interpretations of this concept exist. John Christopher (2001) states that human life is not conceivable without culture because it provides the understanding which enables the social world to have a meaning. Christopher argues that we are made up by our cultures, meaning that we can never fully detach ourselves from culture. Our culture also protects us from anxieties by structuring the environment and giving it a meaning. We know how to deal with life and death through cultural codes and traditions.

In the contemporary world there is a global culture, or international culture of commerce, trade and politics, facilitated and promoted by mass media, and a local culture which give an identity to nations, states and their populations (Jamrozik et al., 1995). For the purpose of this thesis, however, the focus will be on the local culture that shapes and influences our identity, our behaviour and our understanding of this world. According to Veit Bader (2001) culture is not only a highly contested but also a complex, multidimensional concept that has various understandings and has acquired multiple definitions. It has its origins in anthropology, where it was used to refer to 'a way of life' (Williams 1977, p.19). The sociological definition parallels the anthropological definition of culture. Formally defined:

... culture consists of the values the members of a given group hold, the norms they follow, and the material goods they create... Culture refers to the whole way of life of the members of a society. It includes how they dress, their marriage customs and family life, and their patterns of work, religious ceremonies and leisure pursuits... In fact, without culture, man would not be a human (Giddens, 1989, pp.31-32)

Culture, in the sociological sense, is a 'learned behaviour, the skills, knowledge and accepted ways of behaving in the society, the 'ways of life' of the society members, a design for living which is both learned and shared' (Haralambos & Holborn, 1991, pp.2-3).

Culture is both visible and invisible. As Robert Van Krieken and others (2006) put it:

At one level the importance of culture is obvious. The activities people engage in, their behaviour and their manners, the way they interact with other people and their expectations all shaped by their cultural environment, the ways in which distinct meanings are given to all aspects of their lives. The influence is less obvious when it shapes our view of the world, affecting the way we think and feel, the outlook we have on life and the meaning we attach to different situations (p.6)

Among different societies culture varies enormously. Every culture has its unique patterns of behaviour that might be perceived as alien by people of a different cultural origin. In Australia, Michael Liffman (1981) argues that often the understanding of culture is superficial, stereotyping and serves to divide people of different cultural backgrounds rather than improve their understanding of one another. As Liffman (1981) states:

Culture in the important sense, relates to the deep aspects of individual and group life. It deals with attitudes, values and assumptions about such universals as birth, death, pain, understanding of sex and family roles, of faith, divinity, luck, future, progress, misfortune and the like. In this sense, it is a deep and not easily understood facet of individual and group life (p.7)

From the definitions presented in this section culture is, needless to say, a complex and multidimensional phenomenon that varies significantly across societies. Culture gives identity, structure and guidelines to individuals, states and nations. In the next section the theoretical underpinning of culture will be presented and discussed.

Cultural dichotomies: The west versus the rest

Cultures are both similar and different. They vary around values, norms, traditions, customs, ways of behaviour, ethics, shared history and even representations of the social unconscious (Weinberg, 2003). Cultural differences can be framed in terms of cultural dichotomies (Hermans & Kempen, 1998). A dualism is generally acknowledged between individualist Western cultures versus collectivist non-Western cultures or selves (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Laungani, 2001; Marsella, 1985; Shweder & Bourne, 1984; Triandis, 1990, 1995). Pittu Laungani (2001) points out four major dimensions of difference between Western and non-Western culture:

- 1) Individualism versus Communalism (Collectivism),
- 2) Cognitivism versus Emotionalism,
- 3) Free Will versus Determinism,
- 4) Materialism versus Spiritualism.

The cultural patterns of individualism versus collectivism have been discussed widely in the literature. Shweder and Bourne (1984), for example, characterise the Western self as egocentric and the non-Western self as sociocentric. Markus and Kitayama (1991) write that in the Western cultures the focus is on independence where in the non-Western cultures the focus is on interdependence. Westerners maintain their independence from others while Easterners emphasise their attention to others. Triandis (1989) offers the following difference between individualism and collectivism. While individualists prioritise a personal agenda over the collective one, collectivists make no distinction between personal and collective or sacrifice personal goals for the collective ones. Marsella (1985, p.290) describes a Western self as independent and autonomous and non-Western self as one that is 'extended to include a wide variety of significant others'. So many discussions have been undertaken in this area (Hofstede, 1980, Kirkpatrick & White, 1985; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Sampson, 1988; Spiro, 1993; Triandis, 1989) that Kagitcibasi (1994) proclaimed the 1980s as the decade of individualism-collectivism, and this tendency continues, according to Lonner and Adamopoulos (1997), with no indications of disappearing.

Hubert Hermans and Harry Kempen (1998, p.113), however, have criticised the psychological tradition of cultural dichotomies as representing cultures as internally homogeneous and externally distinctive which 'by their nature are separating rather than fusing and static rather than following'. They argue that cultural differences in the form of dichotomies do not meet the challenge of globalisation and its implication for the sociology of culture and self. Hermans and Kempen (1998) believe the emphasis should rather be on cultural interchange and global interconnectedness. They claim the phenomenon of hybridisation can be seen as a result of cultural connection. Hybrid phenomena result from the transformation of current cultural practices into new ones.

Jan Nederveen Pieterse (1995), on the other hand, opposes the vision that cultural practices are moving toward cultural uniformity or hybridisation. He questions cultural influences of the West on the rest of the world and argues that the West fails to recognise the influence of

non-Western cultures on the West and on one another.

Further exploring the argument, Maykel Verkuyten (2005) insists that when people from different cultural backgrounds live close to each other, their feelings that others have different customs, habits, and ideas are accentuated rather than moderated. People observe and experience that the differences are not only stereotypical but have significant implications and relate to gender differences, values, norms, religious practices and habits. These differences are not imaginary, as the majority of intercultural conflicts and confrontations show. Culture is tacit, lived and physically felt. People are well aware of the cultural differences even it is hard for them to verbally express what those differences are (Verkuyten, 2005).

One of the contemporary approaches to culture is presented by Raewyn Connell (2007a). In *Southern Theory* Connell critiques the northerness of the general social theory of culture arguing that it is ‘overwhelmingly produced in the Global North’ (2006, p.237) and, ‘with few exceptions, sees and speaks from the Global North’ (2007b, p.368). She names the non-metropole regions of Latin America, Asia, Africa and Oceania as ‘Southern’ and the metropole (North) as the urban and cultural centres of the major imperial powers at the high tide of modern imperialism (Connell, 2007a). Reflecting on the writings of three of the most prominent theorists James Coleman, Anthony Giddens and Pierre Bourdieu, Connell (2007b) sees metropolitan theorising as fundamentally flawed as it neglects the southern perspective of the social world and culture and challenges the northern theory claim to represent universal social knowledge:

It is a striking fact that this body of writing, while insisting on the global scope of social processes and the irreversible interplay of cultures, almost never cites non-metropolitan thinkers and almost never builds on social theory formulated outside the metropole (p.379)

Connell suggests a more inclusive social science based on ‘engagement, critiques, respect and recognition’ (Connell, 2007a, 224). She calls for cooperation among theorists of the South as well as between the North and the South.

Another contemporary approach to culture is the theory of cultural *cosmopolitanism*. The

theme emerged in Anthony Giddens's work (2000) as a cultural expression of processes of globalisation. For Giddens, globalisation can be understood as a necessary precondition of cultural cosmopolitanism. Stevenson (2003) offers the following definition of cosmopolitanism:

Cosmopolitanism is a way of viewing the world that among other things dispenses with national exclusivity, dichotomous forms of gendered and racial thinking and rigid separations between culture and nature. Such a sensibility seeks to appreciate the ways in which humanity is mixed into intercultural ways of life (p.5)

The cosmopolitan citizen, therefore, is a 'citizen of the world', who is open to cultural differences and has a genuine desire to engage with people from other cultures.

Similarly, Lamont and Aksartova (2002, p.1) define cosmopolitanism in terms of a practice 'used by ordinary people to bridge boundaries with people who are different from them'. Utilising existing debates on cosmopolitanism, particularly those that emanate from a cultural studies perspective, Lamont and Aksartova (2002) conducted in-depth interviews to study cultural practices among working class men. Their interview data shows how cultural groups bridge boundaries of difference through general conversation. Rather than a cosmopolitanism grounded in the triumph of multicultural identities, Lamont and Aksartova (2002, p.18) refer to universal principles of human nature which 'enable people to resist racism' as evidence of everyday cosmopolitanism.

In socio-political research, Robinson and Zill (1997) have defined cultural cosmopolitanism as openness to cultural products free of local or national prejudices. They find a strong positive correlation between cosmopolitanism and the level of education, particularly those who studied social sciences and humanities courses. Additionally, women scored higher than men, as did black respondents and young people. Interestingly, cosmopolitans were also found to have a more positive and optimistic attitude and to be more satisfied with their life generally.

Cosmopolitans are culturally and geographically mobile. As Hall (2002) has recently declared, cosmopolitans have the intellectual and technical resources to gain employment across national boundaries and have an ability to emphasise with cultural practices

originated outside their home country.

Although there is an argument in the literature (Mignolo, 2002) on whether cosmopolitanism can remove the historical barriers of gender and race, as a cultural ideal for many, it continues to structure patterns of engagement with cultural differences across the globe.

Religion and culture

Cultural diversity in Australian society is multidimensional. In addition to ethnic, socio-economic, racial and social class differences, religion is another significant aspect of Australian cultural diversity. In general, a religion is regarded as a:

...set of beliefs and practices, usually involving acknowledgement of a divine or higher being or power, by which people ought to conduct their lives both practically and in a moral sense (ABS, 1996)

In 1983 the High Court of Australia defined religion as:

...a complex of beliefs and practices which point to a set of values and an understanding of the meaning of existence (ABS, 2005a)

The relationship between culture and religion remains strong. Religion is a significant factor and an important part of cultural and individual identity. According to Matthew Arnold (1960), culture has been inherently bounded with religion and, therefore, cannot be separated and discussed in isolation.

Although today the majority of individuals in Australian society engage with secular communities to feel included and connected, there are a growing number of people associated with faith-based communities. Despite the fact that attendance at Christian churches in Australia have declined with only 15 per cent of Australians attending church at least once a month, the decline appears to have stopped and there is a sign of growth, especially among young people (Mackay, 2008). Forty five per cent of Australians say they are at least somewhat religious and 74 per cent of people say they believe in God (Van

Krieken et. al., 2006, p.410). Table 3 presents changes in Australian religious affiliation between 1986 and 2006.

Table 3: Religious Affiliation, 1986, 1996 and 2006 (%)

Religious Affiliation	1986	1996	2006
Christians	73.0	70.9	63.9
Muslims	0.7	1.1	1.7
Hindus	0.1	0.4	0.7
Buddhists	0.5	1.1	2.1
Non-religions	12.7	16.6	18.7

Source: ABS, 2010b, Characteristics of the Population, cat no 1301.0

Since 1986, the number of people associated with Christianity declined from 73 per cent to 63.9 per cent in 2006. The number of non-religious people grew from 12.7 per cent to 18.7 per cent. In contrast, the number of people associated with non-Christian faiths has grown disproportionately in the last twenty years.

Many social commentators (Giddens, 1991; Mackay, 2008; Van Krieken et al., 2006) have concluded that, far from diminishing, the strength and diversity of religion is striking. Anthony Giddens (1991, p.195) comments that ‘religion not only refuses to disappear but undergoes a resurgence’. Religion increased its role as an ethnic maker, and continues to be used as an ideological force both uniting and dividing cultural groups (Van Krieken et al., 2006).

Table 4 provides changes in world religious affiliation between 1970 and 2000 and projects forward to 2025. Although it demonstrates a decrease of Christians in the world, it illustrates a significant increase in Muslims and a considerable decline in non-religious populations. These numbers also contrast the picture of religious decline in the West.

Table 4: World Religion Summary (%)

World Population (Millions)	1970 3696	2000 6055	2025 7824
Christians	34	33	33
Muslims	15	20	23
Hindus	13	13	13
Buddhists	6	6	5
All other religions	4	6	7
Non-religions	26	22	19

Source: Brierley, 2001, p.1

There is a strong argument in the literature that although increased diversity does not by itself threaten social cohesion, the differences between religious groups are real and can become sources of conflict (Bouma & Ling, 2007). Many associate the revival of religion with increased cultural and inter-ethnic conflicts around the world (Bouma, 2005; Ho, 2006). For example, Christine Ho (2006) writes:

Around the world we are witnessing the revival of religion in social life. The re-emergence of religion in public life has coincided with the rise of a ‘clash of civilisation’ framework for understanding inter-cultural relations, particularly since the September 11 attacks (p.1)

Sociologist Gary Bouma (2005, p.49) argues that ‘no one event has so clearly established the return of religion to significance in global human life as the attacks of September 11, 2001’. Therefore, the continuing strength of religion suggests that there is a problem with the assumption religion will eventually disappear from people’s life as proposed by social thinkers of the 19th and 20th Centuries such as Emile Durkheim, Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx and Max Weber. As Van Krieken and others (2006) comment, secularisation needs to be understood as a process that has occurred in Western countries. But even in the Western countries the re-emergency of religious attitudes is somewhat evident. The global resurgence of religion in the last several decades has lead some social commentators to re-examine the relationship between religion and modern life. Bruce (2002), for example, argues that religion will remain a meaningful social force as it provides powerful resources for groups seeking to defend themselves against perceived cultural or political invasion.

Although numerous cultural conflicts and political movements around the world have a strong religious factor, there has been a degree of tolerance of religious diversity in Australia.

Migration and cultural transformation

It is rarely questioned that culture plays a central role in the process of migrants' integration into a new society of a host country. Ethnic minority cultures at times differ significantly from the dominant Australian culture (Bader, 2001; Hayter, 2009; Jancz, 2000; Lo 2009; Verkuyten, 2005). Immigrants carry with them their cultural and social norms and values, lifestyle, skills and attitudes that would strongly influence their living experiences in a new country. Their existing values, view of the world and culture itself will be impacted by new experiences and interethnic interactions. It has been argued that this transcultural experience of difficult and unsettling processes of cultural negotiation are challenging to all parties involved. This study, in particular, is testing the professional female migrants' experiences of cultural negotiation in a new society. Migrants' identities and cultural views are impacted by the Australian multicultural society as much as the Australian cultural and social context is transformed under the influence of rapidly increasing immigrants from diverse cultural backgrounds (Lo, 2009). There are a number of theoretical constructs developed to explain the way migrants adapt to new culture and the challenges they face in the process.

Culture Shock Theory suggests that migrants from more culturally different societies experience greater challenges with their adjustment into a new culture than migrants from a similar cultural background (Oberg, 1960). Culture shock or 'shock of otherness' is characterised by 'anxiety of an isolated individual with nothing to turn to, no common sense on which to rely, and no relationship that can be taken for granted' (Schultz & Lavenda, 2009, p.60). Schumann (1986, p.383) defines culture shock as 'anxiety, disorientation and uncomfortable feelings'. The model highlights the correlation between the length of residence and the culture shock experience: the shorter the immigration period, the greater the predisposition and risk toward culture shock and mental illness. There is also a gendered dimension to culture shock. Roskies, Iida-Mirand and Strobel (1975), for example, point to the negative correlation between life changes, length of residence and gender, stating that most of the changes happen immediately after arrival

with a strong correlation between mental and physical illness and gender. Immigrant women are apt to be greater sickness prone than men.

A second theoretical paradigm, *Social Isolation Theory*, indicates that severe social isolation prevents migrants carrying out their social roles which they normally performed in their own culture, and this might contribute to the onset of mental illness (Jaco, 1970). According to Weinberg (1967), migrants' feelings of desocialisation and loneliness are strongly associated with higher rates of schizophrenia.

A related hypothesis, *Cultural Change Theory*, focuses on the disrupting effect on the psychological side of migrants undergoing cultural change. The supporters of this theory (Abel & Hsu, 1949; Derbyshire, 1969; Papajohn & Spiegel, 1971) suggest that the adoption of new, unfamiliar cultural values disorganises migrants' behaviour and may result in significant psychological distress and higher incidence of mental illness. Marek Jancz (2000) suggests that all these theories have one thing in common: the stress associated with the immigration process. The stress could be a consequence of the disruption in migrants' performance of their social roles, disturbance of their psychological orientation and by significant cultural differences between home and the new society.

The model of *Acculturation* is theorised as a process of negotiation and mediation between incompatible positions, or as a 'mixing and moving' as migrants 'adapt to the values of the host country while holding on to their own cultural values' (Lewis, 2005, p.96). Bhatia and Ram (2001) define acculturation as a process people undergo when they are socialised in one culture and then move to another. Acculturation, though, should not be viewed as a culture shedding process. Rather, acculturation is a social process that refers to cultural change as a result of migrants' prolonged and direct contact with the host culture (Berry, 1990). There are several explanations for different degrees of migrants' adaptation into a new cultural environment. The most widely accepted model of acculturation has been developed by Berry (1990) who points to four major acculturation categories based on two questions migrants ask themselves: 'Is it of value to preserve my cultural identity and characteristics?' and 'Is it of value to sustain relationships with other groups?' The answer to these questions determines the category the migrant belongs to: *assimilation*, *integration* or *biculturalism*, *separation* or *rejection* and *marginalisation* or *deculturation* (Alpass et al., 2007).

Assimilation occurs when migrants relinquish their own heritage and cultural traditions and adopt cultural beliefs and behaviour of the dominant group (Alpass e. al., 2007). The immigrant who identifies only with the new culture develops an assimilated identity. Supporters of the assimilation model (Chiswick, 1978) argue that adopting the values and behaviour of the dominant culture is necessary to access working opportunities with increased income. However, as Schultz and Lavenda (2009, p.36) argue, permanent assimilation is ‘unrealistic as migrants prefer to maintain ties to the homeland or to migrant communities elsewhere’.

Integration occurs when migrants maintain their cultural heritage while fully participating in a new culture (Bagnoli, 2007). The migrant who retains a strong ethnic identity as well as identify with a host society is considered to have an integrated identity (Pio, 2005). Some commentators (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martinez, 2000; Tadmor & Tetlock, 2006; Vijver & Phalet, 2004) refer to the integration category as biculturalism which results from sharing original values while learning and respecting new ones. Cultural identities, as Lo (2009) argues, may remain independent of each other, and the activation of each identity is context driven. Integration is often considered as a successful immigration outcome where the migrant is able to integrate both the original and host cultural values.

Separation or rejection occurs when migrants preserve their original culture and have no interest to engage with a new society (Alpass et al., 2007). The migrant who has a strong ethnic identity and does not identify with, or even rejects, the new culture has a separated identity (Pio, 2005). Berry (1997) defines the separation category as the preservation strategy where migrants consider the relationship with the broader community as not important to them and tend to avoid interactions with people of different cultural backgrounds.

Finally, *marginalisation or deculturation* occurs when migrants lose engagement with their cultural group and are unwilling to adjust to the broader society (Alpass et al., 2007). Marginalisation mainly results from severe acculturation stress where migrants disconnect themselves from the old culture and reject the new culture too. Migrants who associate themselves with neither old nor new culture display a marginalised identity (Pio, 2005).

There are various factors that influence the acculturation type. For example, Ekblad, Kohn

and Jansson (1998) suggest that significant differences between home and host cultures, migrants' social support and host country's attitude towards migrants play significant roles. When the differences between cultures in the home country and the country of destination are substantial, the migrants are unable to cope with the cultural change and the migration experience can often result in severe acculturation stress and displacement. However, as Homi Bhabha (1989, p.66) argues, 'it is not only the displaced who experience a displacement'. People living in familiar places they were born and grew up in, find 'the nature of their relation to place changed and a connection between the place and their culture broken' (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992, p.10). Macken (2011, p.64) argues that 'average Australians face rapid and significant change in their culture and way of life as a result of migration and there is not much they can do about it, except watch it unfold'.

Theories of acculturation have a shortcoming as they assume that migration is a process of permanent movement of the individuals from one country to another. It is quite possible nowadays to live one's life across national borders maintaining social attachments and the old way of life. Cultural anthropologists Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch and Christina Blanc-Szanton (1992) develop a concept of transnational social spaces as many migrants now possess dual citizenship and maintain their presence in more than one country. They refer to *transnationalism* as the emerging phenomenon of migration where migrants, through regular movement across borders, preserve cultural, social, economic, religious and political relations with both home and host countries. It is migrants' desire to identify with the original cultural and ethnic heritage.

Steven Vertovec (2001, 2004, 2010) has done an extensive work on migration, multiculturalism and transnationalism. According to Vertovec (2010) the concept of transnationalism is not new. Throughout history, and certainly over the last century, migrants have maintained their contact with their families, organisations and communities in their home countries and elsewhere in the diaspora. Lately, the extent and degree of transnational engagement have surged among migrants largely due to easy access to the telephone and the internet and inexpensive and accessible international travel:

Enhanced transnationalism is substantially transforming several social, political and economic structures and practices among communities worldwide in both places of migrant origin and reception (Vertovec, 2010, p.90)

Vertovec (2009) highlights that it is not automatically true that the more transnational migrants are the less integrated they are, or that the less integrated they are the stronger their transnational mode of association. His empirical research has demonstrated the complex relationship between transnationalism and migrants' integration. The findings have revealed that across a range of variables, transnational participation has a complex and largely positive relationship with processes of integration. While migrants continue feeling attached to home countries and communities elsewhere, they are quite capable of developing a new life, social network, livelihood and political interests in their places of settlement. Vertovec (2009) expects transnationalism to widen, intensify and accelerate leading to more cosmopolitan sense of participation and belonging.

In Australia, Raelene Wilding (2009, 2012) has done an extensive work on transnationalism and social inclusion of refugees. In one of the studies on Karen young people (aged 16 - 30) from refugee background living in Melbourne, Wilding (2012) found two key features of the current environment of globalisation and transnationalism. Firstly, there is the deterritorialisation of belonging: belonging no longer requires observance of geographic borders. Secondly, there is an evident shift towards transnational rather than national identification and practices. For young refugees, a strong sense of connection to a Karen community was not in conflict of being Australian. Wilding (2009, p.163) argues that in a current environment of transnationalism, the notion of social inclusion neglects the significance of the transnational networks and mobility for individual lives:

The historical localism of 'social inclusion' seems to result in the concept being applied only to examples in which people are fixed in a particular place – the 'local community'. Even when people are identified as participating in no-local networks, they are usually identified as communicating with others who are also fixed to their own, distinct, local community...In this presumption of fixed place, the patterns of mobility are rendered invisible

The concept of transnationalism is thus particularly relevant to this study: it captures the reality of many migrants' lives, moving physically and virtually between geographical spaces, but also forming their relationships; their social, economic and political participation in communities; and their identities in the context of these movements.

To summarise this section, migration implies relocation from one cultural space to another. Migrants' original culture plays a leading role in the process of their integration into a new society. As many migrants come from significantly different cultures, the cultural change may have a profound impact on migrants' experiences of social inclusion and exclusion as well as on social cohesion of the Australian society as a whole. Migrants' integration is often considered as a successful immigration outcome where migrants are able and willing to integrate both the original and host cultures' values.

Social policy and culture: Australian multiculturalism

Australia is the most culturally diverse country in the world. Since the late 1940s, millions of migrants from all over the world have arrived and settled here. Over the decades, migrants' cultural, social and economic composition has been changing. The Australian migration program has transformed the landscape of the Australian population and government's responses to this increasing cultural and ethnic diversity of newcomers. Community attitudes and governments' policies have shifted over the years from assimilation to integration, then to cultural pluralism, to be replaced with the concept of *multiculturalism* (Jamrozik et al., 1995). The model was borrowed from Canada where it was described as a cultural pluralism doctrine to unite English, French and other culturally diverse populations (Jayasuriya, 1993). Instead of the melting pot, the gastronomic equivalence here is the salad bowl (Fozdar, Wilding, & Hawkins, 2009). Despite the fact that multicultural policies have been operational for a few decades, multiculturalism as a policy is not settled (Hesse, 2000). Instead, it is an unsettled paradigm that 'is not a single doctrine, does not characterise one political strategy, and does not represent an already achieved state of affairs' (Hall, 2000, p.210). As shown in Table 5, there are several models of multiculturalism in the political domain. The term has multiple meanings and, as Gunew and Longley (1992) observe:

The word multiculturalism is harder than ever to contain or pin down. It is because it has been very busy on many fronts and is now being changed, by its triumphs, by its failures, but also by changes occurring around it. If the word 'culture' regarded as one of the most complex ones in the English language, it is not surprising that defining multiculturalism becomes such a challenging task (p.79)

Multiculturalism is based on an assumption of the equality of all cultures (Jupp et al., 2007). In principle, it is a belief that carefully chosen human beings can be settled within a stable and prosperous society. Thus the philosophy of multiculturalism does not allow for the inequality of races and the incompatibility of cultures.

Multiculturalism in Australia became official government policy with the election of the Whitlam Labor Government in 1972 and the appointment of Al Grassby as Minister for Immigration. The policy that provoked much 'soul searching' about Australian culture and values, was accepted by all Australian governments, state and federal. In the document '*National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia: Sharing Our Future*' (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 1989) multiculturalism was characterised as a concept for defining the ethnic and cultural diversity of the Australian society. The dimensions of social cohesion, equality and cultural identity were three major principles on which Australian multicultural society should be built. As defined by Jerzy Zubrzycki (1977):

Multiculturalism implies societies in which a number of groups, which differ from each other in ethnicity or religious beliefs, share a common bond. In this sense, Australian society is pluralistic with a wide range of cultural, racial, ethnic, religious and class differences (p.134)

The former Minister for Immigration Mr Chris Bowen (2011) has offered the following definition of multiculturalism:

Multiculturalism is about inviting every individual member of society to be everything they can be, and supporting each new arrival in overcoming whatever obstacles they face as they adjust to a new country and society and allowing them to flourish as individuals. It is a matter of liberalism. A truly robust liberal society is a multicultural society. To me, multiculturalism is a bit like a marriage. It has its stresses and strains. It has its misunderstandings and miscommunications. We have to remind each other occasionally that we are better off with each other. It takes nurturing; it takes care (p.3)

Thus multiculturalism was perceived as people's legitimate right to preserve their ethnic and cultural identity while accepting responsibilities for common citizenship (Jamrozik et

al., 1995). Pearson (2001) would argue that the pluralist ideology of multiculturalism has developed in an attempt to manage a culturally diverse population and ethnic movements searching for opportunities for resource control, status attainment and, possibly, self-governance.

Nevertheless, the concept of multiculturalism is widely debated by multicultural writers, policy makers, scholars and social commentators (Bannerji, 2002; Castles 1997, 1999a, 1999b; Castles, Kalantzis, Cope, & Morrissey, 1988; Collins, 1988; Cox, 2010; Eagleton, 2000; Fleras & Elliot, 2002; Ho, 2006; Jayasuriya, 1985, 1993, 2008; Jupp, 1984a, 1984b, 1989, 1996, 1999; Jupp et al., 2007; Lo, 2009; Lopez, 2000, 2005; Martin, 1981, 1991; Parekh, 2006). From its inception it has proved a highly contentious public policy. The debate has intensified particularly since September 11, 2001, when the question has been asked: Does multiculturalism strengthen or weaken a democratic society? The concept is only applicable to Western countries and not elsewhere because multiculturalism can only exist in liberal regimes (Akerman, 2011). The proponents of cultural pluralism (Zubrzycki, 1977) argue that the principles of multiculturalism of equality, social cohesion and cultural identity enable ethnic and cultural diversity to thrive while developing a strong common bond of citizenship. Mr Bowen (2011), for example, argues that the diversity of the Australian population has been unquestionably of benefit to Australia. It brings economic benefits and cultural benefits. As the Australian Multicultural Advisory Council (2011, p.6) has stated, multiculturalism 'helps create a strong economy, drives prosperity and builds Australia's future. It also enables Australia to enjoy the cultural and social benefits that cultural diversity brings'.

Policies of multiculturalism, while still officially supported by all governments in Australia, have been strongly criticised, particularly in relation to the meaning of culture (Ang, 2000; Bannerji, 2002; Betts, 1999; Brandle, 2001; Castles 1999a, 1999b; Fleras & Elliot, 2002; Hesse, 2000; Hooks, 1994; Huntington, 1993, 1997, 2004; Jakubowicz, 1985; Joppke, 2004; Jupp et. al., 2007; Marks, 1997; Rex, 1985; Stratton, 1998). To some commentators (Sawer, 1990, p.27), the policy is a 'betrayal of Australian British heritage, threats to unity of the nation or discrimination against Anglo-Australians'. Others (Ang, 2000; Brandle, 2001; Marks, 1997; Stratton, 1998) believe it possesses a threat to the whole idea of shared values. As Christian Joppke (2004) suggests, multiculturalism has never been a popular policy in any country, usually being imposed from the top down, and that the current retreat

of governments away from this policy is the recognition of this. Joppke (2004) argues that multicultural policies have failed particularly in socioeconomic terms. Jupp et al. (2007, p.18) assert that in multicultural societies ‘a clash of values certainly exists’. Further, Hooks (1994, p.201) sees multiculturalism as monoculturalism in disguise stating that ‘if white supremacist capitalist patriarchy is unchanged then multiculturalism within that context can only become a breeding ground for narrow nationalism, fundamentalism, identity politics, and cultural, racial, and ethnic separatism’. Castles (1999a, 1999b), too, believes that multiculturalism weakens Australian identity and divides the nation into competing social groups.

The arguments on the subject of multiculturalism are diverse and voluminous suggesting the concept is highly contested and the future of multiculturalism remains uncertain despite the governments’ assurance of its continuing commitment to the policy.

The future of culture differences: Global cultural imperialism or a world in turmoil?

The future of culture differences is also a strongly debated topic. Will multicultural societies succeed? Does multiculturalism weaken or strengthen societies? Are different cultures compatible? Is social inclusion possible in diverse multicultural societies? Is our world increasingly becoming a one world, integrated and united economically and politically and harmonised culturally? Does cultures matter when economies strive? Will people shred their cultural and religious beliefs when they are given opportunity of education and economic security? Or will culture and religion dominate people’s sense of identity and their view of the world (Jupp et al., 2007)? Jupp et al. (2007, p.68) assert that ‘the answer to these questions will have an enormous impact on lives of millions of people and particularly so on citizens of the Western countries whose governments embrace policies of mass migration and multiculturalism with such enthusiasm for economic, political and ideological reasons’.

Widening the discussion on culture differences, Gavin Kendall et al. (2009) explores individual experiences of establishing bonds with strangers and argues that cosmopolitanism referring to a type of person is slowly constructed over hundreds of years, in specific historical settings:

It is, perhaps, a universal psychological reality...- that most of us display stronger feelings of empathy with and recognition of those who are close, familiar and recognisable than towards the abstract, the distant, strangers and humanity. However, cosmopolitanism asks us to face up to rapid changes in their regard and effectively requires individuals to turn processes on their head. We suggest that this particular type of person – the cosmopolitan is the individual who is ‘cold’ rather than ‘hot’ in terms of loyalties and who finds ambiguity and uncertainty challenging and interesting (p.152)

Kendall and associates (2009) suggest cosmopolitanism is not an unfolding global reality. In his judgement, the world is not moving toward cosmopolitan culture. Although we see increased connections between different cultural groups, anxieties and exclusions ‘defuse the accretion of cosmopolitan assemblies’ (Kendall et al., 2009, p.157).

Similar arguments are presented by Jonathan Parapak (1995) who claims that many people are concerned or even frightened by so-called global culture brought about by global communities. Many nations and societies are concerned about the profound influence of global communications and broadcasting. They are concerned about the shifting of value systems, change in religious beliefs, loss of cultural identity. Parapak (1995) supports John Naisbitt’s (Naisbitt & Aburdene, 1990) argument:

The more homogeneous our lifestyles become, the more steadfastly we cling to deeper values of religion, language, art and literature. As our worlds grow more similar, we will increasingly treasure the traditions that spring from within (p.4)

Parapak (1995) concludes that in some ways we will be more globalised in our lifestyle, business, music, fashion, fast food. However, the inner elements, the fundamentals of language, philosophy, religion and value systems will remain in diversity.

To summarise, the issues of culture, religion and diversity discussed above have been about to emerge over the last few decades, but have acquired far greater urgency in recent years. The literature reveals that cultural and religious differences may present a real threat to social cohesion and social inclusion in multicultural societies. The cultural debate raises challenging questions for the supporters of multicultural policies and their critics.

Notwithstanding the future uncertainties, the Australian government continues its commitment to policies of multiculturalism. In the three years from 2006 till 2009, \$48 million was spent by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship on the *Living in Harmony* program and the *National Action Plan* to build social cohesion, harmony and security all of which assume that the treat to harmony and cohesion comes from ethnic diversity (Jupp et al., 2007, p.18). It seems culture and religion may be important issues in the social inclusion context.

Since the idea of culture and inclusion has been so strongly associated with identity and belonging, the next section of this chapter is devoted to these concepts.

Identity, ethnicity and belonging

Processes of globalisation and current migration policies are drawing people from different cultures into close relationship. Given the importance of identity and belonging to the understanding and interpreting of people's experiences of social inclusion, migration and settlement, it is not surprising that these topics are widely discussed among academics across several disciplines including sociology, political science, cultural studies, anthropology and philosophy. The idea of integration and settlement is being framed by a 'politics of identity and belonging' precisely because of the role they play in the process of migrants' integration into a host society (Crowley, 1999).

Migration and identity

I am what I am through my own efforts, surely,
but I am who I am because of where I come from.

(Lawrence O'Toole, 1994)

The concept of identity is vital to understanding and interpreting how people describe and define themselves and others. Erik H. Erikson (1968) is largely responsible for the growing popularity of the identity question and identity processes in the social context. Nowadays, the concept of identity seems to be everywhere. Verkuyten (2005) points out the broad range of varied and dissimilar phenomena regarded as concerned with identity: gender, nationality, personality, individual character, psychological needs, social membership, personal preferences, likes and dislikes, prejudices, projections and identifications, group

characteristics, intergroup conflicts and personal uniqueness. All of these terms are relevant to 'who we are' and therefore are considered as identity matters. This section of the thesis, however, does not attempt to address the multiplicity of controversies surrounding this concept, but rather to discuss debates about the meaning and significance of identity for understanding and interpreting the experiences of social inclusion, migration and settlement.

In the literature, two concepts of identity have come to the fore. The term self or the personal identity refers to who we are. Taylor (1994, cited in Odmalm, 2005) offers the following definition of identity:

Identity is a term that flags who we are, where we come from; working in a symbiotic relationship of choosing the person you want to be while negotiating your individuality with others by the attachments being imposed upon you (p.134)

Importantly, debates often hinge on whether identity is something constructed or whether it is natural and, in turn, question whether identity is fixed or, in contrast, is something changeable and unstable. Whereas some psychologists and sociologists assume that self and identity can be studied objectively, social constructivists argue against the possibility of ever studying self and identity objectively. As Taylor (1994, cited in Odmalm, 2005) notes:

As identity is part of a more or less imagined community or a non-material world that is socially constructed, it therefore needs to be constantly recreated and maintained (p.137)

We do not simply learn identity from our social and cultural environment (Finkelstein & Goodwin, 2005). Instead, we actively negotiate and express our social role every day throughout our life. Thus identity is subject to change. Social forms of trauma, such as migration, might shake its foundation. Cultural relocation tugs at the very roots of identity. Migrants' identity and picture of self may change as migrants negotiate their integration and settlement into a host society.

The concept of individual identity also includes the idea of identifying with others, and

therefore forms a connection between the individual and society (Verkuyten, 2005). Social identity is about the relationship between the individual and the environment. The emphasis is not on what makes a person unique, but on similarities to some and differences from others. The social identity notion emphasises what a person is and how she or he is socially defined (Verkuyten, 2005). Henri Tajfel (1981) offers the following definition of social identity:

Social identity... is that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership (p.255)

According to Tajfel (1981), social identity has two components: the first component is a belief that one belongs to a group (for example 'I am an Australian') and the second component is the importance of that membership to one's self (for example 'I am very proud to be Australian'). Social identity is about characteristics such as gender, age, and ethnic background that position people in social space. These characteristics place persons together with other people who have similar ones and distinguish this person from people that do not have them. Social identity 'locates a person in social space by virtue of the relationships and memberships that it implies' (Gekas & Burke, 1995, cited in Verkuyten, 2005, p.43).

To know someone's identity means to know into which social category he or she fits. At the same time the information provided by social identity is limited to the membership of a particular group. Moreover, every individual may be associated with a variety of different categories, some of which are shared with some people, some with others, never all of them with anyone else. Thus, people have multiple identities. For example, besides being a German, a person may be also a female, a medical practitioner, a mother and an Australian citizen. These identities can be more or less contradictory depending on the circumstances. Further, as Verkuyten (2005, p.54) argues, social identities are neither inevitable nor fixed but, to the contrary, are 'like unresolved issues in an ongoing debate'. As a slippery concept, identities are changeable and indeed negotiable, and therefore can be deconstructed and reconstructed (Thoits & Virshup, 1997). The migration process may be considered as a strong example of an individual's ability to redefine and negotiate their changing identities. In fact, the increasing circularity of migrants' movement facilitates

people having multiple identities and commitments to more than a single nation-state (Hugo, 2006). The migrant's identity is renegotiated through the process of facing a new context, new challenges, new view of self by self and by others. While Roger Bromley (2000, p.3) defines such identities as identities dislodged through the experience of migration or as 'identities at risk', Steven Vertovec (2001, p.580) describes the phenomenon as 'transnationalisation of identities' – the process of migrants arriving at new, cosmopolitan perspective on culture and belonging..

Ethnicity and identity

The concepts of ethnicity and identity are separate but related concepts. Ethnicity contributes to the construction of ethnic identity. The concept of ethnicity became significant in the social sciences in the 1960s and 1970s (Finkelstein & Goodwin, 2005). In the literature, diverse dimensions and thoughts are being proposed on ideas of ethnicity and ethnic identity. De Vos (1975, cited in Doyle et al., 1997, p.14) describes ethnicity as 'a sense of common origin, beliefs and values and a common sense of survival'. Ethnicity includes elements such as language, common descent, common history, common land, ways of doing things and cultural characteristics. It is difficult to shed someone's nationality or ethnicity, and almost impossible to change one's race or sex. From this perspective, ethnicity is seen as fixed to people, who are born into their ethnic group and who will pass on their ethnicity to their children (Finkelstein & Goodwin, 2005). The concept of ethnic identity, on the other hand, is generally associated with 'subjective expression of one's commitment to, sense of belonging to, or self-identification with the culture, values, and beliefs of a specific ethnic group and social life' (Constant, Gataullina, & Zimmermann, 2009, p.276). The literature (Brass, 1991; Connor, 1973; Finkelstein & Goodwin, 2005; McConnochie, Hollinsworth, & Pettman, 1988; Price, 1991) tends to describe ethnic identity as a 'two pronged' concept that includes self-definition as well as how individuals are perceived by others. Maykel Verkuyten (2005), for example, discusses the multifaceted nature of the sense of ethnic identity. Verkuyten proposes four general dimensions of ethnic identity that refer to *being, feeling, doing* and *knowing*.

There is also an argument (Okamura, 1981) that ethnicity and identity are both situational and will vary depending on social context. In this sense 'ethnic identity is produced and reproduced through everyday practices and discourses, in much the same way that gender

is. It is thus dramaturgical, situational, changeable and emergent' (Finkelstein & Goodwin, 2005, pp.142-143). Ethnic boundaries are more silent in some situations than other boundaries such as social class and occupation. Thus, to what degree and how a particular identity is considered relevant or important is not fixed. Constant, Gataullina and Zimmermann (2006a) view ethnic identity and ethnicity as two separate but related concepts. They argue that while ethnic identity is dynamic and may change after arrival in a host country, ethnicity remain a permanent feature associated with country of origin. *The two dimensional theory of ethnic identity*, presented by Constant and others (2006a), describes ethnic identity as the balance between commitment to and identification with the culture and society of the country of origin and commitment to and identification with the culture and society of the host country. The authors (Constant et al., 2009, p.285) introduce five essential components that, with strong emphasis on culture, form ethnic identity: language use, cultural aspects, ethnic networks, migration history, and ethnic self-identification. In general, migrants come to a new country with a strong ethnic commitment to the country of ancestry and an insignificant attachment to the new society, provided there is a considerable difference between two countries. However, 'as pre- and post-migration culture, customs and habitudes clash, migrants develop different levels of self-identification and feelings of belonging' (Constant et al., 2006a, p.27). The ethnic identity develops depending on migrants' participation in the labour market, investment in human capital, family formation and planned duration of the move (Zimmermann, 2007). The two dimensional model of the measurement of ethnic identity advocates that commitments to two diverse societies can coexist and shape one another. The degree of commitment to the home country does not exclude commitment to the host country. This theory recognises that the migrants 'who strongly identifies with the culture and values of the country of origin, may or may not have a strong involvement with the dominant culture' (Zimmermann, 2007, p.5). Equally, a migrant who strongly identifies with the culture and values of the host country, may or may not remain strongly committed to the culture and values of the home country. Migrants may also feel entirely separated from the home and/or host country. Thus, confronted with two different cultures, migrants may become *assimilated*, *integrated*, *marginalized* or *separated* depending on their level of commitment to the culture and values of the home and host countries. Constant, Gataullina and Zimmerman (2006b) find that ethnic identity varies between the sexes and has a significant impact on employment performance. Migrant women, for example, display closer bonds to their native identity than men. Attachment to the labour market and strong identification with the dominant

culture regardless of strength of ethnic identity seems to strengthen social inclusion and economic success for both sexes.

Ethnicity and belonging

Another issue is that of belonging. The concept of belonging is particularly relevant to this study. There is a direct link between social inclusion and belonging. The meanings of home, place, belonging are highly disputed in our complex times of contested borders, multiple diasporas and increased dislocation. There is some evidence (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Verkuyten, 2005) that a sense of identity incorporates feelings of belonging and an awareness of unity and harmony. The concept of *unbelonging* was also introduced to the debate (Bromley, 2000). The dilemma of belongings - or not - is a question faced by many individuals in a newly globalised world. As Verkuyten (2005, p.68) states 'humans want to attach themselves to someone or something, want to belong and feel at home in their world'. Feelings of belonging could be the result, but feelings of isolation, loneliness and rejection can also develop. Within this challenge, the experiences of migrants are of particular interest as they are crossing borders and cultures.

It is well documented (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999; Major, Quinton, & McCoy, 2002; Taylor, 1992, 1994) that many immigrants and particularly asylum seekers are troubled not only by lack of recognition and respect but also by feelings of uprootedness and loss. There is a longstanding literature (Bromley, 2000; Castles & Miller, 2003; Doyle et al., 1997; Jaco, 1970; Ryan, 2007; Weinberg, 1967) that suggests that social support contributes to feelings of belonging. A sense of belonging can compensate for negative stereotypes and discrimination but can also lead to inner conflicts. For migrants, the attempt to achieve an esteemed position and higher status in society can result in 'far reaching adjustment that can result in isolation and alienation from one's own ethnic group' (Verkuyten, 2005, p.69). In addition, the term 'belonging' can be used in the plural, suggesting that one can have several coexisting attachments. The term 'transnational belonging' becomes a prominent theme in contemporary academic debates (Blom, 1999; Favell, 1999; Kelly, 2009). The new global economic system and increased migration opportunities have contributed to the strong cultural ability of some migrant groups to form transnational networks and diasporas, and the emergence of an international framework of law and rights which puts the accent on rights attached to personhood not national

citizenship-status (Favell, 1999; Portes, 1996; Portes, Guarnizo, & Landolt, 1999; Sassen, 1990, 1995; Soysal, 1994; Vertovec, 2001, 2004, 2010). Additionally, Ursula Kelly (2009:35) discusses the concept of 'multiple forms of belonging' that can emerge through migration. Thus, Steven Vertovec (2004) introduces the concept of *double belonging* arguing that now as never before migrants can maintain strong connections with people, communities and places associated with their places of origin. Such a development should be seen as a part of cultural transformation associated with globalising and cosmopolitanising of cultures, identities and attitudes.

It is evident that we all possess multiple identities whose degree and importance for our self-concept may vary. As a researcher, I emphasise migrant women's subjective experience and therefore how they construct and negotiate their identities in a social context is a topic of interest. I am particularly interested in self-identity, understood as a capacity to experience oneself and one's relationships with others, with the world, and with oneself as meaningful. Since the concept of self-identity is not constructed in isolation but rather as a reflection on the world and people's interaction around us, I start this research with the assumption that for migrant women, as the environment and social structure changes around them as a result of immigration, so should their picture of self. The question of individual identity is also closely related to the question of woman's identity and of gender identity: What does it mean to identify oneself as being a woman, a migrant woman, a professional migrant woman? Which identity boundaries prevail and which are more silent? Do women perceive themselves as they are perceived by others as being members of the disadvantaged, ethnic minority groups attempting to settle in a new world? Regarding the question of belonging, the research is interested to understand the importance of and the degree of women's sense of belonging in Australian society.

Conclusion

This chapter has introduced conceptual and theoretical work related to the concepts of culture, identity and belonging. It presented the definitions and theories of culture, identity and belonging and emphasised the meaning and significance of these concepts for understanding and interpreting the experiences of social inclusion, migration and settlement. It analysed how cultural integration and transformation are negotiated under the impact of the immigration process and argued that migrants' experiences are constructed as a

combined effect of their culture and their sense of identity and belonging in Australia. This is regarded as significant to the study because the migration process involves significant personal transformation that will shape professional female migrants' experiences of social inclusion and settlement.

Chapter Four: Gender in Australia

Having explored skilled migration in general terms and the concepts of culture, identity and belonging, it is important to also refer to those areas which are of particular relevance to the study. This chapter presents concepts, ideas and debates around issues of gender, culture, occupation and social relations for the following reasons. Firstly, gender is a crucial factor in our understanding of the causes and experiences of international migration (Piper, 2005). Secondly, as a result of migration, professional female migrants enter Australian gendered society and the gender segregated labour market within Australia. Therefore, it is important to understand gender relations in Australia and how they are organised. Thirdly, gender is central to the lived experiences of migration (Espin, 1999). Being a migrant woman in Australia creates choices and opportunities as well as limits to social inclusion. However, there are differences within the category 'migrant woman'. Professional female migrants' experiences of social inclusion are specific, they are socially constructed and highly 'stratified' as a combined effect of gender, culture, skill level and social interactions such as work (Piper, 2008).

Intersectionality and feminist theory

The study undertaken for this thesis, which aims to highlight silenced migrant women's experience of inclusion/exclusion, is also strongly influenced by feminism. A feminist perspective justifies and provides rationale for this study, however the study is not only about women: it is about women of different ethnicities. My goal is to work toward creating the conditions under which women can exercise more choices and develop their potential in society. Empathy and understanding of women's perspectives and experiences are the starting points. This section provides an overview of the way feminist theory underpins this research.

Jennifer Brayton (1997) asserts that at a basic level feminism recognises the organising of the social world by gender. Feminism is a perspective that aims to eliminate the injustices and inequalities women experience because of their sex. It is about women's rights in economic, social and political life. It is about people having freedom of choices to act constructively in society and to have their contribution to society respected and recognised (Orme, 1998). Chris Weedon (1987) offers the following definition of feminism:

Feminism is a politics. It is a politics directed at changing existing power relations between men and women in society. These power relations structure all areas of life, the family, education and welfare, the worlds of work and politics, culture and leisure. They determine who does what and for whom, what we are and what we might become (p.1)

Feminism asserts that women and men live under different social pressures, encouraged to do different kind of work, behave differently and develop different characteristics (Richardson, 1982, cited in Crotty, 1998). It is well known that even when women are able to advance professionally and achieve a degree of economic independence, it is a social reality that sexist stereotypes are persistently employed to define women's identity and behaviour (Connell, Schofield, & Goodwin, 2003).

Feminism, however, is highly diverse. There are many different views among feminists about the general nature of women's oppression, its sources and what should be done about it. Women have identified themselves as radical feminists, liberal feminists, socialist feminists, humanist feminists and so on to communicate their position. These multiple feminist perspectives result in women's specific preferences in addressing their concerns, differing theoretical underpinnings for the interpretation of research data and distinctive recommendations for further actions and investigations.

Most recently the feminist *intersectionality* framework was developed as a framework determining individual's inclusion or exclusion from particular sectors of society (Anthias, 2001; Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1983; Bottomley, 1992; Deutsch, 2007; Riano, Baghdadi, & Waste-Walter, 2006). Intersectional theorists (Bordo, 1993; Crenshaw, 1991; McCall, 2005; Spelman, 1988) emphasise that the traditional models of social exclusion within society, like those based on gender, race/ethnicity, religion, social class/occupational status, sexuality and others do not operate independently of one another. Instead, these elements are complexly interconnected to determine the positions of individuals in the society where they live (Riano et. al., 2006). For example, to describe the experiences of an immigrant woman it would be necessary to have not only the information that she lives in a patriarchal society, but her culture, her religion, her social class and occupational status. The concept of intersectionality evolved out of the criticism by feminists of colour of existing feminists' account of gender and power (Allen, 2009). As Leslie McCall (2005, p.1771) observes,

intersectionality 'is the most important theoretical contribution that women's studies have made so far'.

One of the earliest efforts to theorise intersectionality has been made by Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis (1983) who attempted to explore the interrelationship between culture and gender. The authors argue that gender, culture and status or social class are enmeshed and the specific intersection of these delivers specific outcomes:

All these divisions have organisational, experiential and representational forms, are historically produced and therefore changeable, are affected by and effect each other and the economic, political and ideological relations in which they are inserted. Relations of power are usually found within each division and thus often the existence of dominant and subordinate partners. They are all therefore framed in relation to each other within relations of domination. They may thus involve political mobilisation, exclusion from particular resources and struggles over them, claims to political representation and the formation of concrete interests and goals which may shift over time. It is not a question therefore of one being more 'real' than the others or a question of which is the most important. However it is clear that the three divisions prioritise different spheres of social relations and will have different effects which it may be possible to specify in concrete analysis. However we suggest that each division exists within the context of the others and that any concrete analysis has to take this into account (1983, p.65)

Despite considerable differences, many feminists share the view that there are structures (patriarchy being one) that oppress, marginalise and exclude women, limit their mobility, access and freedom (Illo, 2005). Feminist intersectionality theories provide the ground for understanding women's experiences. The current research is considered in the context of feminism and the intersectionality framework where intersectionality of gender, culture, occupational status and ethnicity all contribute to professional female migrants' experiences of social inclusion/exclusion.

Feminist theory and gender, work and immigration

Feminist migration scholars have made a significant empirical contributions to the area of migration studies. The inclusion of gender analysis in migration research first appeared in the 1970s and early 1980s (Nawyn, 2010). In 1980s feminist migration scholars moved their analysis from a focus on women to studying gender and provided a complex insight into how gender relations and gendered institutions are constructed, reconstructed and transformed before, through and post migration through interactions of macro- and micro-level processes. The macro-level process is related to patriarchy, levels of power and control men utilise to dominate women. The micro-level process concentrates on the interpersonal relationships between men and women.

The growing body of gender and migration literature draws on gender relation theory, particularly focusing on how gender relations change as a result of migration and settlement. Connell (1987) defines four aspects of gender relations: power, production, emotional and symbolic relations which interact with each other in social institutions. Each social institution, in turn, has its own system of gender relations that that defines how individual gender performance is constructed. Since Connell's (1987) gender relations theory perceives gender as socially constructive, it enables feminist scholars to recognise the fluidity of gender power relations as they shift under the influence of macro- and micro-structures. While not all gender and migration research draws upon gender relations theory, much of it includes the core fundamentals of Connell's view of how gendered practices are constructed, maintained or challenged (Nawyn, 2010).

Although most migrants move to the host country because they envision a better life and general migration literature focuses predominantly on economic migrants, feminist migration scholars (Hondagneu – Sotelo, 2011; Mahler & Pessar, 2006) challenge the economic model of migration and argue that migration, in fact, a gendered phenomenon. They claim, instead, that migration is not only a process best understood in economic terms; it is also a sociocultural process negotiated by gendered institutions, ideologies and practices (Grasmuck & Pessar, 1991; Hondagneu–Sotelo, 1994). One cannot understand the opportunities or obstacles to migrate, nor the economic upward mobility of some and downward mobility of others, the plans to settle or return, without understanding of how migrants are located in a gendered system of social relations as well as with macro-

structures such as global labour market or status (Nawyn, 2010).

Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) was among the first to employ the expansion of the gender theories to the study of migration. She argues that gender is a key aspect in migration analysis:

Gender is not simply a variable to be measured, but a set of social relations that...facilitates or constrain women's and men's immigration and settlement (1994, p.3)

In Hondagneu-Sotelo's (1994) work on gender relations in migration and settlement experiences of Mexican immigrant women and men, she claims that migrant family members do not always operate as a unit. Different and conflicting interests may be in play within one family, although these disagreements may be hidden by the family to preserve family unity. The central argument here is that family interests and individual interests, particularly women's and men's do not necessarily coincide. Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) suggests that women's and men's migration experiences should be viewed within a context of the power relations that exist within the family. Patriarchal dominance and control, in concert with resistance to patriarchy, affect family migration decisions. Thus Rhacel Parrenas (2008) argues that women migrate from one patriarchal structure to another, and although they may encounter challenges in the host country, they also find new ways to attain additional power. Gender, therefore, 'becomes one of the axes around which the terms of belonging, entitlement and laboring are negotiated and contested (Pessar, 2001, p.464). There are some debates in the literature (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Mahler & Pessar, 2006; Morokvasic, 1984, Parrenas, 2008; Pessar, 2001) around questions of continuity and change in gender beliefs and practices and whether migration is a process for women's empowerment. The emphases are on gender as being multi – levelled, dynamic and fluid as individuals engage or battle with each other, their past and structures of changing economic and social world connected through their migration.

Additionally, there is evidence in feminist literature (Pessar & Mahler, 2003) that gender affects people's post-migration experiences and their negotiation of work and family in particular. Traditional sex roles and stereotypical pictures regarding the place of women in society can influence the type of work migrant women are recruited to. As Monica Boyd

and Elizabeth Grieco (2003) assert, women accepted as workers are predominantly employed in 'female' occupations, such as nursing, education and social work. In addition, Eleonore Kofman (2004) states that international migration reinforces the gender division of labour as migrants move from one country to another. This is, to some extent, because of the difficulties immigrant women face in finding employment. Skilled migrant women not always have their skills fully recognized. Thus, a study of migrant nurses in the UK, mostly from Europe, Australia, Africa and Philippines, found that many nurses felt their expertise and skills were not appreciated or respected and they confronted racism and xenophobia. Nurses experienced a significant degree of downgrading of their skills and experiences as they entered the labour market at the level well below those they held before migration. Deskilling also occurs among doctors – majority female migrant doctors work in the lower grades (Raghuram & Montiel, 2003).

As evident, by analyzing social relations between men and women, feminist scholars have demonstrated that gender organises, shapes and distinguishes the immigration pattern and individual experiences. Ongoing developments in feminist theory contributed to the focus on gender where gender is seen as a central concept that impacts on migration and settlement processes such as decision to migrate, adjustment to a new country, participation in the labour market, and potential return (Boyd & Grieco, 2003).

Gender and occupational status in Australia

Professional female migrants' experiences have to be analysed in relation to a gender segregated labour market in Australia (Piper, 2009). After migrating, female migrants enter a highly segregated workforce within Australia. Melanie Nolan (2003) explains that the Australian labour market has long been gender segmented. Throughout the twentieth century women struggled to overcome both exclusion from, and second class status in, the labour market (Nolan, 2003). Although in the last few decades Australia has seen a significant transformation in society associated with changes in women's labour force participation and changes to government policies and work practices, women are still a long way from equality in the employment domain. Women in contemporary Australia continue to experience disadvantages predominantly through the gendered division of labour. As Connell et al. (2003) state, the gender division of labour not only shapes the distribution of resources, shapes personal trajectories and enables or restricts participation, it also shapes

identities.

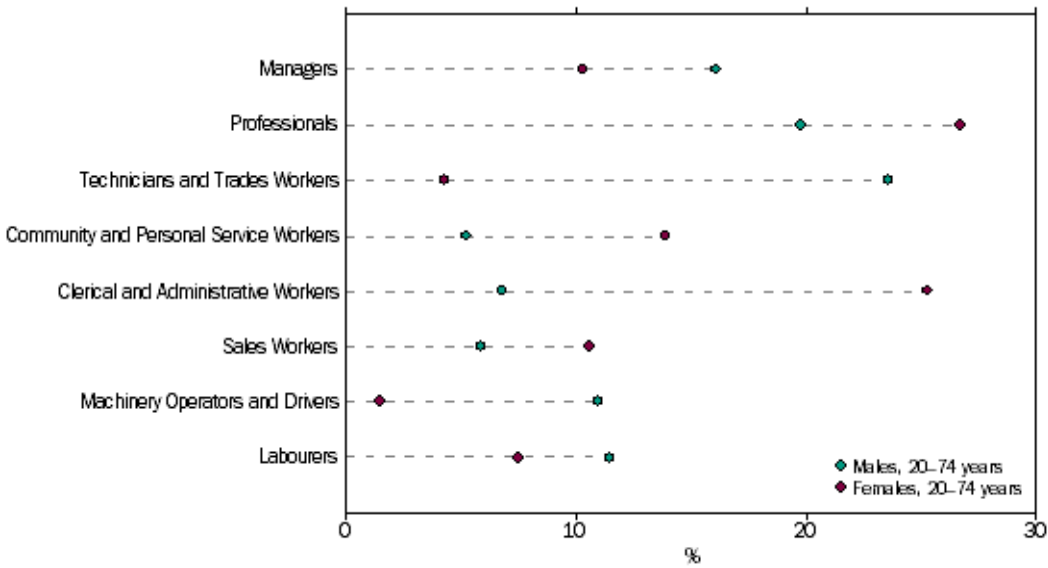
Australian women first started to enter the paid workforce in large numbers during World War II with their participation progressively increasing from 29 per cent of women aged 15 and over in 1954 to 56.6 per cent in 2005 (Census 1954, cited in ABS, 2005b). Women now represent 45 per cent of the Australian workforce, compared with only 30 per cent fifty years ago (ABS, 2012a). Government policies over the last twenty years have 'encouraged' women's participation in the paid labour force through intensive training, incentive initiatives and have also compelled women's participation in paid labour through employment activity requirements such as 'mutual obligation' policies (Connell et al., 2003).

The distribution of employed people across occupations provides a remarkable insight into the composition of the Australian labour market. Significantly, there are large gender differences in occupations. Women are more likely to be employed in clerical occupations groups, such as intermediate clerical, sales and service workers. In 2010-11, Clerical and Administrative workers comprised a quarter (25 %) of the female workforce aged 20 to 74, while almost a quarter (24%) in this age group were employed as Technicians and Trade workers (Table 5).

Women are still overrepresented in Health Care, Social Assistance and Education and Training industries as shown in Table 6. Of those employed in Health and Social Assistance industries, 79 per cent are females. Of those employed in Education and Training industry, 69 per cent are females (ABS, 2011b). Huppertz and Goodwin (2013) argue that gendered occupational segregation relates to choices women and men make in support of the gendered status quo, even when these choices contribute to their inequality.

Table 5: Employment Distribution by Occupation and Sex, 2010-11

EMPLOYMENT DISTRIBUTION BY OCCUPATION (a)(b), 2010-11 (c)



(a) Occupation classified according to ABS Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO), First Edition (cat. no. 1220.0).

(b) As a proportion of total employed males and females.

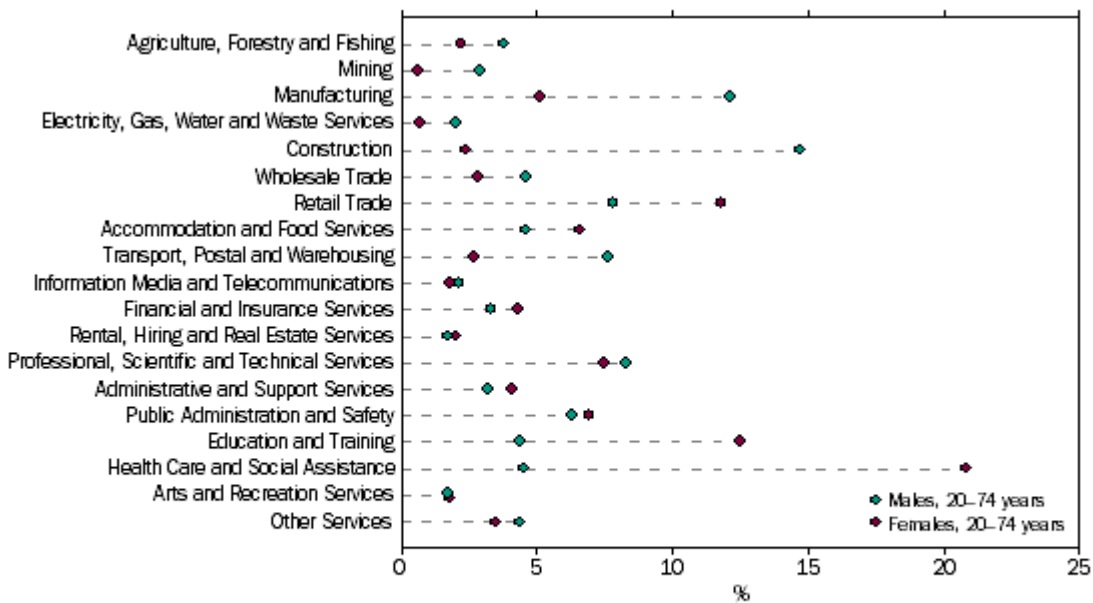
(c) Data were calculated as an average of 4 quarters (August, November, February, May) in the financial year.

Source: ABS data available on request, Labour Force Survey.

Source: ABS, 2012b

Table 6: Employment Distribution by Industry, 2010-11

EMPLOYMENT DISTRIBUTION BY INDUSTRY (a)(b), 2010-11 (c)



(a) Industry classified according to ABS Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC), 2006 (cat. no. 1292.0).

(b) As a proportion of total employed for males and females.

(c) Data were calculated as an average of 4 quarters (August, November, February, May) in the financial year.

Source: ABS data available on request, Labour Force Survey.

Source: ABS, 2013b

Angela Barns and Alison Preston (2010, p. 96) allege that ‘gender segregation is deeply entrenched in Australia and likely to become even more entrenched’ if current patterns of employment continue. Professions in health and education ‘have seen increased feminisation with vertical segregation remaining endemic’ (2010, pp. 96-97). The persistent gender wage gap and occupational segregation continue to hinder women’s access to economic and financial benefits. Pat Armstrong (1996), however, reports that men’s jobs are becoming similar to women’s jobs, and also ‘bad’ since they have poor promotional potential and are becoming increasingly insecure. The decrease of the wage gap is likely to be a consequence of a reduction of men’s wages. As a result, women are likely to find themselves equal in poverty (Armstrong, 1996).

Significantly, there is a growing number of professional female workers as more women and girls are completing secondary and particularly tertiary education. As shown in Table 7, from 1983 to 2003 there has been an increase in educational qualifications particularly among employed women: by 157.2 per cent with post-school qualifications and by 478.3 per cent with tertiary degrees raising female employment in quantity and credentials. Of students in 2011, there was actually a greater proportion of women (42 per cent) enrolled in a Bachelor degree compared to men (37 per cent) (ABS, 2011c).

Table 7: Educational Qualifications of Employed Persons, 1983-2003

Educational qualification	1983	2003	Change
	%	%	1983-2003 %
Men employed	100	100	29.5
-With post-school qualifications	45.2	58.2	66.8
-With degree or higher	9.8	19.5	159.0
-Diploma or certificate	35.4	38.7	41.3
-Without post-school qualifications	54.2	41.8	0.0
Women employed	100	100	80.9
-With post-school qualifications	37.7	53.5	157.2
-With degree or higher	7.4	23.8	478.3
-Diploma or certificate	30.2	29.7	78.2
-Without post-school qualifications	60.7	46.5	38.5

1983=persons 15 years and over; 2003=persons 15-64 years

Source: ABS, 1983; ABS, 2003, cited in Jamrozik, 2005, p.160)

Although a range of cultural and economic shifts in the last few decades has seen a significant transformation and the growing feminisation of the labour market, women’s employment is still strongly affected by the increased unpaid work at home associated with domestic tasks, caring and child rearing responsibilities. The caring roles traditionally fulfilled by women have not been taken by either men or an enabling welfare state (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission [HREOC], 2005). This expectation of gender roles concerning house work and care is felt intensively by working women, particularly mothers, trying to balance employment and caring responsibilities. Consequently, females occupy disproportionately a large portion of part-time and casual positions in Australian labour market. Through there has been a growth in part-time work for all employed people in recent decades, in 2008-09, 45 per cent of employed females worked part-time compared to 15 per cent of employed males (ABS, 2011d). Conversely, men were more likely than women to work full time (85 per cent compared with 55 per cent). Earlier exclusion of women from occupations and arranging female wages at a lower level than the male rate remains evident in the gender segregation of the workforce and the gendered wage gap (Goodwin 2003, p.386). Over the 15 year period from 1995 to 2010, average weekly ordinary time earnings (commonly referred to as AWOTE) for full time adult male employees increased from \$703.70 to \$1,356.90, while AWOTE for full time adult female employees increased from \$583.70 to \$1,130.20 (Table 8). Full-time women workers still receive only 83 per cent of men’s full-time ordinary earnings.

Table 8: Adult Weekly Ordinary Time Earnings (Full Time)

	1995	2010
Females	583.70	1, 130.20
Males	703.7	1,356.90

Source: ABS, 2011a

Gender and unpaid work in Australia

Professional female migrants’ experiences also have to be analysed in relation to the organisation of domestic and household work in Australia. The lives of women in contemporary Australia are changing. Men take a share of domestic work and child care. Advanced technology has made housekeeping work easier and less time-consuming. Although attitudes to parenting and housework among Australian men and women

demonstrate a clear acceptance of flexible gender roles, most of this work is still done by women, whether they are married or single, and whether or not they are in paid employment. Despite the fact that the number of women in paid work, in education and in decision-making positions has remarkably increased in the last few decades, the lives of men and women at home remain largely unaltered (HREOC, 2005).

Women are still allocated the primary role of wives and mothers regardless of what else they might do, and men, the role of breadwinners. The result of this is that even if men help with some work it is assumed that women are responsible for housekeeping duties. Women who work are well aware that when they finish work they have another job to do at home. Whether or not the woman is in paid employment makes little difference to the division of labour within the home. Australian women undertake almost twice as much domestic and caring work as men. They manage, on average, 70 per cent of household work (HREOC, 2005, p.26). This means that most women with paid position must also undertake the domestic work, which constitutes what is called the *double burden of work* (Eveline, 2001).

The responsibility for child care is also gendered and has a strong impact on men's and women's experience of child care and their ability to incorporate child care with paid employment. Partnered women spend a considerably greater amount of time caring for young children (19.6 hours per week) compared to men (9.6 hours per week) although men have increased their average weekly hours spent with young children in the last 30 years (HREOC, 2005). In 1974, men spent only 4.2 hours a week caring for young children. This figure went up to 7 hours in 1992 and 7.2 hours in 1997.²

Another sphere of unpaid work that is highly gendered is unpaid caring work (Table 9). Women represented over half of all carers, and the majority, 71 per cent, of primary carers (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare [AIHW], 2004, p.xii).

² Child care in Australia is not universal, government provided service. Most formal childcare is commercial and expensive.

Table 9: Primary Carers, Relationship to Main Recipient of Care

Relationship	Male ('000)	Female ('000)
Partner	81.7	115.3
Child	34.9	87.6
Parent	9.7	100.8
Other	9.8	34.7
Total	136.2	338.4

Source: ABS, 2003

The most common reason given for taking on the caring role is 'family responsibility'. Many women combine their paid employment not only with parenting but also with caring for their family member whether this member is an elderly parent, child or disabled adult; in 1998 employed women constituted 34 per cent of all primary carers. Further, women are overrepresented as carers of elderly Australians. In 2003, 91.2 per cent of elderly parents were cared for by their daughters (HREOC, 2005). Caring is not considered as work and, therefore, remains broadly invisible. As Sargent (1997) notices the nature of unpaid caring is such that it is referred to as the *burden of care*. The carer's life is generally on hold for the period of care. Since the unpaid caring role is also included in women's 'duty of care', Sargent (1997) considers this is the *treble burden of work*.

Gender and social relations in Australia

Professional female migrants' experiences of social inclusion have to be analysed in relation to the gender dimension of social life in Australia. Combined with the increasing social and economic inequality presented in the Australian labour market is the interrelation between work and social life. The main concern in this relationship is the regulation of everyday life imposed by the workplace and the problems this creates for the responsibilities of parenting and the quality of family relationships and women's social life (Jamrozik 2005). A *Relationship Australia Survey* (Relationship Australia, 2003, p.22) has found that 89 per cent of Australians agreed that relationships suffer because of work-life struggle, and that 40 per cent of parents feel that they have no alternatives to balance paid employment and family. This survey indicated that the most significant negative impact on

partner relationship was 'lack of time spent together' (38 per cent). Women reveal feeling more 'time pressured' in balancing work and family commitments than men, an experience resulting in women's poor health and reduced life satisfaction (Brown & Powers, 2001).

Decreased time in the paid labour market for women actually results in more time in unpaid work at home rather than increased leisure or other social activities time (Model, Stiers, & Weber, 1992). Leisure time is especially limited for mothers of young children, particularly those whose youngest child is under two years old, who, on average, have only 2 hours and 38 minutes of leisure time per week (Bittman & Wajcman, 1999, p.21). Women who are not employed have averaged 24 minutes of child-free leisure time a day, while mothers in paid work have even less leisure time, on average almost none at all. It is important to consider the crucial role that accessible and affordable childcare plays in supporting women's ability to manage work, family and their social life. Difficulties with access and cost of formal childcare are among the most pressures issues for Australian families. The Taskforce on Care Costs report indicates that child care costs have been increasing over the years by a greater percentage than average weekly wages or Centrelink payments (Cassells, McNamara, Lloyd, & Harding, 2005).

Some research has been done on gender and social relations in friendships and in the community in Australia.³ For example, Berry, Rodgers and Dear (2007) argue that participation in the community is gendered with significant differences in level of participation between women and men. Women have significantly more contact with friends and extended family members as well as participating in the voluntary sector, and giving money to charity. Further, Frances Baum and colleagues (2000) argue that people's involvement in the community is socially patterned and is significantly influenced by gender, level of education, health and household income. In their study (Baum et al., 2000) gender seemed to have most influence in terms of social and community participation. Women emerged as being engaged in more social activities than men, significantly more likely to visit family, more likely to participate in school related activities and volunteer groups. Baum et al.'s (2000, p. 414) study concludes that an 'increasing level of participation will reduce social exclusion and is likely to improve the overall quality of community life'.

³ Not as much as on other aspects like paid and unpaid work.

To summarise this section, it has to be acknowledged that today most Australian women are better off than their predecessors of even 50 years ago, let alone two centuries past. Women have significantly increased their numbers in paid work, education and decision-making positions. More men are expressing their desire for greater involvement with their children and shared home responsibilities. It is evident that women have greater prospects of participation in social, economic and political life. The last few decades have shown a significant transformation and the growing feminisation of the labour market as more women have entered it. However, there are growing arguments that women's life becomes more stressful in their endeavour to balance working and private domains. Limited leisure time, increased unpaid responsibilities and unequal income distribution for men and women are defined characteristics of women's lives in contemporary Australia.

The issues that concern Australian women remain very relevant as they form the *context* that professional female migrants enter into: professional female migrants work in female dominated occupations and face challenges balancing work and family responsibilities, difficulties with child care and other pressures that non-migrant Australian women face in their everyday lives.

Intersections of gender, culture and occupational status

While there has been significant work undertaken on the concept of gender and women's experiences in contemporary industrialised countries like Australia, there has also been recognition that gender alone cannot explain adequately women's experiences without references to ethnic, cultural and social contexts. The *intersectionality* framework is particularly relevant to this study as the experiences of professional female migrants are strongly influenced by their gender, culture, ethnicity and occupational status. Gender, culture and occupational status mutually constitute and contribute to the experiences of social inclusion. As Gilliam Bottomley (1992) suggested the intersectionality framework has a particular significance in the context of a country of immigration, such as Australia.

Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1983) suggest that, although in general it is difficult to prioritise one division over the other, in western societies gender divisions are more important for women than cultural or ethnic divisions in employment. Migrant women, for example, would be closer to the female population of the country than to ethnic men in terms of labour market performance. There have been attempts to understand the correlation

between occupational status and gender or cultural position, like the extent to which women and men are likely to be concentrated into specific occupational and economic groupings (Fenton & Bradley, 2002). These correlations have been explained in terms of factors such as cultural or personal choices, the experience of social constraints and the sexual division of labour. Bottomley (1992), in her early work on the migration experience, attempted to interrelate the three and presented intersections of gender, culture and social class in the Australian context:

My perspective here is mostly structural, demonstrating some of the ways in which people's lives are defined, limited and altered by migration, by economic and employment possibilities, by gender relations and by state policies and practices (pp.145-146)

The relationship between gender, culture, ethnicity and occupational status or class has been an important debate in sociology for the last two decades. Evelyn Nakano Glenn (1992) introduces the notion of 'mutual constitution'. According to Glenn (1992, p.33) gender, culture and social class mutually constitute each other, meaning that 'each develops in the context of the other'. The concept 'mutual constitution' suggests development, continuing change and responding to being changed and 'constituted'. The understanding of this process has been guided by studying structures such as gender, culture and occupational status as intersecting and interlocking.

Nicola Piper (2008, 2009) and Stephen Castles (2003) talk about 'stratification' as a combined effect of gender, ethnicity, skill level and migration status on migrant women's experiences of social inclusion/exclusion in receiving countries. Piper (2008), for example, argues that women's experiences of migration are highly 'stratified' with gender intersecting with other social relations such as ethnicity, class, level of skill and legal status. According to Piper (2008, p.1) 'migrants leave and enter gendered and stratified societies'.

Conclusion

This chapter has introduced conceptual and theoretical work related to the concepts of gender, culture, occupational and social relations. It has emphasised the importance of gender for understanding professional female migrants' experiences of social inclusion in

Australia. It argues that professional female migrants' experiences are specific, they are socially constructed and highly stratified as a combined effect of gender, culture, social and occupational status such as work. For these reasons, feminist intersectionality theory is discussed as one feminist theoretical framework capable of capturing these dimensions. The insights from intersectionality theory have helped to shape the study for this thesis which aimed to explore the experiences of professional female migrants.

In addition, this chapter has also emphasised the specific contours of gender relations in Australia. This is regarded as significant to the study of professional migrant women because the context they enter will shape their experiences: where they work, what type of work they do, who they relate to and how much they participate in public or private life. Gender relations in Australia are the context for the exploration of professional female migrants 'social inclusion' or 'social exclusion'.

Chapter Five: Research Design and Methodology

Migrants and migration in Australia have been the subject for statisticians, economists and journalists to research, explore and comment on. The situation of migrants has also attracted attention from researchers involved in social research and social work. However, often the phenomenon of migration is approached from the point of view of the receiving country in terms of the impacts on its interests, needs and value system. In this study, I have chosen a different approach: the focus of the study is on the interests, needs, values and concerns of those who have migrated. Instead of providing analysis and examinations of migration policy, the study was designed to elicit what professional female migrants have to say about their experiences and how this could feed into policy concepts and frameworks, such as ideas about social inclusion.

The research design was determined by these aims and objectives. The main aim was to explore the experiences of social inclusion/exclusion of professional female migrants and factors that have been significant in shaping these experiences. I intended to construct an understanding of these experiences in women's own terms and, in particular, I set out to examine their feelings, perceptions, ideas and what has been important to them over the period since their arrival in Australia. The qualitative approach was chosen as a valuable and useful for capturing the richness and complexity of these experiences.

This chapter locates the empirical study undertaken for this thesis in relation to feminist theory and social constructionism. These two theoretical perspectives provide both a rationale for the methodology and an explanation of how the women's perspectives were 'handled' in the research process. The chapter then describes the method employed, including a description of the interview and data analysis process. The final sections of this chapter introduce the participants and their stories. This introduction to the women is made in two ways. First, they are introduced as a 'sample' of professional female migrants through the laying out of demographic data, including where they came from, how long they had been in Australia, what language they spoke, their qualifications and occupations, and migration status. Second, they are introduced as individuals and a vignette capturing some of the key features of each woman's story has been assembled. This material provides background for further analysis of the data presented in the final chapters.

The study

Feminist research

As can be seen in Chapter Two, applied research aiming to highlight silenced migrant women's viewpoints and position, has been strongly influenced by feminism. My goal in this research has also been to work toward creating the conditions under which women can exercise more choices and develop their potential in society. Empathy and understanding of women's perspectives and experiences were therefore the starting points.

Since the women's movement began in the 1960s, feminist researchers started to examine the situation and experiences of women whose lives and realities were significantly different from those of men, in an attempt to validate their experiences, improve their circumstances and promote their rights. Over the last few decades, a range of feminist writings became known in response to the inability of mainstream research to attend to women's issues in society. Feminist research has become such a significant and critical part of mainstream research that it is now recognised as a form of research in its own right (Alston & Bowles, 2003). In the last 30 years feminist research has made a staggering impact on the position and role of women and signaled the invisibility, marginalisation and social exclusion of women (Illo, 2005). Feminists have sought to understand women's experiences in cultures that have been described as 'patriarchal', 'gendered', or 'masculinist'. Feminist research, by definition, is grounded in feminist theory, although it emphasises different ways of reaching understandings of gendered practices, for example, through concepts such as 'women's way of knowing', 'women's experience', or 'women's knowledge' and beginning with the social organisation of differences between men and women (Allister, 1993, cited in Crotty, 1998).

Despite considerable differences, many feminist researchers share the view that there are structures (patriarchy being one) that oppress, marginalise and exclude women, limit their mobility, access and freedom (Illo, 2005). However, most contemporary feminist research is about multiple, subjective and partial truths. In contemporary feminist research, this means that not all women are the same. From this kind of feminist perspective it is important to acknowledge therefore that not all immigrant women are the same, and neither are their settlement experiences. Feminist research cannot claim to speak for all women, but it can offer new knowledge grounded in the realities of women's experiences and therefore

actively contribute to structural changes in the social world.

Social constructionism

Epistemology is the philosophy of knowledge construction that concerns ways of understanding and interpreting social reality. According to constructionism, meaning is not discovered but constructed (Crotty, 1998). From this point of view, there is no objective truth or mind-independent fixed reality. Instead, reality is socially constructed and, therefore, can only be understood and explained from the inside, from other people's perspectives (Alston & Bowles, 2003). As Shusterman (1991, cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2003) asserts:

knowledge of what others are doing and saying always depends upon some background or context of other meanings, beliefs, values, practices, and so forth. Hence, for virtually all post empiricist philosophies of the human sciences, understanding is interpretation all the way down (p. 312)

Understandably, different people create different meanings in different ways and may present diverse explanations of the same phenomenon. This is why it is so important to understand how the world looks from the viewpoint of those who create it. My task as the researcher is to obtain multiple perspectives and to validate multiple social realities by encouraging the participants to collaborate in the construction of meaning associated with their migration experiences.

Qualitative methodology

Harding (1987, cited in Brayton, 1997, p.2) defines methodology as being 'a theory and analysis of how research should proceed'. Methodology addresses theoretical questions about the study of research and how research is done. In the current study, the context and purpose of the research have guided the choice of research tools and techniques. This study required a type of research that would highlight experience and meaning, and enable the exploration of individual's everyday lives and the meanings they give to events. A qualitative methodology was considered as most appropriate to conduct research that would centralise the concerns of professional female migrants. As discussed, I was particularly

interested in viewing the social world through the eyes of the participants. The concern with taking a quantitative approach was that it may suppress the voices of individuals either by ignoring them or by losing them in the flow of facts and statistics (Mies, 1993). The position of attempting to see the social world through the eyes of the research participants is very much in line with constructionism and acknowledges the epistemological link with feminism.

Individual interviews

As my study focuses on individuals' accounts of lived experience, to be able to understand people's actions, it is necessary to emphasise the meaning they attribute to those actions—their thoughts, beliefs, values and feelings. Marshall and Rossman (1999) argue that these deeper perspectives can only be captured through face-to-face interactions. The purpose of interviews was to have people reflect on the phenomena of migration experience, migrant identity and settlement in Australia. Through the interviews, first hand subjective experiences were explored. My intention was to encourage the participants to recall their experiences and reintegrate them in their interviews. Participants had the opportunity to be open and to explore in depth their feelings and thoughts associated with their identity, immigrant status and professional occupation.

I chose semi-structured interviewing to obtain descriptions of the life world of the interviewees with respect to interpreting the meaning of the migration phenomena. This approach was useful for the following reasons. Firstly, it enabled me to encourage participants to provide a detailed account of their experiences in a flexible way. The flexibility presented participants with the opportunity for self-expression and detailed explanations of unanticipated themes and ideas. Secondly, it still allowed me to collect information on specific topics outlined in the interview guide. Thirdly, semi-structured interviews encouraged a two-way interaction between the researcher and the participants. My role as researcher in data collection is acknowledged: me, being a professional female migrant, assisted significantly in building a rapport with the participants and possibly enabled me to recognise when to follow up for additional information generated by a particular response (for example, passing references to the immigration or professional accreditation process). The less structured conversation explored topics, perspectives and meaning that are important to the women being researched. Therefore, semi-structured

interviews were the most appropriate method to explore migrant women's experiences of migration and settlement in detail and to identify the issues of most significance to them.

The primary aim of the interviews was to achieve an understanding of employment and social 'trajectories' and the factors that have been critical in shaping these 'trajectories'. Interviews were based on the interview guide with open-ended questions and informal probing to facilitate a discussion of issues related to women's experiences of being skilled migrants. The interview guide was developed as a checklist of topics to be covered. The purpose of the questions was to allow the interviewee to speak at length on the designated topics. Interviews explored areas such as:

- the impact of immigration on identity and picture of self,
- the experience of attempting to settle in Australia and finding out how to manage life in a new context and the contrast with one's life before migration,
- attitudes about their migration decisions,
- attitudes about the particular policies of the Australian government,
- the extent to which qualifications and previous industry experience have been recognised and the significance of that process for all aspects of their lives in Australia,
- participants' perceptions of Australia,
- levels of satisfaction with life in Australia,
- labour market experiences,
- participants' use of support services,
- information about additional education and training they have undertaken since arrival in Australia and their experience of that further education and their views as to its value,
- strategies for coping with stress inherent in migration,
- plans for the future.

In addition, interviews allowed me as a researcher to discuss events and participants' responses to and interpretations of those events in details. I was flexible in terms of the order in which topics were discussed and allowed the participants to elaborate openly on the issues raised.

Twenty individual interviewees participated in the interview process. Women were from

both English speaking and non-English speaking countries, as well as primary applicants and secondary applicants. However, one of the requirements for participation was that they would feel comfortable being interviewed in English as it was assumed that professional migrants possess sufficient English skills to participate in the study. The interviews took approximately sixty minutes, were tape recorded, with the participant's consent, and the tapes later transcribed for analysis. Participants were provided with the opportunity to make amendments to their interview transcripts.

Recruitment

Participants were female skilled migrants who had obtained tertiary qualifications before entering Australia. Snowballing techniques were used to recruit participants. This technique was based on the notion that people with a common experience are likely to know each other. Female skilled migrants tend to network. I approached people who matched my criteria and asked them to recommend people they knew. Those who agreed made the initial contact with that person. I made a follow up phone call and provided both written and verbal information about the research. I emphasised that this person should feel under no obligation (either to me or to the friend who had suggested them) to participate in the research. Participants were thus volunteers who had a desire to participate in this study. The initial contact was through my own social and professional networks, which resulted in a strong representation of professional female migrants from the health and social work fields. However, these women passed on information about the study to their social and professional networks resulting in representation from a diverse sample of women of varying ages, backgrounds and occupations (see Table 10: Description of Participants). However, the sample was limited to women living in Sydney and so their perspective on social inclusion and the migration experience largely relate to living in a global multicultural city. In addition none of the women who participated was *not* in paid employment and this may have been a bias caused by snowballing: employed women tended to pass the information on to employed women.

The participants were given a choice of where they preferred to be interviewed. One pilot interview was conducted and was included as part of the final sample as appropriate.

Qualitative data analysis

The participants' accounts were given with a great dignity but also a degree of reserve. Through these accounts, which are not 'sensational' and tell mainly of the ordinary things of everyday life, the faces of the speakers emerge, all different. In order to address the research questions, however, the data from the interviews had to be aggregated and analysed.

The data from the interviews were coded as themes emerged from the transcripts using descriptive, topic and analytical coding (Richards, 2005, pp.85-103). The first step involved descriptive coding in order to collate information about each interviewee's attributes, for example, age, nationality, ethnicity, occupation, migration status, length of time in Australia and so forth. The second step involved topic coding which involved organising all of the text according to research topics. In the main, this process involved the grouping of interview responses according to each of the interview questions as each question encapsulated a research topic of its own. Responses related to these topics, however, did not necessarily appear in direct relation to the interview question and so information related to each topic could be found at various places in the transcripts. In addition, a number of topics were identified that appeared independently of the interview questions, and these too were coded. The third step involved analytical coding in order to interpret the data as themes related to the theoretical questions at stake, for example about social inclusion, identity, and belonging. All steps in the data analysis stage were undertaken manually rather than using qualitative data analysis computer software as NVivo. This required constantly reading and re-reading the transcripts and the coded data and enabled me to gain a great deal of familiarity with the text. Importantly, the manual work meant that each interviewee retained her distinct features, characteristics and personality throughout the data analysis process, despite the disaggregation of the data into themes and codes.

Presenting the data

I have chosen to present extracts from the participants' own words, thus letting them speak for themselves, because I feel it is important to relay their interpretations of their experience if we are to come to a better understanding of how they live, their fears and anxieties and hopes and dreams. The verbatim extracts emphasise the dignity and restraint that

participants brought to their account. Most had not spoken in this way before about their lives after migration. In reporting the participants' experiences, this study employs the following definitions: 'most' is used to refer to more than three-quarters of women; 'many' is used to refer to at least half of women; 'some' is used to refer to less than half; and 'a small number' is used to refer to three or less women (Rawsthorne & Costello, 2010, p.6). All names used in this study are pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality of participants.

Ethical considerations

Ethical issues are critical in all social research. The researcher has a responsibility to protect the participants' rights and wellbeing. Approval from the University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee was obtained before commencing the interviews.

All participants were fully informed about the research and its purpose before they participated. All information that participants needed to make up their minds about whether or not they wished to take part in the study was disclosed in lay language, so they fully understood what they were consenting to. Any intended or possible use of the data or any written account based on that data was discussed. Participants were reassured that any information revealed in the interview would remain confidential.

A formal written Consent Form was handed to the interviewee at the beginning of the interview and she was asked to sign it before we began. Women were reminded that they could stop the interview at any time and request that their interview and any information revealed in it not be included in the study and that the tape of the interview be destroyed. While it was not anticipated that participants would become emotionally distressed as a result of being interviewed, the possibility of psychological harm such as embarrassment, loss of self-esteem or worry was considered. If this occurred, the interview would have been terminated and the person would be encouraged to get in touch with appropriate support people and counsellors, a list of which was provided in the information form. Integrity was protected by ensuring that the intent of the research was fully explained. No information was omitted. Great care was taken not to use misleading words or phrases.

All participants were respected equally regardless of their ideologies, religious background,

or their views concerning the migration experience. Every person was treated as an individual whose dignity, aspirations, interests and values are to be respected. The privacy, confidentiality and welfare of participants were protected. Transcripts of interviews were cleaned of identifying details, and stored in a locked strong box in my home. Keys are stored in a separate location. Data will be stored for the mandatory five year period. Beneficence was expressed by minimising risks of discomfort to participants and by giving them the opportunity to voice their experiences and perceptions in their own terms. In relation to a duty of care to participants, all interviews were conducted in a way that affirmed the importance of women's personal experiences and ensured that any feelings of discomfort or anxiety were recognised and addressed immediately within the interview context.

At the end of the interview, participants were asked again if they were happy to have their interview included in the research. It was possible that interviews would give rise to unwelcome side-effects in the participants. This possibility was explained to the interviewees.

All details relating to the participants in this study will remain confidential, and anonymity of participants will be maintained.

Limitations

Framing the study in specific research and theoretical traditions places limits on the research. Firstly, no qualitative studies are generalisable. Qualitative researchers are criticised for ignoring larger social structures and forces that influence existence by concentrating only on the microcosm of human experience (Cosgrove, 1978, p.66). However, although the results from this qualitative study cannot be generalized, they provide the beginnings on which further knowledge can be built. In addition, all interviews were conducted in English. This shaped the way women expressed their experiences of being professional female migrants. Many other factors might have influenced responses one way or another. For example, interviewees' responses might have been affected by social desirability, that is, to appear as a 'successful' migrant or alternatively, to over-emphasise the common belief that 'migrating is hard'. It was also possible that some participants were more willing than others to share their thoughts and feelings with me.

Despite these limitations, this exploratory study does reveal important information and holds significant implications for social work practice and public policies.

Reflection

I entered the research setting as a social worker and as a professional migrant myself. The expectations that I brought to the setting were challenged: this was a significant outcome of the research. It was important that, in the interest of developing useful and ‘truthful’ knowledge about a complex phenomenon and experience, that contradictory data could emerge. After conducting the interviews, I questioned my own assumptions that the migration experience is difficult and that it threatens the identity of professional migrants in much the same way as for people who entered Australia under other immigration programs.

The participants

The sample

In this section the participants are introduced as a ‘sample’ of professional female migrants through the setting out of demographic data according to a range of attributes identified in the descriptive coding stage. Twenty professional migrant women were interviewed for this study between November 2009 and February 2010. They range in age from twenty eight to fifty seven years. All respondents belong to a highly skilled occupational group. One of the prerequisites for involvement in the research was that their primary professional qualification had been obtained before migrating to Australia.

The women interviewed are not representative of any population of migrant women: the information presented characterises this group of women only. They are not representative of immigrant women in Australia in general. Table 10 presents a picture of these women as a group with the demographic data of each participant including age, country of origin, first language, years in Australia, tertiary qualification prior to migration to Australia, occupation prior to migration to Australia and occupation at the time of the interview.

Table 10: Description of Participants

Pseudonym	Age	Country of Origin	First Language	Years in Australia	Tertiary Qualification prior to Migration to Australia	Occupation prior to Migration to Australia	Current Occupation
Jodie	28	South Africa	English	5	Bachelor of Social Work (Honours)	Social Worker	Social Worker
Catherine	54	England	English	18	Degree in Occupational Therapy	Senior Occupational Therapist	Project Officer
Lorena	54	Chile	Spanish	25	Bachelor in Journalism	Journalist	Bilingual Worker
Roya	57	Egypt	Arabic	25	Bachelor of Social Work	Social Worker	Senior Social Worker
Rhani	46	South Africa	English	5	Bachelor of Art; Bachelor of Social Work; Honours in Psychology	Chief Social Worker	Senior Social Worker, Team Leader
Sudha	39	India	Hindi	10	Bachelor of Social Work; Master in Social Work	Social Worker	Social Worker
Cecilia	47	Peru	Spanish	15	Bachelor of Social Work	Social Worker	Social Worker
Shelo	50	India	Arabic	21	Bachelor of Commerce	Secretary	Community Worker
Blaga	42	Macedonia	Macedonian	8	Degree in Psychology	Psychologist	Bilingual Worker
Maria	48	Russia	Russian	11	Bachelor of Engineering	Engineer	Social Worker
Suzie	57	Sri-Lanka	English	20	Bachelor in Medicine	Medical Doctor	Medical Doctor
Rumaliza	40	England	English	11	Diploma in Nursing; Postgraduate Diploma in	Registered Nurse	Clinical Nurse Consultant

					ICU; Bachelor of Health Science (Honours)		
Manel	44	South Africa	English	4	Bachelor of Social Work (Honours)	Social Work Manager	Social Worker
Rosa	54	Egypt	Arabic	19	Bachelor of Commerce	Teacher	Bilingual Worker
Marianne	47	South Africa	Afrikaans	6	Master in Social Work	Counsellor	Social Worker
Ayla	57	Turkey	Turkish	20	Higher Doctorate in Operations Research	General Manager	Chief Executive Officer
Nadine	45	India	Hindi	14	Master in Social Work	Social Worker	Social Worker
Sylvia	43	Italy	Italian	6	Diploma in Nursing	Registered Nurse	Clinical Nurse Specialist
Olga	49	Russia	Russian	9	Bachelor in Architecture	Teacher	Teacher
Amira	44	Macedonia	Macedonian	15	Bachelor in Language and Literature	Teacher	Bilingual Worker

Age of participants

Only one participant was younger than thirty. More than half of the participants were aged between forty-one and fifty years. A quarter of the participants were aged forty-one to forty-five. A similar number of participants were between the ages of forty-six and fifty. A smaller number of women were between the ages of fifty-one and fifty-five and between the ages of fifty-six and sixty.

Table 11: Age of Participants

Age range	Number of participants in range
25-30 years	1
31-35 years	0
36-40 years	2
41-45 years	5
46-50 years	6
51-55 years	3
56-60 years	3

Age of migration to Australia

As shown in Table 12 all women migrated to Australia were between twenty and forty five years of age. The majority of women came to Australia between twenty six and forty years of age. Only one participant migrated here at the age of twenty three and one participant migrated at the age of forty two. According to figures released from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2009), skilled migrants display a younger age profile than the general Australian population. For example, from 1997 to 2008, 57 per cent of skilled migrants who arrived in Australia, were aged 29 years and younger compared to 40 per cent of the Australian resident population aged 29 years and younger. Over half (56 per cent) of skilled arrivals during that time were aged between 20 and 39.

Table 12: Age of Migration to Australia

Age range	Number of participants in range
20-25 years	1
26-30 years	5
31-35 years	5
36-40 years	8
41-45 years	1

Years in Australia

The majority of participants (82.4 per cent) had lived in Australia for six years or more. A few participants had been here for less than five years. There is a general assumption when

we talk about length of time in Australia, we understand it as an ongoing residence. In reality, this is not always the case. For example, one participant had made a permanent move to another country since her migration to Australia. She and her family had spent more than five years at their new destination before their return to Australia less than one year ago. Still, in this table, this woman’s Australian residency will be represented as an uninterrupted length of stay since her family’s initial arrival here more than nine years ago. In addition, it also does not take into account that most participants regularly return to their country of origin for lengthy visits and holidays.

Table 13: Years in Australia

Years in Australia	Number of participants in range
1-5 years	3
6-10 years	5
11-15 years	5
16-20 years	4
21-25 years	3

First language

The majority of interviewees are from linguistically diverse backgrounds who nominated a language other than English as their first language. Less than one third of participants nominated English as their first language. However, having nominated English as a first language does not necessarily mean that the person is from an Anglo-Saxon background. For example, one person, who was born in Middle East and raised in Dubai, chose to nominate English as her first language although she possessed excellent Arabic and Hindi languages skills.

Table 14: First Language

First language	Number of participants in range
English	6
Arabic	3
Hindi	2
Macedonian	2

Russian	2
Spanish	2
Afrikaans	1
Italian	1
Turkish	1

Country of origin

Several regions of the world were represented in the study. Most of the interviewed women were born in Northern, Eastern and South Europe. Some women originated from Asia and Africa. A smaller number of women were born in the Middle East and Latin America. However, the country of origin is not necessarily the country they came to Australia from. Four participants came to Australia through a third country. In addition, some participants were part of a migrant community in their country of origin.

Table 15: Country of Origin

Country of origin	Number of participants in range
Chile	1
Egypt	2
England	1
India	3
Italy	1
Macedonia	2
Peru	1
Russia	2
Sri-Lanka	1
South Africa	4
Turkey	1
Vanuatu	1

Visa class on arrival to Australia

Most women came to Australia under the Skilled Migration Program as a primary applicant or as a dependent family member.⁴ The rest of the women came under the Family Migration stream.

Table 16: Visa Class on Arrival to Australia

Visa class	Number of participants in range
Skilled/Primary	7
Skilled/Dependant	4
Temporary Business Visa	1
Spouse	4
Family reunion	3
Last remaining relative	1

Qualification assessed prior to migration to Australia

Most women who participated in the study attempted to have their overseas qualifications recognised. Only one woman was not successful in having her overseas qualification recognised by the Australian overseas assessment authorities. However, the remaining eight interviewees had not sought to have their overseas obtained professional credentials assessed prior to migration. This was for a range of reasons: for example, the women's qualifications did not require recognition. Of the eleven women whose qualifications were recognised, seven were the primary applicants.

Table 17: Qualification Assessed Prior to Migration to Australia

Qualification assessed prior to migration	Number of participants in range
Assessed/Recognised	11
Assessed/Not recognised	1
Not assessed	8

⁴ See Chapter Two for discussion of this distinction.

Tertiary qualification prior to migration to Australia

All respondents belong to a highly skilled occupational group with tertiary qualifications obtained before their move to Australia. As shown in Table 19, one of the participants had graduated with a Higher Doctorate, four participants had completed Post Graduate education, three participants had been graduated with an Honours Degree and all the participants held Bachelor Degrees or higher at the time of their migration application to Australia.

Table 18: Tertiary Qualification Prior to Migration to Australia

Tertiary qualification prior to migration	Number of participants in range
Bachelor Degree	12
Bachelor Degree (Honours)	3
Master Degree	3
Postgraduate Diploma	1
Higher Doctorate	1

Prior to migration versus current occupation

Nearly all professional female migrants worked in female dominated occupations such as nursing and social work. The majority of them worked in the same field and at the same level as they had prior to migration to Australia. Some, however, experienced a downgrade in their occupation status, and a few have progressed to more senior positions.

Table 19: Prior and Post Migration Occupation

Pseudonym	Occupation prior to Migration to Australia	Current Occupation
Jodie	Social Worker	Social Worker
Catherine	Senior Occupational Therapist	Project Officer
Lorena	Journalist	Bilingual Worker
Roya	Social Worker	Senior Social Worker
Rhani	Chief Social Worker	Senior Social Worker, Team Leader
Sudha	Social Worker	Social Worker
Cecilia	Social Worker	Social Worker

Shelo	Secretary	Community Worker
Blaga	Psychologist	Bilingual Worker
Maria	Engineer	Social Worker
Suzie	Medical Doctor	Medical Doctor
Rumaliza	Registered Nurse	Clinical Nurse Consultant
Manel	Social Work Manager	Social Worker
Rosa	Teacher	Bilingual Worker
Marianne	Counsellor	Social Worker
Ayla	General Manager	Chief Executive Officer
Nadine	Social Worker	Social Worker
Sylvia	Registered Nurse	Clinical Nurse Specialist
Olga	Teacher	Teacher
Amira	Teacher	Bilingual Worker

The occupational status of professional female migrants mirrors the occupational position of the Australian general female population, most of whom work in health care, social and community services, education and training (ABS, 2011b).

In summary the women who participated in this study consisted of women from a range of countries and included both English speaking and non-English speaking women. Most women worked in the health and welfare fields even though some of these women had shifted into these occupations on arrival in Australia. As some of the preceding discussion of the participants has shown, collating numerical data on migrants' characteristics such as where they are from and what language they speak can render invisible or suppress important issues (Mies, 1993). What follows in the next section is a summary of the twenty women's life narratives. As is expected in qualitative research, all names are pseudonyms.

The stories

This section presents brief summarised stories of the professional female migrants who participated in this study. Only information directly relevant to the topics discussed in the study are presented in the vignettes. The participants and their stories are presented in the order in which the interviews occurred.

Jodie

Jodie, 28 years of age, migrated to Australia from South Africa as the last remaining relative. She was a social worker in South Africa, working as a child protection caseworker prior to coming to Australia. Jodie considered her job as meaningful and important, although social work in South Africa had no economic security and salaries were not enough to cover rent unless you were in private practice.

Jodie had visited Australia a number of times as a child. In February 2004, Jodie came to Australia to stay permanently to have a better life. Personal safety and strong employment opportunities for social workers in Australia made the decision to immigrate so much easier.

Two months after arrival, Jodie found her first job. It was only after working three months in a lesser position that she got some experience and was able to secure a job as a social worker. Jodie received no formal assistance in looking for work. Her social work degree was assessed and recognised after her arrival, not before. The major challenges Jodie encountered during her settlement process included adjustment to cultural differences, social isolation, leaving family and friends behind and finding new friends and connections.

At the time of the interview, Jodie was working as a full-time accredited social worker. She plans to do a master degree. Remaining in contact with her culture and people is essential for Jodie as these contacts bring her a sense of security and belonging. Jodie loves Australia, its beaches, parks, restaurants, resources for children and families. She feels included and belonging.

Catherine

Catherine, age 54, arrived in Australia with her Australian husband and their two children in 1991. They had come from the UK where Catherine had graduated as an Occupational Therapist in 1975. She was working as a Senior Occupational Therapist prior to their arrival in Australia. The decision to immigrate was a partnership decision to improve lifestyle and to experience living in Australia.

Although Catherine had not enquired about job prospects for Occupational Therapists in

Australia, she knew she would not be able to work in her profession. Catherine was told she would have to retake the equivalent of her final exams. As she had completed them sixteen years previously, it seemed unrealistic to her to go that pathway.

Upon Catherine's arrival in Australia, she started in a part-time job and then progressed as she was able and her child raising responsibilities lessened. She had no assistance in finding work. The major challenges with settlement in a new country included raising children without family support whilst trying to establish as a professional person.

In Australia, Catherine undertook several courses that helped her to secure a full-time position as a project officer. The job includes working with people from different cultural backgrounds. At the time of the interview, Catherine continued working as a project officer. Although this was a lower level position compared with Catherine's original occupation, she was satisfied with her employment.

Catherine's plan for the future is to remain in Australia as this country is now her home with a lifestyle and environment she enjoys so much.

Lorena

Lorena arrived in Australia from Chile, as a visitor, in 1984. Lorena's brother was living in Australia after leaving Chile as a refugee in 1979. In Chile, Lorena was a journalist working for a government newspaper.

When Lorena arrived in Australia, she planned to skill herself up with English and to go back to Chile. It was at her English class that she met her husband (now ex-) and they got married eighteen months later.

A few months after Lorena had finished her English course, she approached an ethnic newspaper and they gave her her first job. Since then, Lorena had changed jobs a few times and was working in different kinds of media. She even had her own women's magazine for five years. Her degree in Journalism was assessed and fully recognised as equivalent to an Australian bachelor degree, but insufficient English skills have created major barriers in pursuing a journalist career in Lorena's host country.

New life in Australia presented many challenges for Lorena. She experienced a marriage breakdown, loneliness and significant difficulties with English and adjustment to a new culture. There were periods of great sadness and emotional instability. It took her fourteen years to reestablish herself into a new reality. Reflecting on that time in her life, Lorena felt that it was a period of personal pain, self-discovery and personal growth.

In 1999, Lorena successfully applied for a new job. Part of the job involved producing newsletters. This was the only connection point with her previous profession as a journalist. Lorena continues to work as a bilingual worker and is very content with her new occupation.

At the time of the interview, Lorena described herself as a happy person. A year before, she bought her own house. She loves her job, the theatre group she is a part of and a close circle of friends. And although Lorena still does not perceive Australia as being her home place, she feels connected and comfortable. Lorena chooses to remain positive and see immigration as an enriching and opportunistic experience.

Roya

Roya, 57, was born and raised in Cairo, Egypt. She graduated with a Bachelor in Social Work degree in 1976. Prior to coming to Australia with her husband and their young daughter in 1984, Roya was working as a social worker in different schools and clinics for a couple of years. Her life in Cairo was economically secure with considerable employment opportunities and strong family support. However, the struggle with a mostly Muslim culture, society and religion forced Roya's family to pursue a better life in Australia. As her sister-in-law was living in Australia, the family arrived under the Sponsored Family Reunion Program in December 1984.

After three years of living in Australia, Roya sought the recognition of her professional qualification. Her Social Work degree was not recognised by the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) owing to insufficient field experience hours. As returning back to the University was not a feasible option at that time, Roya started to look for work elsewhere.

Eventually, before her third child was born, Roya achieved her first job in the community centre. It was a part-time job for six months only. After this job, she worked at different government and non-government organisations, but not as a social worker. During that time, Roya has also completed a computer course at TAFE and a degree in Community Work at the University.

In 1997, Roya again applied and, this time, was successful in her overseas Social Work qualification being recognised as equivalent to the Australian bachelor degree. It took Roya thirteen long years to start practising social work in Australia. She believes she was not given a chance. With no support from AASW and other agencies, Roya felt she was fighting on her own.

At the time of the interview, Roya was a practising senior social worker. Her life outside work revolves mainly around her family and friends. With religion playing a central part in her life, Roya's friends are mostly Arabic speaking Christians from the church. For that reason Roya has been an active member of her church.

Roya believes there is a better life for her and her family in Australia. In the past 18 years she has been observing Australia becoming a more open and tolerant society with greater opportunities for every citizen. She wants to see her children getting married and having grandchildren. She is planning to work till her retirement age.

Rhani

Rhani, a 46 year old South African Indian woman, left South Africa with her husband and their two sons in January 2004. They sought permanent relocation to Australia because of crime and safety concerns for their children in South Africa. The family arrived under the Australian Skilled Migration Program, with Rhani being a primary applicant.

Rhani holds a degree in Social Work and several post graduate studies in Counselling and Psychology. She has extensive working experience as a social worker, working in community development and corrective services. Rhani's social work qualification was formally assessed and recognised prior to her skilled migrant visa being granted.

Upon arriving in Australia, Rhani quickly obtained a locum position, which was followed by several more casual short-term positions in the human services sector. In 2005, wanting to secure a full-time permanent job, she applied and was successful in gaining a senior social work position. She received no formal assistance in finding work in Australia.

Rhani continues to work as a senior professional and a team leader. She also undertakes postgraduate study at the University. Despite successful professional integration, the transition into a new life presented unexpected difficulties for Rhani and her family. She felt lonely and isolated as she missed her lifestyle, family and friends back home. Although they would not consider returning back to South Africa, Rhani raised concerns about her family experiencing racism in Australian. Surprisingly to Rhani, some members of South African Indian community in Sydney were not as welcoming as she would have expected.

Overall, Rhani believes that challenges of migration have made her a stronger person with clear determination to make it work for her and her family. Her connection with parents, family and friends back in South Africa has been as strong as ever.

Sudha

Sudha, a 39 year old Indian woman, spoke extensively about difficulties she experienced as a result of migration to Australia. She came to Australia in 1999 with her husband and 3 year old daughter under the Skilled Migration Program. Sudha was a primary applicant.

In India, Sudha was working as a social worker for 7 years after successfully completing a bachelor degree in Psychology. She also had a master degree in Social Work. Both degrees were assessed as equivalent to the Australian bachelor degree in Social Work.

Sudha's immigration to Australia was problematised by her marriage difficulties and eventual breakdown as well as her desire to migrate permanently to Canada. When the decision to leave India was made, Sudha applied to immigrate not only to Australia, but to Canada as well. Her application to go to Canada took so much longer to proceed. She was already living in Australia for 3 long years when, finally, she was given a Canadian visa. She went to Canada from Australia, however, eventually, she had to come back because she

was pregnant, had no money in Canada and no place to live.

Sudha described her adaptation to life in Australia as challenging and painful. She learnt that immigration was not only a professional move. It was a personal move as well. Additionally, with marriage breakdown and two young children to raise, she found herself uprooted and isolated. At times, her marriage's instability was creating difficulties in Sudha's relationship with other Indian women who criticised Sudha for her untraditional family values. Sudha portrays the experience at that time and her coping with the situation as the hardest thing she was not prepared for. She felt she had no life. At that time, a general sense of dissatisfaction with her marital life had prompted Sudha to focus her attention on children and work. Finding a first job in the welfare sector and later moving from welfare to the social work field became a turning point that prompted Sudha's reclamation as a strong and resourceful woman.

Proudly, Sudha believes that she had become a stronger person as a result of migration, marriage breakdown and tremendous challenges she had to overcome in the last 10 years. Her 'disastrous' relationship with her husband, she thinks, has taught her to see herself differently from the typical Indian's woman perspective. Sudha's personal resilience, sense of humour, ability to reflect and strong determination have helped her to overcome challenges and become freer emotionally and otherwise.

Ten years ago, Sudha moved to Australia with her family. She is now a mother, a professional and a strong, resilient, resourceful woman. She identifies herself as a professional migrant, Australian national with Indian ethnicity. Becoming a single mother added another dimension to her multicultural identity. Having many friends of different ethnicities, Sudha created her own world she feels being a part of and belonging. She intends to remain with her children in Australia.

Cecilia

Cecilia, who was 47 when she participated in the interview, grew up in Peru. She came to Australia at age of 32 with her husband and their two children under the Skilled Migration Program. Escaping the unstable political situation and terrorism in Peru were the major reasons for them searching better life in another country. Cecilia's husband, who is an

electronic engineer, was a primary applicant.

Cecilia's first years as an immigrant were confusing and difficult. Although her social work qualification obtained in Peru was easily recognised by the Australian Association of Social Workers, poor English skills and lack of local employment experience made the attempts to find social work job a painful journey. Cecilia spoke at length about challenges she encountered during that time. She enrolled herself in English classes, TAFE, Disability course and First Aid trainings. She was open to every opportunity that would bring her closer to her goal of becoming a social worker in Australia. Cecilia found a way to travel to the Hunter area every morning for six months just to get social work experience. In Sydney, she was working as an assistant in an aged care hostel, had volunteer work in a welfare agency and was working in community services to move her closer to a social work job. And although at times Cecilia was getting depressed and disappointed, she never lost her determination to pursue her ambition. All that time, she had never stopped being a caring mother and wife supporting her family to build a new life in Australia. Elaborating on that difficult time, Cecilia recalled being very determined, focused and exceptionally optimistic despite all the adverse circumstances. Despite all the challenges, in year 2000, Cecilia finally secured a social work position.

At the time of the interview, Cecilia was still employed as a social worker. She loves her job. She loves her profession. She is passionate about different cultures and people, and enjoys helping them in their time of need. Describing the impact of immigration on her life, Cecilia spoke about changes in her personality. She became a different person, ambitious, strong, determined and resourceful. Back home she was shy and scared. Cecilia attributes her changing sense of self to her new environment.

Cecilia loves Australia, the freedom, the opportunities, the way society is structured and operates. She feels included and at home. And although she is concerned about young people's values and relationships and some ethnic tensions in the community, she sees a great future for her family here. Cecilia intends to undertake a further study. A management course would be of particular interest to her as she looking at enhancing her career opportunities.

Shelo

Shelo, a 50 year old Indian woman, was delighted to be interviewed. She came to Australia with her twin sister from Dubai in 1988 motivated by several factors: Australia's high living standards, inability to remain in Dubai permanently and unwillingness to return back to India. She studied in India and had completed the Bachelor of Commerce in 1981. Shelo also did a secretarial course to enhance her career opportunities. In 1982, she went to Dubai and worked for a private international company until her migration to Australia six years later. Shelo and her sister had to apply for immigration to Australia three times before they finally were granted skilled migration visas. Shelo was a primary applicant.

In 1988, Shelo and her sister came to Perth. Shelo did not have her overseas qualification recognised as this was not the same process as today. There was no formal requirement for the overseas qualification to be recognised even for skilled migrants. Interestingly, the international company Shelo was working for in Dubai, had an office in Perth. So, she was able to secure employment with them again just two weeks after arrival. She got married soon after and, in 2000, Shelo moved to Sydney with her husband and their newborn daughter. She has lived in Sydney ever since.

Although it did not take Shelo long to find a job in Sydney, balancing employment and family commitments presented new challenges for her. Part time temporary positions in different settings dominated her employment reality at that time. Nevertheless, Shelo managed to enroll herself in the Bachelor of Science degree at Macquarie University which she successfully completed with Honours in 2006.

At the time of the interview, Shelo worked full time in the community sector. The position is not permanent as are many in this area. And although she is enjoying working in this field, Shelo is seriously considering a postgraduate University degree.

Shelo enjoys her life in Australia. She has many friends and feels included and a part of the society. Shelo has emphasised that she is the one who finds ways to become included and to participate. She does extensive volunteer work and plays an active role in her daughter's school and in the church. She is also a member of the Australian Service Union.

According to Shelo, the hardest adjustment into new Australian life was the lack of support from people around her when she needed it most. She had a contact with a couple of employment agencies when she arrived in Australia, however she felt that they were not helpful and at times were even highly discriminatory. Even people from her cultural background were distant, unhelpful and difficult to approach. She had no choice but to become ambitious, determined and active herself. Shelo, informed by her adjustment difficulties, believes she has become a stronger person. She believes the Australian society's success lays in tolerance, respect and acceptance of differences by its people.

Blaga

At the age of 34, 8 years before the interview, Blaga migrated to Australia from Macedonia with her husband under the Australian Skilled Migration Program. During the interview Blaga was shy initially, but then spoke adamantly about her migration experience.

Blaga holds a Degree in Psychology completed in Macedonia. She also did a postgraduate Diploma in Cognitive Behaviour Therapy. Prior to coming to Australia, Blaga worked as a psychologist in community services and was involved in a number of research projects.

Blaga had relatives living in Australia, so she came to visit them in 1997. Although there was a civil war in Macedonia in 2000-2001 between Albanians and Macedonians, the war was not the reason for her family migration. They simply came to have a better life. Blaga's husband had a Bachelor Degree in Technology (IT) that was recognised as suitable for migration purposes. He was a primary applicant.

The first two years in Australia were the most difficult time for Blaga and her husband as newcomers. The government regulation not to support skilled migrants during the first two years post arrival, in addition to their absence of local work experience and a desperate need for a paid employment, forced them to reconsider their migration decision. At some point Blaga and her husband were seriously considering returning back to Macedonia. Fortunately, Blaga found a cashier job in a local supermarket and, later, was able to start a part time course at TAFE that she was attending at evening times.

In 2003, two years after arrival, Blaga successfully applied for a position as a bilingual

worker and remained in this position at the time of the interview. The job involves working with elderly people, people with disabilities and carers. Caring for her two year old son, as well as working full time, Blaga is resigned to remain in this job although it is not commensurate with her abilities and experience and does not require a University degree. Nevertheless, Blaga recognises that she has a wide range of skills acquired through education and experience that she is able to utilise in her current position.

Blaga has spoken proudly about being a migrant from Macedonia. She is proud to be a mother, a working mother who has chosen to remain positive and optimistic despite the everyday challenges the new life in Australia presents.

Maria

Maria, a Russian immigrant, was 48 at the time of the interview. She came to Australia at age 37 under the Family Reunion Program. Maria possesses an Engineering degree and worked in the Scientific and Research Institute prior to coming to Australia. Difficult economic conditions during Perestroika forced Maria's family to seek financial and economic security in Australia. She had visited Australia before applying for a visa, however the visit had not prepared her for the challenges that lay ahead.

Maria's first years as an immigrant were challenging and uncertain. She was faced with a different culture and lifestyle as well as lack of family support and familiar environment. Her Engineering degree was formally recognised as an Australian bachelor degree, but limited English and the absence of local employment experience prevented Maria from getting an engineering position. She enrolled in TAFE English course and, after seeking a consultation with a career counsellor, decided to pursue a social work career. Although this was a significant career change, Maria felt that it would be more difficult to secure an engineering position in such a male dominated industry in Australia. In 2005, seven years after arrival, Maria had completed a bachelor degree in Social Work and, soon after, was offered a social work job.

Working as a social worker, Maria is satisfied with her new career outlook. Reflecting on her life in a host country, she identifies deeply with her culture and her country of birth. Despite her vibrant personality and positive outlook, Maria's statements illustrate the pain

and loss associated with migration. Contacts with her ethnic group remain exceptionally important to her. More and more Maria hears the stories of Russian migrants returning back to their homeland. Maria is hopeful that one day she will be able to reunite with her country and her people.

Suzie

Suzie, 57 years of age, migrated to Australia from the United Kingdom under the Family Reunion Program. Suzie was born and raised in Sri-Lanka where she completed her undergraduate degree in Medicine. She was given a scholarship by the Sri-Lankan's government to undertake postgraduate study in the UK where she decided to stay permanently. Suzie was working as a medical doctor specialising in dermatology for 8 years in the UK before, in 1989, at age 37, she migrated to Australia with her husband and their two young sons.

Prior to applying for a permanent visa, Suzie travelled to Australia for a holiday where she also managed to pass the clinical exam allowing her to practise medicine here. The UK references from Suzie's former consultants and informal support here in Australia helped her to secure her first job at a hospital in Sydney just 3 months post arrival. In another 3 months, Suzie already was working as a medical doctor full time.

At the time of the interview, Suzie was still practising medicine. Proudly talking about her successful 35 year long medical career and personal achievements, Suzie emphasised the importance of hard work and determination not only for a successful migration settlement but also for a fulfilling life in general. Suzie said she was always giving 150 percent. Although she had not found the settlement experience challenging, the process has made her stronger as a person.

Now in her late 50s, Suzie plans to practise medicine until her retirement age. She loves her job, which she finds vastly rewarding. Suzie also loves Australia and perceives the Australian society as being well balanced and inclusive. Ability to work in her profession and to study, connect to the local Tamil community and participate in the Australian life gives Suzie a sense of security and belonging. She often travels to India, which she loves dearly, however her plans and her future are in Australia.

Rumaliza

Rumaliza, 40, migrated with her partner from the United Kingdom under the Skilled Migration Program in 1998. Rumaliza is a qualified and experienced nurse who was born in Vanuatu and raised in Africa as a child. Later on her family moved to England where they have lived ever since. Before coming to Australia, Rumaliza was working as a registered nurse and a team leader in the intensive care unit in London. She and her partner had visited Australia a number of times, so Rumaliza had an opportunity to have her nursing qualifications checked before applying for a permanent visa. She was a primary applicant.

Rumaliza was delighted to come to Australia. Soon after their arrival, she started to look for work and, with the assistance of the employment agency, was able to secure her first nursing position very quickly. Although the first job was in a slightly lower position than her last in London, this was a successful beginning of a professional nursing career in a new country. Rumaliza also joined a swimming club soon after arrival and this helped her to diversify in terms of friendship away from just work colleagues. Even though she felt a little isolated in a new country at the beginning of her life in Australia, it did not take her long to settle in.

Clearly, Rumaliza enjoys her life in Australia and a large circle of friends, mostly new immigrants from different countries. She now works in a senior nursing position. A keen member of a swimming club and an active participant in the academic and professional world of nursing, Rumaliza sees herself as a very privileged person who has very few needs. She admits not having a strong identity in terms of culture or country. Rumaliza enjoys being an Australian and expresses gratitude for the opportunity to take part and participate in society. She strongly believes her future is here, in Australia.

Manel

Manel, aged 44, a skilled migrant who arrived in Australia with her family in 2005, was delighted to be interviewed. Manel willingly shared thoughts about her family migration and challenges she faced during resettlement and readjustment into a new life.

She was born and raised in South Africa where her ancestors were brought from India to work in a canefield six generations ago. Even though Manel strongly identifies with Indian

culture in terms of its customs, tradition and religion, she and her family do not speak any of the Indian languages. Instead, they speak English at home.

Manel holds a Social Work degree (Honours) from the Indian University in South Africa and worked 16 years as a social worker prior to coming to Australia. Manel's social work experience included working with people with disabilities and in the child protection service. She reports that, while in South Africa, she enjoyed the comfort of a secure job, financial stability and strong family support. However, the increased violence against Indian population and growing concerns about the safety of their children prompted Manel and her husband to consider leaving the country. They were looking for a new country that could offer the same things as in South Africa in terms of weather, lifestyle and cosmopolitan population. As Manel's brother-in-law was living in Australia and was willing to support them on their arrival, Australia was chosen as Manel's family final destination. They had not visited Australia before their permanent move. They migrated using a migration agent and recognition of Manel's social work qualification was organised in South Africa as a part of the skilled migration requirements.

Immediately after their arrival, Manel started to look for a job. She was a primary applicant and, therefore, felt responsible to find a job first. Two months after arrival, Manel got very sick and ended up in hospital. Fortunately, soon after discharge, she successfully applied for a social work position and remained in this position at the time of the interview. Reflecting on the first two years in a new country, she remembered being completely overwhelmed and daily challenged.

Manel, informed by her own adjustment difficulties, believes immigration brought out a vast amount of strengths in her. It brought out qualities that were dominant within her, that were not active before. It brought out humility, a sense of humbleness and a deepest sense of respect for human beings. Manel believes she became a better person. She became a survivor.

At the time of the interview, 4 years after arrival, Manel felt like she was living in limbo. Being isolated within the Indian group who came from India because of the language barrier and not deeply connecting to the Australian community, she finds the question of identity and belonging as a puzzling one. Manel's family mostly socialises with the South

African Indian community and although she enjoys the friendship of her work colleagues, the sense of being different and uprooted remains.

Rosa

Rosa, 54, migrated to Australia from Egypt with her husband and two young sons in early 1990s. She holds a degree in Commerce (Accounting) and a degree in Music (Piano) and, in Egypt, she was a teacher with 18 years of experience in the field. Rosa worked in both private and public schools teaching mathematics, music and commercial studies. Rosa's parents and siblings had lived in Australia and, when her husband was offered a job contract during their holiday visit here, they decided to immigrate. Rosa wanted to reunite with her family.

When Rosa finally arrived in Australia, she did not think she would have to work. She thought her husband's wage would be sufficient to ensure their family's economic security and that Rosa would be spending her time looking after the children and volunteering for the community. The reality of a new life was different and disappointing as she had to start looking for a job. Rosa had not applied to have her tertiary qualifications recognised as she was not interested in practising accounting in Australia. To Rosa's disappointment, her 18 years of teaching experience in Egypt was not recognised here. Nevertheless, with the help of a friend, Rosa obtained a one day a week bilingual worker position to work with the elderly Arabic speaking community, which was followed by several more casual and short term positions in aged care and education. English was Rosa's second language at school, but she lacked confidence and experienced difficulties understanding an Australian accent. Suddenly, in January 1991, Rosa's husband lost his job and Rosa started to look for full time work. Later that year, she successfully applied for a full time position as a bilingual worker. The job involved working with elderly Arabic speaking people in a local community. Eighteen years later, Rosa continued to work in this position and was very content with her job.

Rosa loves Australia and plans to remain here with her family. Both her sons are now married and Rosa is looking forward to having grandchildren. She identifies with both Egyptian and Australian cultures and appreciates opportunities Australia has offered to her.

Marianne

Marianne, who was 47 when she participated in the interview, grew up in a middle class family in South Africa. She graduated as a social worker in 1983 and worked in different settings including health and community services for more than 20 years. She also holds a master degree in Supervision and Management and, for the last 5 years prior to her migration, worked as an Employment Assistance Program (EAP) counsellor for a large South African company. Marianne was at a good point in her social work career when her family moved to Australia. She is fluently bilingual and speaks Afrikaans at home. A sense of personal insecurity, crime and violence prompted her family to immigrate. Marianne came to Australia when she was 41 years old with her husband and their two children. She was a primary applicant.

Shortly after Marianne's arrival in Australia, she registered with the Australian Association of Social Workers and placed her name on the casual employment list. Her social work qualification was recognised before her arrival as a part of the Australian Skilled Migration Program. Three months after arrival, Marianne found her first job and remained in that position at the time of the interview. Although this was a social work position, it was at the entry level and lower than Marianne performed in South Africa. Later on she was offered a scholarship and had completed a master degree at the University in 2008.

Despite the successful reconnection with a social work career, Marianne described adaptation to life in Australia as difficult and painful. Although she had not lost in social status and position as a result of migration, the emotional aspect of immigration and settlement was overwhelming. She believes the life stage at which her migration occurred has also made a big difference. Being in her 40s, the experience of loss, grief and isolation tested her abilities to manage new circumstances well. Fortunately, Marianne had the support of her family to lessen the pain of the migration journey.

At the time of the interview, six years after Marianne's arrival in Australia, her life mainly revolved around her family, her job and her friends. Even though Marianne strongly identified herself as South African, she felt settled and being part of the Australian broader community. Since coming to Australia, Marianne has been enjoying the sense of safety and personal security, the ability to go for a walk and feel safe, to sleep safely at night. Of

particular importance to her is the contact with people of a similar culture, values and religion.

Ayla

Ayla, age 57, arrived in Australia under the Skilled Migration Program with her husband in 1989. They had come from Turkey where she had completed a higher doctorate in Operations Research. Ayla was working as a general manager for budgeting, planning and investment with a major holding company in the construction industry prior to her arrival in Australia. The decision to immigrate was a partnership decision to escape their perception of a weakening of secularism, high inflation and unstable economy. Ayla's qualification was assessed before they arrived and she had made enquiries about job prospects in Australia. She was confident she would get employment in her area of expertise but, to minimise risk, she and her husband did not come together. Ayla's husband, who was a software engineer, came first and only when he got a job, she quitted hers to come over. The husband was a primary applicant.

Upon Ayla's arrival in Australia, she started to look for a job. She searched for a job she could easily do and was well qualified for. Ayla's only support at that time was her husband and other Turkish migrants. This support Ayla found invaluable at that time. And although she quickly obtained her first job in Australia, the lost contact with her family and friends back in Turkey has significantly complicated the settlement process.

In Australia, Ayla has changed jobs a few times and worked in both private and public sectors. At the time of the interview she worked as an executive manager in a large Australian not for profit (NGO) organisation with responsibilities for the research, policy and program management. Ayla was satisfied with her employment. She enjoyed a fulfilling social life and particularly appreciated opportunities to remain in contact with her language and Turkish friends that gave her a solid sense of belonging.

Ayla's plan for the future is to remain in Australia as she enjoys the freedom, beautiful nature and opportunities for personal development this country offers to its citizens.

Nadine

Nadine, 45 years of age, arrived in Australia with her husband and their two young children in 1995. They came from India where she graduated with a Master Degree in Social Work. In India, Nadine worked with The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on a contractual basis. She regarded her job as challenging however satisfying at the same time. It was Nadine husband's decision to move to Australia to secure a stable, quality family life and greater opportunities for their children. Nadine's family arrived under the Australian Skilled Migration Program. Nadine was a primary applicant. Her social work qualification was assessed and recognised prior to their arrival as a part of their migration application. Relevant information was provided by the Australian High Commissioner regarding social and professional life here. Nadine and her husband were confident that, with their qualifications and a good command of English, they would get jobs in their areas of expertise.

Next day after their arrival, Nadine contacted the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) and appeared for a job interview within the first 10 days in Australia. Contacts with her professional association, Centrelink and the Australian Migrant Women's Association helped her to get confidence and information to secure her first job. Informal assistance of family and friends contributed to a softer introduction to the Australian way of life, new culture and society values.

Reflecting on the migration process and settlement, Nadine revealed that migration to Australia has affected her in many different ways and at multiple levels. She has significantly grown professionally and has secured a full time senior social work position. Nadine has also completed a number of professional courses through her work place and university and was thinking of expanding her knowledge even further. On a personal level, establishing herself as a migrant presented many obstacles for Nadine. She has experienced marital problems, a sense of loss of values in her children, significant culture differences and not always feeling welcomed by members of the broader Australian community. This continues to cause stress in her life. Fears of ageing in a different culture and lack of family values in her children has become her major concern as she realises some of her values are different from those of the wider society. Migration has also given Nadine the opportunity to realise her full potential and has tested her capabilities to the limit.

Nadine's plans for the future remain uncertain. She may decide to return back to India one day as she may feel more comfortable in her country of origin as she ages.

Sylvia

Sylvia, 43, was born and raised in a small secluded village in Italy. Her parents provided her with a stable, protected environment with her and her two brothers living with their parents till their late 30s. Hard work was more valued than academic achievements within the family and participation in home maintenance and building was always a given. Sylvia's parents belong to the working class but with hard work they gained economic stability, owned their own home and built one for each of their three children. Sylvia graduated with a diploma in Nursing and was working as a registered nurse specialising in surgery for nearly 20 years. She talked openly about her life in Italy. She always had few but good friends and enjoyed travelling with them for several years. Her economic and social circumstances were fairly satisfying and rewarding. As she travelled extensively, she always felt like a citizen of the world more than a villager. Nevertheless, Sylvia had a certain status in her little part of the world. She was even asked to join a party for a local election. She ultimately declined since she was already pursuing the experience of working overseas.

Following her short immigration experience in England, where Sylvia was working as a community nurse for 15 months, she went for a round-the-world trip and visited Australia for a month as well as several other countries. Sylvia found Australia a fantastic place to live in, with friendly and easy-going people, good job opportunities and wonderful country to explore. She marveled at the multicultural environment and the unpretentious way of living. This was so different from Italy in the 1990s. It was during that holiday that Sylvia stopped by the NSW Nursing Board to get information to immigrate. After two experiences of working in Australia on temporary business visas for about 1.5 years each, she decided to proceed for a permanent migration and applied for a permanent residency. Sylvia's main motivation for permanent migration was to explore her level of independence, gain a better vision of the world in a country that was clearly liberal on many levels, with similar values to those in Italy but different at the same time. Migration provided the possibility to freely engage with people of her same sexual orientation in a safe and accepting environment in

one of the most liberal cities in the world.

The transition into a new life in Australia has not presented major challenges for Sylvia. She was successful in obtaining a nursing position even before her arrival and, after changing jobs a few times, has secured a full time nursing position she was still doing at the time of the interview. Sylvia has described herself as a remarkably independent, practical and resilient person with excellent planning and organisational skills. She believes her nursing qualification has helped her even more to have a choice in terms of career opportunities and growth, employment and financial security.

Overall, Sylvia sees her migration experience as a successful adventure at both personal and professional levels. At work, she enjoys recognition for her professional experience, knowledge and expertise. At the time of the interview, she was successfully undertaking postgraduate study sponsored by her employer and the Commonwealth. Personally, Sylvia is absolutely content with her Australian lifestyle, close circle of friends, Australian freedom and multiculturalism, and the possibility to gain educational and professional opportunities at any stage in life.

Olga

Olga, a 49 year old woman, spoke openly about her migration experiences. Olga was born and grew up in Russia, where she graduated with a bachelor in Architecture in 1983. The search for better opportunities and new adventurous experience were among the major reasons for Olga's family immigration to New Zealand in 1996. She came with her husband and their son under the New Zealand Skilled Migration Program. Olga was a primary applicant.

Adjustment to a new life in New Zealand presented Olga with overwhelming difficulties. Although her parents were able to come and join them, Olga was struggling in an attempt to adapt to a new environment, culture and lifestyle. She had not worked in New Zealand as an architect despite the full recognition of her professional qualification prior to her arrival. Elaborating on that difficult time, Olga recalled being depressed and disappointed with her new life. Every aspect of that life was difficult for her, not just searching for a job. Nevertheless, when Olga's English improved significantly, she was successful in gaining a

part time art teacher position at the primary school. The birth of Olga's second son, who had a moderate disability and required special care, presented new complications that finally prevented Olga from pursuing her professional career. Olga had become a primary carer of her disabled son, who was born in New Zealand 2 years after her family's migration there.

Despite all the challenges, in the year 2000, Olga's family decided to move to Australia as eligible New Zealand residents. Olga's architecture degree was recognised as equivalent to the Australian bachelor degree, however she never worked in her profession in Australia. Her major focus and responsibility remained looking after and caring for her youngest son who required significant support and attention. Olga spoke at length about the great difficulties and frustration she encountered when dealing with education, community, child care and disability services in relation to her youngest son's care and support. The caring responsibility has left Olga with little choice regarding her own employment and community participation. Although it was easy for Olga to settle in Australia compared to her first resettlement in New Zealand in 1996, her family returned to New Zealand in 2005, where they spent another 5 years.

In 2010, Olga's family made another 'permanent' move to Australia in hope of better services for their disabled son. The only career opportunity Olga has had in all these years of multiple migrations was the Graphic Design course at Sydney's TAFE that she completed in 2004. Reflecting on the past 13 years, Olga spoke about the changes migration brought about for her personally and professionally. At the time of the interview, she did not identify herself as a professional woman, but more as a religious, creative person with a rich world inside of her. Olga connects and enjoys the company of people of similar beliefs and worldview. She does not feel attached to Australia, nor to New Zealand. Olga's initial attachment to Russia has also been lost and she has no intentions returning there. She said she would easily move again to a new country as she does not feel connected to, nor belonging in Australia.

Amira

Amira, 44 years of age, migrated to Australia from Macedonia under the Family Reunion Program. She graduated from the Macedonian Philological University with a Bachelor of

Language and Literature and was working as a high school language teacher before moving to Australia. Amira liked her job and her life back home where she felt included and belonging. She moved to Australia in 1994 when she was introduced to and later married a Macedonian man who was also an Australian citizen and lived in Australia. He moved to Australia as a child with his family forty years earlier.

Upon Amira's arrival in Australia, she fell pregnant and stayed at home preparing to become a mother. During this time she managed to have her Macedonian qualification recognised as equivalent to the Australian bachelor degree. Amira emphasised in her interview that she did not come to Australia to pursue a career. She came here to have a family life. Nevertheless, she enrolled in TAFE English course to improve her English skills and later on, with the assistance of a friend, was offered a few hours a week bilingual worker job. This was her first job in Australia.

The first 5 years in Australia presented Amira with multiple adjustment challenges. She was faced with a different culture, language and lifestyle as well as lack of friends and family support. Although her husband and his extended family were always willing to help, Amira felt isolated and missed deeply her family and friends back in Macedonia. At times she was at the breaking point and once nearly went back to her home country.

At the time of the interview, Amira was working full time as a bilingual worker in a non-government agency. It is a permanent position. Amira was considering further academic study to enhance her career opportunities as her child raising responsibilities lessen. Remaining in contact with her culture and people remains necessary as these contacts bring her a sense of community and belonging. Her friends are mostly Macedonians, Serbians, Bosnian and Croatians, from the former Republic of Yugoslavia. Amira appreciates the opportunity her new country has given her, however she may still one day decide to go back to Macedonia, the country that deeply in her heart she has never left.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided the rationale for utilising a qualitative methodology of semi-structured interviews to gain insights into the experiences of professional female migrants in Australia. It also demonstrated that the information collected via this methodology can be

presented in various ways that both shed light on and make more or less visible the general or individual experiences of women. For example, presenting the women who participated in my study as a 'sample' has shown their similar and different characteristics. In contrast, the vignettes have enabled the individuality of participants' experiences to be highlighted. Further analysis of the data derived from the interviews will be presented in the next four chapters.

Chapter Six: Professional Female Migrants- Before Migration

The study undertaken for this thesis acknowledged that the migration experience would consist of distinct and significant stages and that individuals' perceptions of their experiences would alter depending on which stage of the process they were reflecting upon. As such, the interviews sought to capture participants' perceptions and experiences of social inclusion at three key moments: before migration, in the first twelve months after migration and in the present. This chapter focuses on participants' experiences before migration and on the migration decision: where they migrated from, who they migrated with and why they migrated. This material is discussed in the first section of the chapter and provides a nuanced introduction to the female professional migrants' experiences. It shows that the 'migration track' from elsewhere to Australia sometimes involves a third country; often involves thinking about other people (as the majority of participants came with others); and that the decision to migrate, whilst often involving financial and economic factors, is complex and multi-faceted. The second section of the chapter explores participants' experiences of social inclusion before migration. Existing research suggests that pre-migration experiences would shape experiences of the post-migration period. As such, it was interesting to know about my participants' previous lives: Did they work? Did they experience social support? Did they feel culturally included in their previous country? This chapter provides important information about the characteristics of migration from the perspective of female professional migrants to Australia by showing who they are and what they had *before* migrating.

Migration track: Direct or indirect?

It was important to know the migration track of the participants as migrants do not always come directly from their country of origin. Although the majority of the participants came to Australia from their country of origin, a small number of women came to Australia indirectly, not from their country of origin, but rather from a third country where they lived as migrants. For example, Olga (49, 9 yrs. in Aus.), originally from Russia, moved to Australia from New Zealand where she resided with her husband and two sons for a number of years. Suzie (57, 20 yrs. in Aus.), a Sri-Lankan woman, arrived from the UK, where she was living with her family as a professional female migrant. Rumaliza (40, 11 yrs. in Aus.) also came to Australia from the UK, although she was born and raised in

Vanuatu. Shelo (50, 21 yrs. in Aus.), on the other hand, came here from Arab Emirates where she stayed with her parents and sister after leaving India, her country of origin. For these reasons, the migration track has been distinguished as either ‘direct’ or ‘indirect’. Previous research argues that the experience of previous settlement in a third country will have an impact and will influence migrants’ perception of Australia, the pace of integration, the expectation and openness to new experiences in a society and a new culture. As discussed in Chapter Three, migrants who came to Australia through a third country, particularly an English speaking country, are less likely to experience ‘culture shock’ as defined by Schumann (1986) and Schultz and Lavenda (2009).

Alone or accompanied?

The majority of women migrated to Australia as a member of the family unit accompanied by their husband and children, and only four women migrated alone (Table 20). One woman came with her sister. Thus, most women were embedded in existing relationships on arrival, and also had existing responsibilities. Both of these factors may impact on individual’s experiences of social inclusion and social exclusion - particularly the level of social support available, but also opportunities for economic participation.

Therefore, the migration track can be considered distinct in terms of both where women came from and who they came with.

Table 20: Alone or Accompanied

Came to Australia with	Number of participants in range
Alone	4
Husband	3
Husband and children	12
Sister	1

Reasons for coming to Australia

The participants’ responses to questions about their reason for coming to Australia revealed the complexity and significance of the decisions as they recognised immigration to another

country as a major life changing event with potential gains and major losses attached as a consequence. Most women gave more than one or a combination of reasons. Further, participants who had a family at the time of their move stated that the decision to come to Australia was a joint decision rather than one made for them, for example as part of their husband's strategy for career advancement, or one made by them alone. Although each woman's reasons for migration were different, some key themes emerged. Thus the study problematised decision-making as multiple and interdependent rather than singular and independent. The findings are in contrast to the argument made by Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) that the migrant family members do not always operate as a unit. Hondagneu-Sotelo suggests that migration decisions should be viewed within the context of the power relations that exist within the family, where patriarchal dominance and control, in concert with resistance to patriarchy, affect family migration decisions.

As discussed earlier in the review of the literature, 'push-pull' theories explain the causes of migration in terms of the 'push' factors that encourage people to leave their countries of origin, and 'pull' factors that attract people to a specific destination (Betts, 1996; Bogue, 1969; Castles & Miller, 2003; Herberle, 1938; Mahroum, 2000). In other words, as Herberle (1938) argued, if a person's needs cannot be satisfied within the current, familiar environment or, being currently satisfied, but learning about greater opportunities elsewhere in an unknown and uncertain foreign land, then a relocation may become an attractive alternative. The motivation to migrate derives from the set of values and beliefs that remain unfulfilled in the person's home country, but which the person expects to fulfil through the act of migration (Bogue, 1969; Papadopoulos, 2005).

The neoclassical economic theory that emphasises the economic aspects of migration, such as employment opportunities and wage differences, has highlighted that people make their immigration decisions by contemplating the cost and benefits of migration (Castles & Miller, 2003; Mahroum, 2000). According to this approach, migrants, and highly skilled professional migrants in particular, mostly consider the move for economic maximisation. In my study, however, the push and pull factors include not only those focusing on the human capital/labour market dimensions, but on human dimensions such as socio-political, environmental, personal and family factors as well. The need to go beyond simple economic models has been highlighted in the literature by Khoo, Hugo and McDonald (2011) who argue that although the majority of immigration policies assume that skilled

migration is driven predominantly by salary, job and career opportunities, the motivations for skilled migrants are much more complex. European migrants, for example, are more likely to indicate Australian lifestyle as an important reason for migration due to Australia's lower population density, more housing space, lack of pollution, and a warmer climate.

The participants revealed several reasons that constitute 'pull' factors. Firstly, the majority of women stated that the main reason for their move to Australia was to improve their quality of life. This was described by women in different ways. As the following examples illustrate, participants perceived Australia as a country that offered a balanced, relaxed and healthier lifestyle, more opportunities for children as well as financial and economic security.

In Australia there is a better lifestyle- better work and life balances together with a better weather and opportunities to participate in sports (Rumaliza, 40, 11 yrs. in Aus.)

A promise of a better life in terms of opportunities for the whole family. Secure, stable and quality family life, more opportunities for children (Nadine, 45, 14 yrs. in Aus.)

Secondly, the appeal of the environmental, social and cultural atmosphere in Australia motivated some people to move. For example, Sylvia decided to immigrate based on her previous experience of visiting Australia. Her motives for immigration are multiple including economic, social and environmental reasons:

I found Australia a fantastic place to live in, with friendly and easy going people, good job opportunities and fantastic country to explore. I marvelled at the multicultural environment and the unpretentious way of living, so different from Italy in the 1990s (Sylvia, 43, 6 yrs. in Aus.)

Thirdly, maintaining family ties including marriage and joining family encouraged two participants to migrate:

All my family was here except one brother. I wanted to immigrate. I wanted to be

with my family (Rosa, 54, 19 yrs. in Aus.)

I did not come to pursue the career or anything else. I came to have a family life (Amira, 44, 15 yrs. in Aus.)

The participants also revealed several reasons that constitute 'push' factors. Some interviewees were driven by fear about their family's safety and desperation to leave. High levels of crime, civil conflict and concerns for personal safety were particularly evident in stories of women who came to Australia from South Africa. Jodie, for example, could not see a safe future for herself in South Africa, because of the high levels of crime:

I felt scared. I knew so many people who had been hijacked including family members. I knew I could not make a positive future back home (Jodie, 28, 5 yrs. in Aus.)

Rhani and her family also wanted to escape living in fear and uncertainty of South Africa. She felt that it was not safe to use public transport or go to the movie, and regarded these as things people take for granted in Australia:

My husband thought where things were going of crime in South Africa, he was worried about the boys. The boys were at that age where they should be doing things by themselves: going to the movies, things like that. Our children did not do public transport. You never allow them to get on public buses or public transport at all (Rhani, 46, 5 yrs. in Aus.)

Manel identified violence in South Africa, particularly against the Indian population, as a significant 'push' factor. In fact, it appears that the experience of financial comfort does not compensate for violence and crime in the country:

Our concern was the future of our four children, because of the violence in the country. There was a lot of violence against the Indian population in South Africa. Children's safety was probably the main reason why we took a decision to move over, even though my husband and I were very, very comfortable financially (Manel, 44, 4 yrs. in Aus.)

For Marianne, violence and crime were significant factors in the migration decision, but so too was political instability:

The reason that we moved was of the crime and the violent situation in our country. Politically it was quite unstable at that time. And we have got children and we want a safe future (Marianne, 47, 6 yrs. in Aus.)

However, 'safety-related' migration was not just a factor for women from South Africa. Cecilia from Peru gave a similar rationale for coming to Australia, talking about terrorism in her home state:

In 1990s, there were a lot of problems with terrorism in Peru (Cecilia, 47, 15 yrs. in Aus.)

Another push factor that can be discerned relates closely to cultural exclusion and is associated with participants' minority or outsider status. In my study, some women belonged to a minority group in their home countries. For example, Roya (57, 25 yrs. in Aus.) and Rosa (54, 19 yrs. in Aus.) who came from Egypt, were part of the Christian community there. Rhani (46, 5 yrs. in Aus.) and Manel (44, 4 yrs. in Aus.) were part of the Indian community in South Africa. Sylvia (43, 6 yrs. in Aus.) from Italy identified as part of the lesbian community.

As discussed earlier, the image of the male migrant is often related to his economic role. Women too, described their decision in terms of economic migration. Two participants stated that their move was motivated by economic instability in their country of residence. Ayla, for example, presented a long list of reasons for her dissatisfaction with life in Turkey, including economic insecurity, deterioration of the education system, weakening secularism and lack of personal development opportunities:

Long term economic security in Turkey was not clear, given the economic conditions were not stable and some social trends would have been worrying, i.e. disparity of wealth, deterioration of the education system, our perceived weakening of secularism, high inflation rate and lack of broader personal development opportunities (Ayla, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

In contrast, Maria's reason was purely economic:

I wanted to immigrate. I was seeking financial and economic security (Maria, 48, 11 yrs. in Aus.)

These types of comments demonstrate that both women and men position themselves as 'economic migrants' and financial security and opportunity can be a push factor in the decision making process of female professional migrants.

In the literature on migration, the desire for adventure and new experience is a less emphasised reason for migration. Yet two participants in my study seemed to have been propelled by such desire. Sylvia, for example, expressed migration in the following way:

My main motivation was to explore my level of independence, gain a better vision of the world in a country that was clearly liberal on many levels, with similar values than in Italy but different at the same time (Sylvia, 43, 6 yrs. in Aus.)

Love of travelling and adventure motivated Olga to immigrate:

We decided to move to Australia not just to improve our living standards. Another reason was curiosity. We like travelling so much. We like adventure. This is in our adventurous characters (Olga, 49, 9 yrs. in Aus.).

In summary, the participants in this research moved to Australia for various reasons. Many of these were related to structural or social factors, while some of them related to personal or personality factors. It was not possible to articulate one particular reason applicable to all participants. Nevertheless, there was a range of reasons mostly associated with economic, social or environmental factors that were applicable to most participants.

Experiences of social inclusion before migration to Australia

As the purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of social inclusion of professional migrant women in Australia, it was important to develop an understanding of women's experiences of social inclusion before migration occurred. There is a general

assumption that pre-migration experiences shape experiences of the post migration period. As Hayter (2009, p.7) states, cultural and linguistic diversity, in concert with an individual experience of migration, ‘can significantly affect whether the individual describes him/herself as socially included or excluded’.

Participants in this study were given the opportunity to speak about their experiences of life, family, work and other aspects of life in their country of emigration. Their responses were analysed and grouped into themes and these themes provided insights into their experiences of social inclusion. These are presented in this section divided into three themes:

- economic participation as social inclusion;
- social participation and social support;
- cultural participation as social inclusion.

Economic participation

As discussed earlier, economic participation has been a key part of the social inclusion agenda. For the majority of people employment is a constructive resource through which people create their social identities as well as their social status and economic rewards (Jamrozik, 2005). Access to a job enables people’s participation and becomes such an essential part of social life and social inclusion in society. Many scholars (Bertone, 2007; Bradley & Healy, 2008; Goodwin, 2003; Pocock & Buchanan, 2003) have acknowledged the significance of economic participation in being socially included in society. As Santina Bertone (2007, p.131) states ‘employment is vital to people’s sense of well-being and social inclusion in society’. The migration literature (for example Cobb-Clark, 2001) also suggests that migrants’ economic participation prior to immigration is an important indicator of the labour market outcomes shortly after their arrival in Australia.

Significantly, **all** women reported being in paid employment prior to coming to Australia. Indeed, most participants reported having secure jobs with good prospects in their country of residence. Catherine, for example, had a good job and prospects:

Both my husband (at the time) and I had good jobs and prospects (Catherine, 54, 18 yrs. in Aus.)

Suzie was working as a doctor in the UK:

I had a good job in the UK. I did work as a doctor (Suzie, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

Manel used words such as 'very, very' and 'comfortable' to emphasise her economic position as an experienced and respected professional in South Africa:

My husband and I were very, very comfortable financially. We have reached stages of our career where we had reached a very good place. I have reached the natural progression of where you would be after 17 years of practicing as a professional. I think I had earned a lot of credibility and respect in my organisation (Manel, 44, 4 yrs. in Aus.)

Marianne was a social worker with more than 20 years' experience and at a 'good point' in her career at the time her family moved to Australia:

I worked for more than 20 years in different settings as a social worker. I really enjoyed my career very much. I was at good point in my career at the time that we moved to Australia (Marianne, 47, 6 yrs. in Aus.)

Nevertheless, two women said that, although they had good jobs, they felt stagnant with poor career advancement opportunities. Sudha's economic position in India was characterised by economic security, but with little opportunities for growth:

Yes, I was economically secure, but I think I was stagnant (Sudha, 39, 10 yrs. in Aus.)

Sylvia's economic participation was associated with job constraints and poor career advancement opportunities:

I was able to do my job (Registered Nurse) without much effort due to the many years of experience but I was starting to feel the strain of a repetitive and more demanding job constraints and the poor career advancement opportunities (Sylvia, 43, 6 yrs. in Aus.)

In addition, five participants identified insecurity as being a characteristic of their economic participation, including unstable economic environment or the contractual nature of their job. Ayla had a good job, but was worrying about the future:

I had a good job, good education and good family life. However, the long term economic security was not clear, given the economic conditions were not stable and social trends would have been worrying, i.e. disparity of wealth, potential for less focus on secularism (Ayla, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

Nadine enjoyed both challenging and satisfying work that made a positive impact on her clients. The job security, however, was questionable:

Job security was questionable as I worked on contractual basis. I enjoyed my work as it was challenging and satisfying at the same time. My job was fulfilling and made a positive impact on the life of clients (Nadine, 45, 14 yrs. in Aus.)

In summary, all participants reported being in paid employment prior to coming to Australia. Economic inclusion, however, was identified and discussed by women as not only having a job. It is having a job with a future. Interestingly, these women moved from one country with no job security to Australia, where job security could not be guaranteed either. However, as discussed earlier in this chapter, employment and economic security were not the only reasons these women migrated to Australia.

Social support

Social support was identified by participants as a key component of being socially included in community life. It is well documented in the literature (Bromley, 2000; Doyle et al., 1997; Jaco, 1970; Weinberg, 1967) that social support enables participation in social life and contributes to feelings of belonging and an awareness of unity and harmony (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Castles & Miller, 2003; Ryan, 2007; Verkuyten, 2005). Social interaction, level of social support and integration with family, friends and community has been identified as one of the fundamental features of social inclusion (UK Social Exclusion Unit, 2007, cited in Goodwin, 2012).

The study revealed participants' positive social life/support experiences prior to migration in spite of push and pull theory described in the previous section. Thus, this confirms that the social inclusion framework incorporates more dimensions of the migration experience than, for example, the push and pull factors that focus predominantly on economic decisions. What was interesting about people's life in their home country is that they mostly enjoyed a good and fulfilling social life prior to coming to Australia. They represented themselves as being part of the community and spoke very positively about having strong support from their families and friends:

I had a very pleasant life with a lot of friends. I was living independently. I had my career. I did have a rich social life (Lorena, 54, 25 yrs. in Aus.)

There was family support. You have your mother, your sister. In Indian culture family plays a very significant role. You only have to call and they would help (Manel, 44, 4 yrs. in Aus.)

Social life was very connected and fulfilling. Family life was less challenging with fewer stresses and more relaxed. I felt very much being included and being part of the society (Nadine, 45, 14 yrs. in Aus.)

In South Africa the Indian community is very close. And you are ending up having so much support in terms of friends and family. You end up having your mother and your mother-in-law. If your kids are ill and you cannot take time off work, one aunty or another would take care of your kids. Or, if on the weekend you have a function, they will come and help you (Rhani, 46, 5 yrs. in Aus.)

Only one person reported having no family support:

I did not have family there. All my family was in Australia, except one brother. He was in America (Rosa, 54, 19 yrs. in Aus.)

Evidently, most women enjoyed good social networks and social support. Lack of social support was evidently not one of the reasons they migrated.

Cultural participation

As discussed in the previous chapters, there is a strong connection between social inclusion and culture. The literature (Hayter, 2009; Zetter et al., 2006) highlights the role of culture and cultural diversity as a critical factor in whether people are socially included or excluded. Hayter (2009), for example, asserts that cultural participation is a key indicator of whether people describe themselves as socially included or excluded. It has been argued (Arnold, 1960; Ho, 2006; Jupp et al., 2007) that culture, coupled with language and religion/faith, sense of identity and belonging, shape social inclusion outcomes. In some circumstances, cultural, religious and language differences lead to exclusion from community life.

The participants' responses support the argument that strong and active cultural participation contributes to the sense of inclusion and belonging to the broader community. The majority of women who lived in their country of origin prior to coming to Australia, felt being part of the society and included in community life. It was particularly so for women who were a part of the dominant cultural and ethnic group before they migrated. For example, as Maria described it:

Good social life. Family support. Friends. I felt at home. I felt being part of the society. I felt included. I did not need to try hard to feel included. I did not try at all to feel included. It was normal and natural to feel included. I belonged there (Maria, 48, 11 yrs. in Aus.)

However, this was not the case for people who reported being a minority ethnic group in their country of origin, and this created difficulties for full participation in community life. As Manel puts it:

There was a changeover in the government. So, as a result, there was a lot of racial sort of jealousy against Indian population. Because we are not indigenous to South Africa. I think it was generally against everyone, but more so against the Indian population because the indigenous population felt that basically it was their right to have the education, businesses, to have everything (Manel, 44, 4 yrs. in Aus.)

Rhani was also a member of South African Indian community:

And then there was a lot of change. 1994 was a time of racial segregation. We did have legislation in terms of racial segregation meaning prior to that I could not go to 'White' University. I had to go to 'Indian' University. So, we had a very segregated area. So, you live in that area (Rhani, 46, 5 yrs. in Aus.)

The findings support the argument in the literature (Jupp et al., 2007) that culture has been inherently bound with religion and, therefore, cannot be separated and discussed in isolation. Religion remains a significant factor and important part of an individual's cultural participation in a broader community. For example, Roya and Rosa state:

My husband and I wanted to have a better life for our children. Back home we struggled a little bit with the society, the culture, the religion. Egypt is a Muslim country (Roya, 57, 25 yrs. in Aus.)

It was my country of course. I felt awkward many times. Majority of people fasting and you do not. If you eat at the front of the people, it is considered as being rude. Especially when I was pregnant I had to eat. Sometimes I went to the bathroom to eat something, so I did not offend anyone (Rosa, 54, 19 yrs. in Aus.)

Participants' responses also supported the argument presented by Gwahirisa (2009) that language presents a barrier to participation in cultural, sport and leisure activities:

Because my language was so poor at that time, it was a hard time for me. Everything was difficult, not just job. I was struggling so much at that time. I did not feel included or being part of New Zealand's society at all. We were not happy in NZ (Olga, 49, 9 yrs. in Aus.).

In summary, the participants revealed mixed experiences of cultural participation and inclusion prior to their migration to Australia with the level and depth of inclusion influenced by factors such as their majority or minority ethnic and religious status and their ability to speak the language. These findings support the arguments in the literature that culture, coupled with language and religion, sense of identity and belonging shape social

inclusion experiences.

Migration as a disruption of social inclusion

An additional theme that emerged from the women's stories about their lives prior to migration to Australia was the theme of migration as a disruption of their sense of social inclusion. As discussed previously, the sense of social inclusion incorporates feelings of belonging and being a part of the community. However, migration seems to disrupt individual's sense of being part of a unity. As Verkuyten (2005, p.68) states 'humans want to attach themselves to someone or something, want to belong and feel at home in their world'. Others argue (Branscombe et al., 1999; Major et al., 2002; Taylor, 1992) that many immigrants are troubled by feelings of uprooting and loss. Further, immigration is known to disrupt family support networks, reduce social cohesion and impede career opportunities (Levitt & Schiller, 2003; Portes & Borocz, 1989). The findings of this study support these claims as most women described difficulties associated with the move to a new country. The disruption of social inclusion was primarily evident through the disruption of the social support and economic stability women enjoyed prior to migration to Australia.

Although participants reported being excited about moving to Australia, the disruption of their social support networks consequently led to feelings of grief, loss and, in some circumstances, guilt. Most women expressed feelings of grief and loss of leaving family and friends behind. For example:

It was that all loss and grief experience of leaving family behind. Leaving friends behind. Coming to a new country. The new place you hardly anyone knew. Emotional aspect was really, really hard (Marianne, 47, 6 yrs. in Aus.)

Leaving my friends, my family, my home and culture. Everything that was familiar and loved was gone. There was a great sense of loss and fear of the unknown (Jodie, 28, 5 yrs. in Aus.)

Separating from family and friends (Ayla, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

Some women were quite specific about what occupied their thoughts and minds after the

decision to immigrate was made. For example, one person talked about feelings of guilt of leaving ageing parents behind:

I felt and still feel guilty about leaving ageing parents behind (Rumaliza, 40, 11 yrs. in Aus.)

The fracturing of their economic stability, which resulted from interrupted employment and loss of many years of professional experience, contributed extensively to the disruption:

After 3 years in the position of the head of the department, when I earned people's respect, I have immigrated (Rhani, 46, 5 yrs. in Aus.)

It is important to note, however, that two participants reported not having any difficulties associated with the decision to move to a new country.

Conclusion

In summary, the following points can be highlighted. Firstly, although the majority of women came to Australia from their country of origin, a small number of women came to Australia indirectly from a third country where they lived as migrants. Secondly, the majority of women migrated to Australia as a member of a family unit accompanied by their husband and children. Thirdly, most women gave more than one or a combination of reasons for coming to Australia including reasons associated with 'push' and 'pull' factors. And fourthly, women's experiences of social inclusion prior to their migration to Australia were characterised by strong economic participation, strong family and social support and mixed experiences of cultural participation. It has emerged that for many women migration disrupted the sense of social inclusion they had because it involved separating them from social support and fracturing their economic stability.

The next two chapters present pictures of women's experiences of social inclusion in Australia at two distinctive stages: in the first 12 months in Australia and in the present. This is because substantial differences between women's experiences in the first 12 months and experiences further on were identified.

Chapter Seven: Professional Female Migrants- First 12 Months in Australia

The previous chapter provided important information about the characteristics of migration by showing who the professional female migrants were and their experiences before migrating to Australia. This chapter provides information about the characteristics of migration from the perspective of professional female migrants in Australia by showing ‘who they were’ and ‘what they had’ *in the first 12 months* in Australia. The interview questions sought to capture participants’ perceptions and experiences of social inclusion in the first 12 months of their settlement in Australia: Have their professional qualifications been recognised? Did they go looking for work soon after their arrival? Did they experience social support? The material discussed in the chapter shows that although most women have had their qualifications assessed and recognised and were in paid employment by the end of the first 12 months, the settlement process was complex and multi-faceted. Existing research suggests that skilled migrants quickly obtain jobs and successfully integrate into the broader Australian community. My study, however, challenges this assumption and highlights the complexities and varieties of integration processes and experiences.

Economic participation

As previously discussed, successful immigration, integration and inclusion into Australian society predominantly depend on migrants’ successful employment experiences. Economic participation has been positioned as an essential part of the social inclusion agenda. A range of studies exploring the labour market outcomes of migrants during the early settlement period suggests that economic participation would be significantly higher and unemployment rate lower for skilled and professional migrants (Badkar, Callister, Krishnan, Didham, & Bedford, 2007; Bertone & Casey, 2000; Birrel et al., 2006; Cobb-Clark 2000, 2001; Junankar, Paul, & Yasmeen, 2002; Junankar & Mahuteau, 2005; Richardson et al., 2001, Richardson et al., 2004). The findings of this study reflect the literature as all but one woman who went looking for work after arrival, were employed by the end of 12 months. Only Cecilia (47, 15 yrs. in Aus.) was still in training at that time.

Recognition of professional qualifications

As discussed in Chapter Two, recognition of overseas qualifications plays a vital role in the ability of migrants to enter the Australian labour market. The gap between migrants' pre-existing qualifications and experience and their employment opportunities in Australia has been well documented (Birrell et al., 2006; Hawthorne, 2002; Iredale, 2005; Wagner, 2003; Wagner & Childs, 2006). Regine Wagner (2003), for example, emphasises difficulties skilled migrants face when attempting to enter the Australian labour market at a level commensurate with work they performed prior to migration. There are many professional migrants who have formal qualifications and often have many years of experiences in the field of expertise, but who remain unable to practice these in Australia. The literature suggests that, in general, the skill level of immigrants has been higher than that of the Australian population, however problems with skills recognition and utilisation affect migrants' real occupational and skill outcome. Recognition has been a problem particularly for migrants from non-English speaking countries. In my study, however, many participants had sought and had their professional qualifications assessed and recognised by Australian authorities prior to their arrival in Australia. For example, Rhani used a migration agent to help her family with a migration process. It took 12 months to have her qualification assessed and recognised, but this enabled Rhani to arrive in Australia as a recognised professional:

I had to have my qualifications assessed before the visa was granted. It took a long time. A migration agent in South Africa sent all my paperwork through to Australia to be assessed. It took 12 months before it came back assessed as competent AASW eligibility (Rhani, 46, 5 yrs. in Aus.)

Suzie, a medical professional from the UK, had to do a qualifying exam here in Australia in addition to her qualification recognition. Suzie managed to pass the exam while holidaying in Australia, and also arrived in Australia as a recognised medical professional:

I had to do a qualifying exam in Australia. The first part of the exam- the theory- I did in UK. And for the clinical, I came to Australia for a holiday and did the exam here. I passed the exam and then I migrated. When I came here I was eligible to work (Suzie, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

Importantly, however, a few women have not attempted to have their qualifications recognised because they doubt their ability to pass the exam or they thought their qualification and area of expertise were too specific and only relevant to their country of origin. For example, Catherine, a native English speaker who migrated from the UK, seemed not to have the confidence to go through the recognition process:

I did not seek to have my qualification assessed by an Australian agency. I was told I would have to retake the equivalent of my final exams. As I had completed them sixteen years previously, it seemed unrealistic to go down that pathway (Catherine, 54, 18 yrs. in Aus.)

Catherine's experience with recognition contradicts the notion (Birrell, 2006; Hawthorne, 2002) that suggests recognition of professional qualification is predominantly a problem for migrants from non-English speaking background: women from English-speaking backgrounds may be absent from the research on qualification recognition simply because, for reasons such as Catherine's, they do not pursue qualification recognition.

Amira came to Australia, first and foremost, to have a family life. Moreover, her undergraduate degree in Macedonian language and literature studies would not be in demand in Australia:

My overseas degree was in Macedonian language and literature studies, but I arrived here on a spouse visa, because I came as a spouse. I did not come to pursue the career or anything else. I came to have a family life (Amira, 44, 15 yrs. in Aus.)

Amira's experience with recognition supports the literature (Wagner, 2003) that suggest that there are particular difficulties with recognition and employment for dependants and spouses.

Shelo, in contrast, did not have her qualification assessed as there was no requirement to do so:

No, my qualification was not recognised. There was no requirement (Shelo, 50, 21 yrs. in Aus.)

Only one person had her qualification assessed but not recognised for migration purposes. Blaga, who graduated and worked as a psychologist in her home country of Macedonia, had her qualification assessed by not recognised in Australia. This outcome partly supports the argument in the literature (Cobb-Clark, Connolly, & Worswick, 2001; Khan 1997; Wagner & Childs, 2006) that educational qualifications seem to be less transferable when the origin and destination countries are dissimilar. For example, Blaga, who arrived from Macedonia, stated the following:

I have sent my qualification to the Australian Society of Psychologists and have got the feedback that my qualification is not suitable for migration purposes (Blaga, 42, 8 yrs. in Aus.)

The literature (Richardson et al., 2001; Richardson et al., 2004) argues that migrants, who quickly find work that makes use of their qualifications, are likely to be more productive, better paid, and happier about their integration into Australian society. The findings support the literature on the value of qualifications for migrants as the majority of this study participants have had their professional qualifications assessed and recognised by Australian authorities prior to their arrival in Australia. Since the recognition of overseas professional qualifications usually links to enhanced opportunities in the labour market, the next section is devoted to participants' job search experiences.

Job search

As discussed in Chapter Two, the settlement experience of newly arrived skilled migrants often begins with finding their first job in a new country. The job search culture may differ significantly from country to country and could present real challenges for migrants coming from both English and non-English speaking countries. In this study, only one participant reported finding employment prior to her arrival in Australia:

I did not go looking for work as soon as I arrived as I already had a job waiting for me (Sylvia, 43, 6 yrs. in Aus.)

The majority of women did go looking for work soon after their arrival. This, for example, is how Sudha, who found job after two weeks, described her experience of looking for

work:

I found a job within two weeks. It was a sale telephones job. All I was doing every day was applying for a job: 20, 30, 40 places. Anything I understood. I came from India. India is multicultural, but there are not as many nationalities as there are in Australia. To be very honest, to understand any other accent which is not Indian was very hard. I never used to understand what the job was. If I could understand even few words, I used to apply (Sudha, 39, 10 yrs. in Aus.)

Within three months Suzie, who came from UK as a medical doctor, was working full time in her profession:

I started my first job three months after arrival and, within three months, I was working full time. I did not actively look for a job because I did not know how to look for a job here. In the UK it is different. The doctor in the UK already gave me the letter to go and meet this doctor as a reference. I did not really ask him, but he gave it to me. I think it would not be a problem to get a reference here. The doctors here know their mates. But it helped anyway (Suzie, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

The situation of finding work relatively quickly was similar for Marianne who came to Australia as an experienced social worker:

It took me three months to get my first job. And I am still doing this job six years later (Marianne, 47, 6 yrs. in Aus.)

However, not all women went looking for work in the first 12 months post arrival. Family reasons such as being pregnant and/or looking after young children were among the most common reasons for some women to remain at home. As Roya and Olga commented:

I was pregnant. My husband worked (Roya, 57, 25 yrs. in Aus.)

No, I did not look for work. My second child was small. My husband was working (Olga, 49, 9 yrs. in Aus.)

Remarkably, most women who started to look for job as soon as they arrived, found that the job searching was not difficult or problematic. Although some of them reported differences in job searching and job application culture, they managed to navigate the system successfully to their advantage:

I saw an ad the first weekend and went for it. I did not have much difficulty as I went for something I could easily do and was well qualified for. I was probably lucky that something that fitted came up so quickly (Ayla, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

I contacted AASW⁵ a day after arrival and appeared for an interview within the first 10 days (Nadine, 45, 14 yrs. in Aus.)

Difficulties

As discussed in Chapter Two, immigrant women may disproportionately bear the social, economic and emotional disruption of the immigration process (Fincher et al., 1994). In my study, too, participants found the job search process challenging and adversely affected their settlement experience. The job search process was hampered by employer requirements such as local references or a local experience. For example, Jodie, a new South African graduate who spoke English very well, reported difficulties associated with a lack of local experience and knowledge of the Australian resources and services:

It was difficult to get social work job as a new South African graduate. In South Africa I was offered three jobs when I finished my degree. Here most places would not even grant me an interview. I lacked knowledge and experience of social work in Australia, systems, bureaucracies, resources and services. It was only after working 3 months in a lesser position that I got some experience and was able to find a job at the same level (Jodie, 28, 5 yrs. in Aus.)

Jodie came to Australia alone and did not have children at the time of migration, so she was able to devote all her time and energy to achieve a desired employment outcome. Unlike other participants, her circumstances allowed her to lower her employment goals in order

⁵ Australian Association of Social Workers is the professional body that regulates social work practice in Australia.

to learn how to negotiate the Australian employment landscape.

For Cecilia, however, it was not only language difficulties, or lack of local experience that affected her negatively. The absence of social support and social networks contributed to the outcome of being depressed and disappointed. Cecilia described her difficulties finding a job, particularly as a person from CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) background:

I did a volunteer job in 'Transilient'. And I started getting depressed. Very daunting. I thought I will never be able to work in my profession. I was on my own. I did not have anyone to talk to. For me personally, the most frustrating thing was not to get anyone who could get me through to my profession. Whatever I did, I found my own way. After one year I was very disappointed. I have started to do search in the paper, looking through the Sydney Morning Herald's jobs and checking and researching. But every letter I sent, they said to me: 'Thank you, your resume is very good, but you do not have any work experience'. Once they called me for the interview, but at the end- disappointment: 'You seem to be very clever, you know everything, but you do not have a local experience'. And after I started to get very depressed. Very daunting' (Cecilia, 47, 15 yrs. in Aus.)

Blaga also came as a CALD migrant. For Blaga, it was a combination of factors such as unemployment, financial strain, and unfamiliarity with a local job searching culture that characterised the first 12 months of her settlement experience. This is how Blaga described her experience:

First year was very difficult. And we (with husband) could not find a job. There was no financial assistance from Centrelink. We were renting. And we did not come with a lot of money. We were desperate. We were looking for all kind of work, even for cleaning. They were asking; 'Do you have recommendations?' Even the lowest work we could not find. I was applying for a long day care centre and I did not know not to mention my psychology qualification in my resume. And they would say: 'Or, you are overqualified'. That was a bad thing. No one told me not to mention my qualification. I would have worked for less money, just give me something. We were at some point so desperate, we started to think to go back to our country. You cannot

survive without a job (Blaga, 42, 8 yrs. in Aus.)

Women attributed difficulties in finding their first job to lack of English skills, lack of local experience, dissimilar job searching culture and difficulties with recognition of overseas qualifications. These findings support the literature (Chiswick & Miller, 1992; Cobb-Clark & Crossley, 2001; Duleep & Sanders, 1993; Richardson et al., 2004) that suggests that fluent English speakers and professional and skilled migrants with recognised qualifications have superior employment outcomes compared to other groups of migrants. Nevertheless, this study supports the position that, despite the difficulties, many skilled non-English speaking women will secure professional work within twelve months of seeking it (Hawthorne, 1996). Among the attributes that help to secure the desired employment participants mentioned were personal qualities such as determination and resilience, self-confidence and good sense of humour.

Retraining

Most participants reported undertaking additional training in the Australian context with an English language course being among those mostly utilised. Inability to speak English is often reported in the literature as a major obstacle to economic and social participation of newcomers in Australia. Amira, obviously, was very concerned about her limited English skills:

I did enrol myself in the evening college to do English. I just wanted to learn English. For the first 5 years I had a dictionary in my bag. Wherever I would go, I would not leave the house without a dictionary (Amira, 44, 15 yrs. in Aus.)

Cecilia was attending two courses to improve her opportunities in a new country:

I came and I went to AMES⁶ (510 hours). That was during the day. And at the afternoon I enrolled myself in TAFE. I did 6 months of formal English course (Cecilia, 47, 15 yrs. in Aus.)

Some women completed specialised professional and computer courses to improve their

⁶ Adult Migrant English Service- government funded English program for new arrivals.

chances in the Australian employment market. All participants were very proactive improving their opportunities for economic inclusion.

Perception of 'social inclusion', 'adjustment' and 'settlement'

The findings support the literature (Abbott, Wong, Williams, An, & Young, 2000; George, 2002; Nash & Trlin, 2006; Valtonen, 2001, 2002) that highlights the difficulties migrants experience after migrating to another country. Social support and social networks are found to be of particular importance at the initial stage of the adjustment process as many new migrants face emotional, cultural and economic challenges in a new land (Ho, Cheung, Bedford, & Leung, 2000; George, 2002; Powell, 2001; Valtonen, 2001). Weinberg (1967:33) asserted that the 'lack of social contacts, especially close contacts, has been regarded sociologically as the means by which human nature 'decays' or weakens'. Willis and Yeoh (2000) assert that immigration that disrupts family and social support networks, hit the life and careers of professional migrant women the hardest. In contrast my study found variations of experiences and these can be categorised as easy adjustment, challenges and isolations and culture clash.

Easy adjustment

The experience of adjusting easily into new life was associated with being satisfied with how things went in the first 12 months and not having major difficulties with accessing support and services for some women and being able to plan well and having previous experience of migration for other women. Four women reported adjusting easily and not having difficulties in the first 12 months in Australia, including two women who did not have English as their first language:

I did not find anything difficult. I was satisfied with how things went (Suzie, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

I was very privileged and had very few needs. The difficulty was just company and finding friends, but as I said that lasted a short time. I think I could easily have found opportunities to access services and support if I had needed them (Rumaliza, 40, 11 yrs. in Aus.)

Sylvia, for example, attributed easy adjustment to her ability to plan well. She has also worked in another English speaking country before migrating to Australia:

I did not find many difficulties really. Finding accommodation required some time but the outcome was great with my flat mate becoming one of my friends. I did feel a little home sick at first, but eventually I got used to it. I was successful because I planned accurately and living in the city made my life easier in matter of transport, lifestyle and entertainment (Sylvia, 43, 6 yrs. in Aus.)

Olga, originally from Russia, came to Australia from New Zealand. As moving to Australia was not her first migration experience, she did not find it hard to settle here:

It was easy to settle (Olga, 49, 9 yrs. in Aus.)

There appeared not to be any common characteristics that explained why adjustment was easy for these women. No relationship was found between, for example, family composition on arrival and the experiences of adjustment to a new way of life.

Challenges and isolations

As discussed in Chapters Two and Four, immigrant women face inevitable social, physical and emotional disruptions through the immigration process (Bertone & Casey, 2000; Hawthorne, 1996). In this study, the majority of women described the loss of social support and social networks as a defining factor of the experiences in the first 12 months post arrival. Many of them have been challenged by social isolation and loss of family support. For example, this is how some women described their experience:

The first year was difficult. There were many times of social isolation and sadness, particularly difficult times where I got sick or had a difficult situation happened in my life. I did not have a support system. I mostly missed my family, people who were genuinely happy for me when I succeeded or listened to me when I was sad. I had grown up with my South African friends. Our shared experiences and history gave our friendship a level of depth and connection. Here my friendship was superficial and unsatisfying. I felt very lonely (Jodie, 28, 5 yrs. in Aus.)

...lack of family support. Limited social circle and lack of identity related to that (Nadine, 45, 14 yrs. in Aus.)

The main difficulty was that we had a family unit destructed and no-one to talk to. And with children, yes, you can arrange the childcare, but it is not the same as having grandparents. It was just not having a supportive family with you. It was hard. At that time I thought: 'I have no-one to talk to. If I do not go to work, I could die and no-one will know' (Sudha, 39, 10 yrs. in Aus.)

No friends. We did not know anybody. We did everything ourselves. Very much like people do today (Shelo, 50, 21 yrs. in Aus.)

For many women missing family, friends and social support back home resulted in grief and loss experiences that hindered both the settlement and the adjustment processes:

That period of my life was very sad. It was a big change for me. Emotionally and psychologically. Being here without my job, without family. My parents were over there. I was very isolated. It was very, very difficult... There was no support. Now looking back, I was really depressed... I felt totally, totally disconnected, isolated, down (Lorena, 54, 25 yrs. in Aus.)

It was very difficult. It was extremely difficult. I think the emotional side was first and foremost very hard. Although it was our choice to come, it was that all loss and grief experience of leaving family behind. Leaving friends behind. Coming to a new country. The new place you hardly anybody knew. The emotional aspect was really, really hard. This sense of isolation (Marianne, 47, 6 yrs. in Aus.)

It was not easy. I felt lonely. I felt isolated. I really missed everything. I missed my lifestyle back in South Africa. I missed it. I really missed it. I still miss it. I still do. But not only that one. I missed my friends, I missed my family. I missed everything. I just was unhappy. It was the biggest adjustment. You leave that other part of your family. You come as a unit, but you do not come with your parents, and your family, and your support and your network (Rhani, 46, 5 yrs. in Aus.)

Some participants found it difficult to find new friends, revamp social networks and access support and services they needed at that time:

It was difficult to find a group of friends who I truly connected with. Initially it was difficult to make good friends who I could talk to about issues of substance (Jodie, 28, 5 yrs. in Aus.)

I was not given support. I was not given a chance. I was fighting on my own. But I did not give up. It was very hard work. I was so stressed. A lot of time I was crying (Roya, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

There are no friends here (Olga, 49, 9 yrs. in Aus.)

Thus, the loss and grief experiences associated with the loss of social support and the loss of social networks, hindered the participants' settlement and adjustment experience in the first 12 months in Australia.

Although for the majority of participants the loss of social contact and networks back home resulted in experiences of grief and loss and in some instances depression, some women talked positively about support they received in the first 12 months post arrival:

Our friend guided us through everything. He took us to Centrelink to get the benefit because we were unemployed (Cecilia, 47, 15 yrs. in Aus.)

The support of other Turkish migrants was invaluable at that time. It was the reinforcement of the decision we had made and the friendship that was very important (Ayla, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

Access to formal support was mainly associated with job search and will be discussed in the employment section. However, some women commented on the lack of support from the Australian public and community agencies:

Lack of support from people around. People that immigrated previously did not go

out of their way. And I do not talk only about Anglo, but also people from similar cultural background. Our peers did not support us. It still does not feel right (Shelo, 50, 21 yrs. in Aus.)

We were struggling hard. There were some people who were putting you down. I had to race. (Rosa, 54, 19 yrs. in Aus.)

Staff members of some of the agencies were more sensitive and hope inspiring than others. This was the key. In my contact with people some were very welcoming and interested while others made me feel like an outsider and unwanted which was very demoralising (Nadine, 45, 14 yrs. in Aus.)

Culture clash/ assault on identity

The literature (Abbott et al., 2000; Nash & Trlin, 2006; Powell, 2001; Putnam, 2000) asserts that language barriers and cultural differences pose significant difficulties and negatively affect the pace of integration for many migrants particularly those whose culture differs from the culture of the host country. Some participants of this study found Australian culture very dissimilar to the one they were previously a part of resulting in stress and painful readjustment. Those participants' reports on difficulties associated with adjusting to a new culture could be grouped into the following themes: negative impact of adjustment on relationships and family life; stress and depression associated with adjustment to new social and workplace relations; loss of self-esteem and self-confidence; difficulties associated with differences in language; difficulties associated with a new lifestyle, differences in food, differences in the society structure and how the society is organised. Thus, it appears that some of the theories discussed in Chapter Three, such as *Culture Shock Theory* (Oberg, 1960); *Cultural Change Theory* (Papajohn & Spiegel, 1971) and *Social Isolation Theory* (Jaco, 1970) do resonate with the challenges associated with moving into a new culture, such as disturbance of people's psychological orientation and disruption in migrants' performance of their social roles.

As discussed in Chapters Two and Four, women, apart from their responsibilities to contribute to their family's income, have been burdened by their responsibilities to their families and the quality of family relationships. For example, Fincher (et al., 1994) argues

that women are disadvantaged because they spend so much time settling their families in the early months and years, combined with difficulties with the recognition of their professional and educational credentials and limited access to language and child care services. Child care services seem to be of critical importance to settlement for all migrant women. Nadine, who came from India, describes the impact of cultural adjustment on her family:

I was stressed about many demands to learn a new way of life. Adjustment to new cultural norms and the impact it had on my relationship with my husband and children and family life in general (Nadine, 45, 14 yrs. in Aus.)

Amira's experience supports the theory of cultural dichotomies discussed in Chapter Three: for example, the theory of *Individualism versus Communalism* (Hermans & Kempen, 1998) that argues that in the Western cultures the focus is on independence where in the non-Western cultures the focus is on interdependence:

In my country people are more engaged. There are front yards in my country, not back yards. Here everyone is in the back yard. Here it is not engaging. This is something very difficult for me. It is a different culture. A sense of community I have been missing... I felt very hard. Everything was difficult. It is a new country. New language. I had to establish the link with people who came from the same city as I did. They were from the same generation. Grew with the same music. Because I could not really find something in common who were born here. Like different world in a way. And that is why it is hard. I was really unhappy at some stage. I was miserable (Amira, 44, 15 yrs. in Aus.)

Some women reported difficulties adjusting to new social and workplace relations. Hawthorne (1996), for example, highlights the difficulties migrant women face with informal socialising at work and describes the way that is particularly important to professional mobility and personal acceptance. Jodie became aware of cultural differences. This is how she reported this:

I lacked the understanding of cultural differences. We both spoke English so I assumed the rules were the same. Initially people may have experienced me as

emotionally expressive, for example, talking to someone on the train or at the checkout counter of a supermarket. However I have learnt that this is not an accepted cultural norm in Australia (Jodie, 28, 5 yrs. in Aus.)

Ayla revealed her experience:

It was difficult getting the hang of the way things are done here. Social and workplace relationships are different and for a new migrant it takes a bit of adjusting (Ayla, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

Struggling with a new culture has also affected women's self-esteem and self-confidence. Sudha, for example, talked about her loss of confidence:

When I applied and I migrated I had a confidence. And I knew I can make it. But I don't know when I lost confidence. I had no confidence. I had been very weak. And I have stumbled. I stumble very often, more often than you can imagine. It was a struggle. I got zero help (Sudha, 39, 10 yrs. in Aus.)

It affected me greatly and led to great longing and second-guessing myself (Jodie, 28, 5 yrs. in Aus.)

I lost self-confidence (Nadina, 45, 14 yrs. in Aus.)

Lorena and Blaga described the painful readjustment associated with differences in language:

Now looking back I was really depressed. The language difficulty...and I did not know how the system worked. I felt totally, totally disconnected, isolated, down... I did not have any contact with English environment (Lorena, 54, 25 yrs. in Aus.)

I was pretty good in English. But still it is very different when you are not a native speaker and you come to the country. And the colloquial expression. Everything is different. I was working as a cashier and people will ask me something: 'Do you have the time?' I am thinking: 'What she is talking about?' And things like that.

Especially if someone speaks very fast. I could not catch all that. And I was going to the library to learn the Australian expression. First year was very difficult (Blaga, 42, 8 yrs. in Aus.)

Manel and Rhani talked about challenges they faced associated with a new lifestyle, differences in food and society in general. Manel found the new environment overwhelming:

It was completely overwhelming at the beginning. In South Africa the pace is a little bit slower. In Sydney, it is like a whirl wind. If you do not start rotating with this whirl wind, you can be left behind. And in order to stay in the whirl wind of activities, it will happen that you are going to be totally overwhelmed at the beginning. And this is exactly how we found it (Manel, 44, 4 yrs. in Aus.)

Rhani talked about missing the familiar food and sense of community she enjoyed in South Africa:

I remember my first shopping experience. I do not think I will ever forget that. In your country you know which mayonnaise you like. I had to do the grocery shopping, and I looked for my normal brands and I went: 'or, not here'. Because you realise the differences in terms of food. It was a biggest adjustment. In South Africa the Indian community is very close. In Australia is very different (Rhani, 46, 5 yrs. in Aus.)

As demonstrated, some women faced real and profound difficulties associated with moving into such as dissimilar culture. The contrast of Australian culture was characterised by participants in terms of 'new way of life', new cultural norms, new language, new music, new meaning of acceptable behaviour, new social and workplace relationships, new food, and new society. However, it is important to note that, in some instances, women's social and cultural experiences overlap. Participants' social network and social relationships combined with acquisition of language and sense of identity and belonging are so complexly intertwined and interlinked that sometimes it has been difficult to separate the social and cultural aspects of the inclusion experience.

To conclude this part of the chapter, the following has to be highlighted. Firstly, the majority of participants had sought and had had their overseas professional qualifications assessed and recognised by the Australian authorities prior to their arrival in Australia. Secondly, most women did go looking for work soon after their arrival and all but one were employed by the end of their first year in Australia. The major difficulties in finding a job were associated with poor English skills, lack of local experience, dissimilar job searching culture and lack of recognition of overseas qualifications. Thirdly, moving into a new culture has been associated with stress and painful adjustment. The adjustment difficulties during the first 12 months in Australia varied among the women and can be characterised as easy adjustment, challenges and isolation, and culture clash.

Participants recommendations: Social inclusion in the first 12 months

I thought it was relevant to include participants' own perspective on social inclusion in the first 12 months post arrival. Participants identified five major indicators of social inclusion during the early stages of the settlement process: 1) ability to speak English; 2) social support; 3) recognition of qualifications and economic participation; 4) overcoming cultural differences; and 5) personal strengths and determination.

Firstly, the ability to speak English was identified by participants as a key factor in a successful settlement experience. Even women who spoke English well, recognised and appreciated their English skills as invaluable and necessary to enable them to live and function effectively in Australia. This finding supports the literature presented in Chapter Two (Hawthorne, 1996; Ho, 2004) that ability to speak English remains a determining factor in migrants' settlement experience. For example, as Suzie said:

The ability to speak English definitely helped me. English is important. Language is very, very important because it is a form of communication. And you have to communicate most of the time. And you have to write (Suzie, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

Rumaliza valued her ability to speak English:

I think it would be very daunting if English was not my first language (Rumaliza, 40, 11 yrs. in Aus.)

Lorena talked about her difficulties with English:

Language was my main barrier to get a job (Lorena, 54, 25 yrs. in Aus.)

This is what Amira had to say about her challenges related to the lack of English:

I was not really comfortable with my English because in Macedonia I was learning French. I enrolled to study English in the evening college. I just wanted to learn English. I could understand, but speaking was very hard for me. And I was speaking in a very low voice because I was ashamed to say something wrong. For the first 5 years I had a dictionary in my bag. Wherever I would go, I would not leave the house without a dictionary (Amira, 44, 15 yrs. in Aus.)

Secondly, social support was identified by the participants as a required feature of being included in a new country. Social support was identified by women as essential regardless of whether they needed support or had an experience of not receiving support when it was required. Women talked about social support as a combination of informal support from people here in Australia, support from family and friends in their country of emigration as well as support of community services and government agencies here in Australia. Women's reports of the importance of social support supports the literature (Castles & Miller, 2003; Ryan, 2007; Verkuyten, 2005) that highlights the contributing factor of social support to migrants' participation in social life and feelings of belonging. Here are some examples of what participants said about the importance of support and recommendations associated with it:

Having support here was crucial. Practical support and having someone to talk to and share experiences would be important. It would be good to have more hands on practical support with employment. At least there should be some routine work experience provided to new migrants (Ayla, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

I think the government has to support people. Help them with simple things. When you come here, there should be people you can contact. Not everyone has friends here. We have to get what we wanted here because we made a big effort to come to this country (Cecilia, 47, 15 yrs. in Aus.)

Information should be provided to immigrants on 'how to' in all areas of life. This could be a website in different languages (Rumaliza, 40, 11 yrs. in Aus.)

I think that to the degree the government probably should help. Whether the Department of Immigration has a group of volunteers who are willing to help people out. Register people who are willing to help and have them on their database. So, when you come in, you can ask. Like a Helpline. Basically you come through, you have your passport stamped and that is it. There is nobody meets you at the gate and says 'welcome' (Rhani, 46, 5 yrs. in Aus.)

The government needs to invest in ongoing campaigns to make people aware that 'migrants' add value to the Australian society and overall they make positive contribution to the life of average Australian (Nadine, 45, 14 yrs. in Aus.)

Thirdly, the recognition of professional qualification and gaining employment was identified as a defining factor of economic and social inclusion. For example, as Jodie said:

Experience in the workplace has given me the help I needed (Jodie, 28, 5 yrs. in Aus.)

Lorena described how lack of employment affected her inclusion experience:

Being here without my job... I felt totally disconnected and isolated (Lorena, 54, 25 yrs. in Aus.)

As discussed in previous chapters, cultural differences may seriously hinder the adjustment process and migrants' experiences of settlement and integration into a new society. Overcoming cultural differences, therefore, was recognised by participants as a significant contributor to the feelings of inclusion and engagement. For example, as Manel stated:

Everybody who comes in undergoes change in their thinking process, irrespective what expectations you are coming with. But at the end of the day you realise it is all about quality of life (Manel, 44, 4 yrs. in Aus.)

Ayla talked about adjusting to social and workplace relationships:

Getting the hang of the way things are done here. Social and workplace relationships are different and for a new migrant it takes a bit of adjusting (Ayla, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

Nadine highlighted the importance of cultural adjustment:

There are many demands to learn a new way of life. Adjustment to new cultural norms, gaining confidence to access local services and eventually understand the social norms and systems. Once the initial worries of finding work, accommodation, etc. were resolved, I started integrating gradually into the wider society (Nadine, 45, 14 yrs. in Aus.)

Sylvia described her strategy for inclusion:

I did go out in the evening to commence to socialise as I did not know anybody in Australia, and I was lucky enough to get along a couple of people that introduced me to their circle of friends (Sylvia, 43, 6 yrs. in Aus.)

It can be seen in this section and, as mentioned previously, the cultural and social dimensions of social inclusion overlap.

Finally, participants attributed personal strengths and determination as contributing factors in facilitating inclusion into a broader community. Women placed emphasis on working hard, taking initiative, seeking information, and remaining positive. Below are some examples of what women had to say about the importance of those qualities:

I think you have to work very hard and to be determined and look forward. Be prepared to work hard. It is more than a medical degree. Not to take anything for granted (Suzie, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

I just took the initiative and was very active myself (Shelo, 50, 21 yrs. in Aus.)

I recommend what is important- not to sit down and wait, but to seek information and to try yourself. Find a way and be positive (Cecilia, 47, 15 yrs. in Aus.)

Sometimes it is not enough to speak English. You have to have confidence (Rosa, 54, 19 yrs. in Aus.)

Conclusion

To summarise this chapter, participants' experiences of the first 12 months in Australia have been complex and multi-layered and were characterised by three distinctive themes: easy adjustment, loss of social support and culture clash. While some women experienced the initial period of settlement without a challenge, others suffered from changes in their sense of identity and loss of social support. Searching for ways to establish themselves in a new country to maximise benefits for themselves and their families, they were able to identify the most important things in this initial period of integration into a new life. These were: the recognition of their qualifications; finding a first job; establishing social support and social networks. Cultural adjustment and being willing to go out of their way to seek integration and inclusion were also highlighted. This brings us to the next chapter that focuses on the participants' experience of social inclusion in the present.

Chapter Eight: Professional Female Migrants- Current Experiences of Social Inclusion

The previous chapter provided information about the characteristics of migration through a discussion of professional female migrants and their experiences in the first 12 months in Australia. This chapter provides information about the characteristics of migration from the perspective of professional female migrants in Australia by showing their perception of ‘who they are’ and ‘what they have’ *in the present*. The interview questions sought to capture participants’ perceptions and experiences of social inclusion at the time of the interview: Did they work? Did they experience social support? Were they satisfied with their life? What kind of challenges did they face? Did they experience social inclusion? What were their perceptions on social inclusion, adjustment and settlement? At the time of the interview, while some participants have lived in Australia for many years, others still saw themselves as recent arrivals. And though for many, the years of challenges associated with settlement in a new country were well behind, for some the painful adjustment has continued regardless of the length of their settlement in Australia.

Economic participation

As discussed in the theoretical chapters, employment and economic participation contribute significantly to migrants’ sense of social inclusion and successful integration into the broader Australian society (Bertone, 2007; Bradley & Healy, 2008; Gillard & Wong, 2007; Goodwin, 2003; Pocock & Buchanan, 2003). The literature (Boyd & Grieco, 2003) suggests that migrant women are predominantly employed in ‘female’ occupations such as nursing, education and social work. The data elicited in this study supports this statement as the majority of women worked in ‘female’ dominated occupations. Moreover, the participants who had not worked in ‘female’ occupation prior to migration, had to re-study and move into ‘female’ occupation such as social work in order to secure employment in Australia. At the time of the interview all but one woman worked full time. Only Olga did not work because of her caring responsibilities. As for many other Australian women, most professional female migrants worked in female dominated occupations such as social work and nursing. Significantly, the majority of women worked in the same profession they had worked in prior to their migration to Australia. Even more significantly, most of them were

employed at the same level as in their country of emigration. Below are some examples of women's current economic participation:

I am very happy with my work. I am able to use my qualification (Jodie, 28, 5 yrs. in Aus.)

After 8 years I became social worker. Full time. I love this job (Sudha, 39, 10 yrs. in Aus.)

I am very happy. I probably will go to Uni or TAFE to do some course. I am very ambitious. I am really passionate about people and cultures and how I can help people, make people happy. Everything I do in my job- from my heart, from myself (Cecilia, 47, 10 yrs. in Aus.)

I have been doing my job in Australia for 18 years. My job is very secure. Same occupation. Same level. I love my job. It is very rewarding. I have been a doctor for 35 years (Suzie, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

My present job gives me the opportunity to pursue different interests, such as vocational education within the job, formal qualification at University with postgraduate studies and personal interests. I was fully able to use my qualification. I felt that my expertise was recognised. Same level, same occupation. My qualification helped me to have a choice in the location where I wanted to work (Sylvia, 43, 6 yrs. in Aus.)

Out of all women who worked in the same profession, only Roya was working at a higher level than in her home country. As Roya stated:

I work in a more senior position than overseas. Full time. Permanent. I enjoy working. Same occupation. I feel secure in my job (Roya, 57, 25 yrs. in Aus.)

Some women had to change their profession in Australia although two of them had their overseas degrees recognised. However, of these women only one worked at the same level as in her home country. It is important to note, that only two women who changed their

occupation after migration here, were able to reach the same level as they had overseas. Maria and Shelo said the following about their current employment experiences:

I had to change my occupation, but I am happy now. I have a good job of a similar level to what I had prior to coming to Australia (Maria, 48, 11 yrs. in Aus.)

Based on my experience and my administration skills that I had for 18 years, I could not get work in my area of expertise. My current job is a program access officer. Full time, not permanent. No positions are permanent in the community sector, but I am happy to be there (Shelo, 50, 21 yrs. in Aus.)

Most participants who had to change their profession in Australia, however, worked at a lower level compared to their home country. Nevertheless, the majority of them reported being satisfied in their current role:

I am happy in my current role, where I only partially use my qualification, only in terms of having a behavioural science qualification (Catherine, 54, 18 yrs. in Aus.)

I am happy with my current job, which I have been doing for the last 11 years. I am not working in the same occupation as I last had in my country (Lorena, 54, 25 yrs. in Aus.)

I am happy now. I am now level 3 which does not require tertiary education. My degree is still not recognised. My occupation is at the lower level than prior to migration. I utilise my skills, do counselling, but it is still not recognised (Blaga, 42, 8 yrs. in Aus.)

Amira, meanwhile, was looking for better employment opportunities:

My degree was recognised as Bachelor of Art. The degree helped me in my current position. Not the same occupation. Not the same level. I am looking for the opportunities in employment. I guess I am not clear what is there for me with all the options (Amira, 44, 15 yrs. in Aus.)

Perception of ‘social inclusion’ and ‘settlement’

In current debates the concept of migrants’ social inclusion is closely linked to the concept of successful settlement. This section, therefore, features participants’ perception of social inclusion and settlement, particularly focusing on their satisfaction with life in Australia and coping with the stress and challenges of living in an adopted country. Other dimensions of settlement such as social and cultural participation will be outlined further in this section.

Overall, the majority of women reported feeling settled or quite settled in Australia. As discussed in Chapter Five, the women who participated in the study have been living in Australia between four and twenty five years. It was not necessarily the case, however, that women who lived here longer felt more settled than those recently arrived. For example, Jodie who came just five years ago, felt settled and at home:

I feel settled. Australia is now my home. I have been successful to date in achieving my goals, however I would have achieved my goals earlier in terms of career and finances if I had stayed in South Africa. When I arrived here it was about surviving. Now that I am settled, I can begin thriving (Jodie, 28, 5 yrs. in Aus.)

The significant part of achieving successful settlement has been attributed to women’s ability to access and utilise opportunities for further development and personal and professional growth. Some literature (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2003) identifies such individuals as ‘active settlers’, who tend to be goal oriented and future oriented. Many of the women reported enjoying and utilising opportunities that life in Australia has offered them. Catherine, for example, presents as a confident and an ‘active settler’:

I am able to be what I want to be and do most of what I want to do (Catherine, 54, 18 yrs. in Aus.)

Suzie is proud of her achievements:

I live comfortably now. I feel I am a success story. I have no regrets. I would not have done anything differently (Suzie, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

Sylvia is another example of an 'active settler', an achiever. She is enthusiastic about learning and is involved with mainstream society through work, local community and social network:

I have been very successful in achieving my goals. I will become a citizen on Australia day. Professionally and academically I am getting large recognition (Sylvia, 43, 6 yrs. in Aus.)

Although successful settlement has been achieved by the majority of participants, for most the settlement process has been a long and a challenging journey:

I think I could say that I started to live fully in Australia when I started to work in a multicultural service. It took me 14 years to start live in this country. 14 years. It was very, very difficult (Lorena, 54, 25 yrs. in Aus.)

Or, it is much better. Quite settled. Very happy. But the immigration process and settlement was not perfect. I do not think so (Marianne, 47, 6 yrs. in Aus.)

While most participants feel currently settled and have developed a sense of belonging in Australia, some still experience uprootedness and stress that was strongly associated with a loss of support and adjustment difficulties. This finding supports the literature introduced in Chapter Three (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999; Major, Quinton, & McCoy, 2002; Taylor, 1992, 1994) that many migrants are troubled not only by lack of recognition and respect, but also by feelings of uprootedness and loss. Manel, for example, talked about her life still being in limbo and strongly affected by loss of support and uprootedness. Manel and Sudha contested the assumption that professional migrants easily find their way into a new life:

Four years down the line, I am still a little bit in limbo. Difficulty was stepping out of the comfort zone with a lack of support. Now I have been able to acquire a lifestyle minus the support. I think a lot of people take it for granted because you are professional and because you have a certain degree of empowerment within you that you should be able to find your way. But it is not so. What about this sense of uprootedness that you may be experiencing? You leave your mother behind. You

leave your sister behind. You leave your brother behind (Manel, 44, 4 yrs. in Aus.)

Sudha felt being uprooted and 'stuck':

I feel Indians back home have progressed more than Indians who are here, they are more stuck because we will never be Australians. We will never be white men quite honestly. But we are also so uprooted. It is unbelievable (Sudha, 39, 10 yrs. in Aus.)

Nadine reflected on settlement in a context of a general life circle:

It is like roller coasters ride. Migration has affected me in many different ways and at multiple levels. It continues to cause stress in various aspects of life as I go through the different phases of the life cycle. The best way to deal with stress for me is by putting things in perspective, accepting that I have few supports but also have strengths. Migration has also given me the opportunity to realise my full potential and has tested my capabilities to the limit (Nadine, 45, 14 yrs. in Aus.)

Women's perceptions of settlement and their sense of belonging has been closely linked to the satisfaction with their life in Australia.

Satisfaction with life in Australia

Most participants revealed they have been satisfied with their life in Australia. Among things people valued and appreciated most were the sense of personal safety and freedom, resources available to its citizens, the environment and cultural diversity. For example, Marianne talked about safety after coming here from South Africa:

I like the sense of safety. Personal safety. Sleeping safely at night. Getting to the station and just knowing my car will still be there. Safety and personal security are the things we are enjoying the most. Being able to go for a walk (Marianne, 47, 6 yrs. in Aus.)

Jodie and Rhani talked about opportunities and resources available to them:

Australia is such a fantastic place to raise a family and live a good quality of life.

There are fantastic services for people with disabilities, the elderly and children (Jodie, 28, 5 yrs. in Aus.)

I like the structure for kids. Kids are given the opportunity to work from 15 years old part-time. Sport and development. Stuff at school. That is the reason we came. I see my kids having the opportunity to develop and grow into whatever they want to become (Rhani, 46, 5 yrs. in Aus.)

Many women expressed their general satisfaction with Australian life:

I love the environment, lifestyle and most of the weather (Catherine, 54, 18 yrs. in Aus.)

I love this country. I am very happy here. My family is happy. I like everything about this country (Cecilia, 47, 15 yrs. in Aus.)

I love Australia, the best country in the world. I have travelled in more than 20. It is more relaxed, less insular and parochial (Rumaliza, 40, 11 yrs. in Aus.)

I love Australian way of life. I think it has a lot to offer. I understand it can be challenging to accept foreigners in your country, accept the differences in culture and race. Overall, I like being here. I think Australian society has given me a fair go. Reasonably safe environment to raise a family (Nadine, 45, 14 yrs. in Aus.)

Some women enjoyed that cultural diversity and Australian multiculturalism:

I like cultural diversity. I like the respect for privacy (Lorena, 54, 25 yrs. in Aus.)

I like Australia a lot. I like its freedom, freedom of speech and its multiculturalism. I like how laid back and easy going Australians are. And the possibility to gain education and professional opportunities at any stage in life (Sylvia, 43, 6 yrs. in Aus.)

Although most participants talked enthusiastically about things they value and enjoy in

Australia, some mentioned factors that worried them in Australian society. Racism and ethnic tensions, lack of harmony and lack of traditional values were mentioned most. For example, as Jodie, Lorena and Rhani talked about racism in Australia:

I do not like racism in Australia. It is bizarre as Australia is such a multicultural society, but there is still a high level of racism. I would even go so far as saying that the racism in Australia is higher than in South Africa (Jodie, 28, 5 yrs. in Aus.)

Australia is a racist country. Some people are racists, but not everyone. Even some other ethnic groups, like Lebanese, Asians. And it is sad. Racism does exist. It is everywhere (Lorena, 54, 25 yrs. in Aus.)

I do not like the racism. I think there is a lot of racism in Australia. Australia is more racist than South Africa. Not only Australia. It is everywhere in the world, UK, US. But people do not call it as it is. People say: 'No, we are not'. There is discrimination of people looking down on different people. My youngest son came home one day and he had a big issue with his skin colour. He came and he said: 'Why am I as brown as this? How I am not like the others? And because I am brown I cannot play with this person and with that person'. And that was a high school in Australia (Rhani, 46, 5 yrs. in Aus.)

Blaga, Amira and Manel raised concerns about lack of harmony and increasing competition among ethnic groups in Sydney:

I find laws are open to interpretation and are too liberal. There is a lot of rubbish on the streets. It was better. And there is a code of grace and this and that. So, if you do not like that - do not come here. I am a Christian Orthodox, but I do not ask Australia to change Christmas to 7th of January because I am Christian Orthodox. In my eyes, it is becoming more like anarchy (Blaga, 42, 8 yrs. in Aus.)

Living here can be very scary sometimes as well. Maybe because I am living with ethnic community more than with Australian community, but I think ethnic people can be very racists. I can see Macedonians being very racist towards Indians and Chinese. It is up to the people and their own beliefs whether they choose to be racists

or not (Amira, 44, 15 yrs. in Aus.)

Australia is a highly quantitative society. With so many different groups coming from different parts of the world. To a very large extent there becomes competition among groups. That upsets me (Manel, 44, 4 yrs. in Aus.)

Cecilia and Nadine also talked about ethnic segregation in some areas of Sydney as well as loss of traditional family values as they saw it:

I do not like seeing families losing control of the kids. Makes me very worry. I also see some ethnic groups sticking together and not integrating. It is a bit dangerous to bring so many people in one area together. It happens around Blacktown. They have brought a lot of people from Somalia and all those countries. They do not seem to mix with other people. And the other people just look at them like they are different (Cecilia, 47, 15 yrs. in Aus.)

Fear of deteriorating health and ageing in a different culture is one of my fears. Lack of family values in my children (as defined in my culture) is another major concern. Having to raise my children in isolation without family was very limiting and difficult... My perception of Australian society is that here we have less respect for elderly people and their experience in life, as compared with some ethnic cultures. I may feel more comfortable in my country of origin as I age (Nadine, 45, 14 yrs. in Aus.)

Among other dislikes women mentioned the Australian poor health care, the government's management of illegal immigration, the level of private indebtedness among others:

I do not like health care. It is a horrible medicine in my opinion. If you need to get help very quickly - you cannot. You have to go to hospital and you have to wait a long time. You have to wait, to wait, to wait, to wait. Nobody comes even if you have a very small child. You will wait a very long time there (Olga, 49, 9 yrs. in Aus.)

Like many people I do not agree with some positions of the government in matter of

illegal immigration, poor legal accountability of some traders like builders (Sylvia, 43, 6 yrs. in Aus.)

In summary, while many women have been satisfied with their life in Australia, and appreciated the sense of personal safety, opportunities and resources available to them, the 'dark side' of their experience was racism, ethnic separateness and some government policies.

Strategies for coping with stress

As discussed in Chapter Four, migration is often viewed as a process of women's empowerment. Coping with stress and inevitable adversities when adjusting to a new social, cultural and economic environment have been identified as an important part of the settlement process. In support of the literature (Mahler & Pessar, 2006; Parrenas, 2008; Pessar, 2001) the professional female migrants demonstrated exceptional strengths and discussed strategies that helped them with meeting challenges associated with migration and settlement. Among many strategies, obtaining social support and developing and utilising personal strengths and resources have been emphasised most. By social support women meant regular contact with their family and friends, social participation and building networks, participating in group activities such as a church, a sport club or an interest group. On building and utilising personal strengths and resources, women talked about maintaining healthy living, developing personal resilience, being realistic, being aware of their own limitations, being reflective and seeking help when required. These women said the following about the importance of social support when coping with stress:

I think social support is important in the settlement process, as well as any stress management techniques that work for the individual (Catherine, 54, 18 yrs. in Aus.)

Have a support network of people undergoing a similar experience like other migrants, be open to opportunities to develop new friendships and contacts, do not get discouraged if you do not feel accepted by some people, get to understand the way things work and the systems and processes that operate them (Ayla, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

Join an interest group or sport club so that you have more than work as a social outlet (Rumaliza, 40, 11 yrs. in Aus.)

Participants also provided thoughtful insights on developing personal resilience and the capacity to resist stress. Sudha, for example, talked about becoming a stronger person as a result of migration:

I became much stronger as a result of migration. I have developed resilience. I am more resilient, more determined. That would be the strongest thing. I think the sense of humour is another one because you are able to look back and laugh. Ability to reflect on how things are. Learning from mistakes (Sudha, 39, 10 yrs. in Aus.)

Lorena learnt meditation skills to address stress:

In my case, the main work to deal with challenging time is through meditation. It was a part of my migration experience to learn these skills, to learn how to deal with stress (Lorena, 54, 25 yrs. in Aus.)

Sylvia shared her experience of managing stress by being organised and by limiting risks:

I do admit that my first experiences had limited stress because my risks were limited. My strengths were preparation, seeking help and managing things step by step. Make your limitations or needs known before commencing an employment, so you can be offered help to manage a new situation. Always have a plan B. I knew I could always go back home where I had a house, family and finding a job if things did not work out (Sylvia, 43, 6 yrs. in Aus.)

Roya mentioned the role of social support and religion in her ability to deal with stress and crisis:

When I am dealing with a crisis, I have to believe in myself, my skills and my ability to do that. I have my support. I have my family and my church group. I pray a lot. I believe in prayers. Probably, coming to Australia made me closer to Lord than when I was in Egypt. So, I am very active member in the church (Roya, 57, 25 yrs. in

Aus.)

Olga found resources like swimming and watching a good movie helped her to deal with stress of settling in a new country:

I try to go to swim in the sea. Water is a resource for me. I also try to watch a good movie (Olga, 49, 9 yrs. in Aus.)

To sum up, the participants found that regular contacts with family and friends, building social networks and utilising personal strengths were among the most effective strategies to deal with stress associated with a settlement in a new country.

Major challenges

The challenges the professional female migrants face are two-fold. On one side, they face challenges that mirror those of the general Australian population and women in particular, such career growth, balancing life and work, being a single mother or raising a disabled child:

I wanted to study at TAFE, but my employer would not approve the study leave (Amira, 44, 15 yrs. in Aus.)

There are many. Study, career growth (Maria, 48, 11 yrs. in Aus.)

Being a single mother (Sudha, 39, 10 yrs. in Aus.)

Difficulties in maintaining a social life with a busy work life (Catherine, 54, 18 yrs. in Aus.)

Some challenges, however, are associated with being a migrant. The challenges associated with migration include lack of social support, experiencing racism, living and ageing in a different culture:

I do not have anyone to help me with my child. I had my mother for 1 year staying here when my son was born. We cannot afford to support her for 10 years if she

stayed here. So, she went back. My father is still there. It is very complicated. My husband is not helping. Then I am working here full time. Yes, it is very difficult, very difficult (Blaga, 42, 8 yrs. in Aus.)

I suppose the need to feel you belong is always there. My ongoing challenge is to organise my life so as to spend as much time as I can with those friends, ethnic and otherwise that accept me and whose friendship and support I value (Ayla, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

Children experience racism at school (Rhani, 46, 5 yrs. in Aus.)

Fear of deteriorating health and ageing in a different culture is one of my fears. Lack of family values in my children as defined in my culture is another major concern. Having to raise my children in isolation without family was very limiting and difficult (Nadine, 45, 14 yrs. in Aus.)

The next part of this section is devoted to the role of social support and extending social networks as those appear to become the cornerstone of successful settlement and social inclusion of the professional female migrants.

Social participation

The experience of social participation of the professional female migrants was predominantly characterised by the presence of social support, the lack of support for caring for children and the experience of expanding social networks.

Social support

There is a longstanding literature (Bromley, 2000; Castles & Miller, 2003; Doyle et al., 1997; Ryan 2007) that suggests that social support contributes to feelings of belonging and social inclusion. Ryan (2007), for example, declares that migrant women, particularly if they have children, quickly establish new circles of friends with neighbours, work colleagues and fellow students. All women indicated the importance and the need for social support in their current life. Social support is particularly important when dealing with stress and challenges of post-migration life. For example, Catherine talked about the

importance of social support in the settlement process:

I think social support is important in the settlement process as well as any stress management techniques that work for the individual (Catherine, 54, 18 yrs. in Aus.)

As in Ryan's (2007) study of Irish nurses migrating to the UK, the majority of participants reported having sufficient social support and social contact in their current life. As mentioned previously, social participation overlaps with cultural participation and will be discussed in the next section of cultural participation within and beyond one's culture. Nadine, for example, finds benefits of participating in community programs, festival celebrations and individual socialising. She is well knit into the broader Australian community:

I participate in community programs, festival celebrations and individual socialising. I am well knit into the broader Australian community (Nadine, 45, 14 yrs. in Aus.)

Additionally, Ayla is open to new friendships and contacts. She is open to cultural differences and has a genuine desire to engage with people from other cultures and backgrounds. For example, Stevenson (2003), discussed in Chapter Three, refers to these individuals as cosmopolitan citizens. Ayla is aware of the importance of social support and social contacts:

Have a support network of people undergoing a similar experience. Be open to opportunities to develop new friendships and contacts. Do not get discouraged if you do not feel accepted by some people, get to understand the way things work and the systems and processes that operate them (Ayla, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

Some people, however, spoke about lack of social support and were still missing family and friends back home. Catherine, for example, said the following:

Any isolation I feel is related to being far from my family of origin and difficulties in maintaining a social life with a busy work life. I think the empty nest syndrome can affect divorced or separated migrants more, as for many there is no family other than

children raised who have developed their own independent lives (Catherine, 54, 18 yrs. in Aus.)

Lack of support for caring for children: Intersection of gender and migration

Lack of social support is particularly relevant to migrant women because they have caring responsibilities. As discussed earlier in this thesis, the responsibility for child care in Australia is gendered and has a strong impact on women's experience of child care and their ability to incorporate child care with paid employment. Women, on average, spend 19.6 hours per week caring for young children (HREOC, 2005, p.32). Difficulties with access and cost of formal childcare are especially felt by migrant women because they are less likely to have an informal social support and access to informal child care arrangements through their families and social networks. Blaga, for example, revealed her enduring struggle to cope with child caring and other domestic responsibilities as well as employment and the negative impact this had on her life:

I do not have anyone to help me with my child. I had my mother for 1 year staying here when my son was born. We cannot afford to support her for 10 years if she stays here. So, she went back. My father is still there. It is very complicated. I have to juggle everything. I do everything at home. My husband is not helping. Then I am working full time. Yes, it is very difficult, very difficult (Blaga, 42, 8 yrs. in Aus.)

Caring for her child prevented Olga from joining the labour force. She also experienced lack of support for caring for a child:

No, I did not go looking for work. My second child was small. And I had problems with my son. No-one was helping me. I found people being indifferent. It was not their problem (Olga, 49, 9 yrs. in Aus.)

Additionally, Amira talked about difficulties of balancing caring, domestic and employment responsibilities in the environment of no support:

I was not really comfortable with my English. But I was pregnant. And I gave birth. And it was really hard for me to find a time to do something else. I had one kid, and

another child. I managed to get a part time job. To work, look after the kids, have the family life and to be able to earn income. My son is 14 now, my girl is 11. They are coming to the age when they are going to be more independent. And they might not need me as much, because they can come and do things for themselves. I did not have the opportunity to study here because when I came I had my kids. I had other priorities in my life (Amira, 44, 15 yrs. in Aus.)

Rhani remembered the support for caring for her children she enjoyed back home, the support she could not bring with her to Australia:

Back home, if your kids are ill and you cannot take time of work, one aunty or another would take care of your kids. You do not come here with your parents and your family and your support and your network (Rhani, 46, 5 yrs. in Aus.)

Nadine raised concerns regarding her children growing up without her being a role model for them. Nadine's status of 'Mother' was compromised by self-neglect, the lack of support and a single parent identity:

Within my family, having to raise children without strong role models has meant that the status of 'Mother' is not upheld the way it was in my family. I feel it is unfair but I feel helpless. To some extent, migration played a role in me having to be a 'single parent', the role which I think I fulfilled at the expense of self-neglect, which I think has affected my personal identity (Nadine, 45, 14 yrs. in Aus.)

Some women, however, demonstrated exceptional resilience and strengths when confronted with multiple demands in a new country. Manel commented on being a 'superwoman':

A lot of my colleagues and other migrants as well found it a bit strange that I am so new in the country with children and still work full time. But remember, it is not easy when you are really starting life. And remember, at that time I was the only one in the family working. So, it was necessary for me to work. And it was a full time position. I have 4 boys. And I took this job. Full time. It required for me to be a super woman because being a mother, waking up early and making sure boys are sorted out. Fortunately, I did not have to do school drops off and pick-ups because

we were renting the place with school being just opposite. This was a big bonus (Manel, 44, 4 yrs. in Aus.)

Thus, while the majority of them successfully shifted their social contacts and support into a new environment, some have reported limited social support and a struggle to reconnect and adjust their social relations. Not all women reached a desired level of social support in their life post migration. Lack of support and its negative impact was especially evident in lives of migrant women with children who were simultaneously confronted with multiple demands of a new life in Australia.

Expanding social networks

Although all participants reported having contacts beyond their own culture, they were at various stages of the integration process. While most of the literature only considers the broader society and the migrants' sense of inclusion in it, the findings of this research present a slightly different picture. Firstly, when people moved to Australia, most of them came with their little society called a family. Secondly, as they began a gradual integration into the broader Australian society, some women found themselves becoming a part of the broader society, while others associated mostly with specific societies such as a cultural group or an ethnicity society, a religious group society or an identity society such as a lesbian or a gender society. In most cases, those specific societies overlap and are inclusive, with only some clearly defined and rarely crossed. For example, some participants reported significant extension of their social network resulting in truly becoming members of the broader multicultural society:

I have more friends from other backgrounds, rather than my own. I have really moved. I have a lot of friends (Shelo, 50, 21 yrs. in Aus.)

I have Australian friends and many of my friends are new migrants from Japan, Europe, USA and Canada. I like it that way because I like to understand different cultures (Rumaliza, 40, 11 yrs. in Aus.)

I have few friends from Peru who speak Spanish, but mainly my friends are from different cultures (Cecilia, 47, 15 yrs. in Aus.)

My partner is second generation Australian. His parents are from Bosnia and Croatia. The rest of my friends are South African (Jodie, 28, 5 yrs. in Aus.)

Now my friends are people from different cultures. Not just Spanish speaking. My boyfriend is from Iran. Being with Muslim, although, caused some problems around my old friends. Some friends did not accept him (Lorena, 54, 25 yrs. in Aus.)

Some women, however, build their connections based on shared ethnicity or culture. Amira, Maria and Suzie, for example, remain members of their ethnic society:

We met with families who came at the same time as I came here. They were from the same city. They were from the same generation. And we established a very close friendship with a few of those families. We grew up with the same music. I had to establish that link because I could not really find something in common with people who migrated much earlier or who were born here. Like different world in a way. My friends are Macedonian because of the culture and language. I have colleagues at work. Not really people that I invite to my place (Amira, 44, 15 yrs. in Aus.)

I integrate with my ethnic group through the church and personal friendship (Maria, 48, 11 yrs. in Aus.)

We have a strong Sri-Lanka Tamil community. I take part in that community (Suzie, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

Other women build the connections based on similar religious beliefs:

I connect with people of the same faith. Because I believe in God. For me it is very important to connect with people in the same position as I am. They are New Zealanders, Germans, Koreans. Multicultural (Olga, 49, 9 yrs. in Aus.)

My main social life is the church. The church has Iraqi, Egyptian, Sudanese. They are all Christians. Mostly Arabic speaking. I am very active member in the church (Roya, 57, 25 yrs. in Aus.)

A few women talked about becoming members of an identity society. Sylvia, for instance, revealed her membership within the lesbian community in Sydney:

I engage with people of my same sexual orientation in a safe and accepting environment in one of the most liberal cities in the world (Sylvia, 43, 6 yrs. in Aus.)

Sudha established herself as a member of a gender society:

Now my friends are from different nationalities. So, I am not able now to have that concept of isolating myself as a nationality anymore. As an ethnic group. Now I found girlfriends from Australian, Lebanese, Jordanian, Middle Eastern, European and Indian backgrounds. And I found, as women, we are all good for the same thing. Whether it is a relationship, or struggling with the children, with the family. And these different friendships give me strengths (Sudha, 39, 10 yrs. in Aus.)

Some women revealed how they manage various memberships of specific societies. Manel, for example, explained how she managed her social networks:

We have a broad circle of friends. I would not invite, though, Indian, Australian and European people together. When my husband is free on the weekend and we decide to do some entertaining, it is going to take some thought, which group we are going to have: South African group, or our Chinese friends because my husband has friends from his work as well. But I would not entertain a mix bag. A mix bag of people (Manel, 44, 4 yrs. in Aus.)

Ayla talked about her difficulties of mixing with the broader Australian community:

We have a lot of non-Turkish and Anglo-Saxon friends and participate in community activities, but there is often a bit of a feeling of being an outsider (Ayla, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

In summary, it can be said that women maintained and extended their social networks with some becoming active members of a broader Australian community, while others establishing themselves as members of specific societies, at times with the multiple

memberships and challenges this presents.

Cultural participation

All but one participant had contacts with their cultural groups and all maintained their social networks with people overseas. Most of them reported having strong contact with their culture. Women mentioned the following reasons for the importance of maintaining ethnic cultural contacts and relationships: shared ethnicity that has a positive impact on settlement and sense of belonging in Australia; the connection between culture and religion, the cultural connection to their language. The contact with their culture was also important because for some participants the Australian culture was different. For example, many women discussed the positive impact of their cultural connections on the settlement process:

We are involved in our local church. That was also something that helped us to settle into. It was about finding people who share the same values, religion (Marianne, 47, 6 yrs. in Aus.)

For many women the cultural contacts were strongly associated with their sense of belonging and a need to connect with people from the same background:

Contact with my culture is so important. It keeps me sane and grounded. I feel normal and belonged (Jodie, 28, 5 yrs. in Aus.)

Contact with my culture and people are very important. Remaining in contact with my language and Turkish friends gives me a solid sense of belonging. Maintaining a connection to people from a similar background and who share similar experiences makes you better centered (Ayla, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

Some women kept contacts with their culture because of its connection to their religion. For example, Roya talked about the importance of contact with people from the Arabic culture and the same religion:

Most of my friends are Egyptians. Not only Egyptians. Arabic in general. Because of

the culture. My main social life is the church. The church has Iraqi, Egyptian, Sudanese. There are all Christians. Mostly Arabic speaking (Roya, 57, 25 yrs. in Aus.)

Suzie also valued strongly her relationship with Sri-Lanka Tamil community in Sydney:

We have a strong Sri-Lanka Tamil community. I take part in that community because of culture and religion (Suzie, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

This is what Manel had to say about her contacts with the original culture:

We do get together with a quite fair number of South African Indians that are here in Australia. If we wish to go to the temple, we go to the temple. Because I think church really helps with resettling and adjusting. If you are in the religious group, it is for a common goal and you feel the sense of belonging (Manel, 44, 4 yrs. in Aus.)

Some participants maintain their cultural contacts because of the language. Amira, for example, appreciates when she can talk to people in her native language:

I think culture has a very strong impact on us. More than we realised. You want to talk to someone who understands. My friends are Macedonian because of culture and language (Amira, 44, 15 yrs. in Aus.)

Olga maintained her cultural networks because she found the Australian culture significantly different from her own:

Of course, it is important for me to remain in contact with my culture, because my culture is so different compared with Australian culture. This is very important for my children, my husband, and my parents. For all of us (Olga, 49, 9 yrs. in Aus.)

The cultural contacts, however, did not necessarily have to be face to face. Sylvia, for example, who did not feel the need to continuously interact with Italian people in Sydney, maintained her cultural contact through TV, shops, and phone connections:

My cultural background is very important to me and I feel very Italian in many ways, but I do not feel the need to continuously interact with Italian people to feel connected. I feel Italian, but I do not privately interact a lot with Italian community in Sydney. I watch Italian TV to keep up with what happens in Italy and use phone and Skype connections to speak with my family every week (Sylvia, 43, 6 yrs. in Aus.)

Sudha was the only person who did not have contacts with people from the same ethnicity in Australia. She experienced a forced exclusion from own culture through a divorce from her husband:

After I separated, I was completely shut by our community (Sudha, 39, 10 yrs. in Aus.)

To summarise, the professional migrant women maintain contact with their culture predominantly because of shared ethnicity, religion and language. People's contact beyond their culture, sense of identity and belonging will be discussed in the next chapter.

Political participation

People's interest and commentaries on political participation were very slim. Only a few women commented on their political engagement, mostly emphasising the lack of interest in politics and poor involvement in political activities. Here is what some of them had to say:

No political participation. I watch very carefully the news, but I do not like politics very much (Blaga, 42, 8 yrs. in Aus.)

I do not take part in political participation (Suzie, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

I have no affiliations (Sudha, 39, 10 yrs. in Aus.)

I am not in the political party. Politics is a very complicated thing (Cecilia, 47, 15 yrs. in Aus.)

Although some overseas scholars (Odmalm, 2005; Smith, 2007) assert that migrants are often politically engaged citizens in their new country, commentators in Australia (Jupp et al., 2007, p.10) claim that, with decline in recruitment to political parties, ‘an important social element of voting becomes weaker’. According to the *Scanlon Foundation Survey* (Markus & Dharmalingam, 2011, p.x), although 86.7 per cent of the population had voted in a previous election, a much smaller proportion was engaged in action calling for more active political participation. Only 25 per cent of Australians had written or spoken to a member of parliament, and only 10.5 per cent had attended a political meeting. It may well be that professional female migrants’ attitudes to political participation mirrors that of the general Australian public. The reason for lack of interest in politics would be of interest to explore but this has to be the topic of a different research.

Conclusion

So far, this thesis has captured three moments in perceptions and reconnections in professional female migrants’ life: before migration to Australia, the first 12 months and in the present. As can be seen, most women were economically included before migration and enjoyed strong social support. The first 12 months in Australia presented obvious challenges to settling in a new country: difficulties with the recognition of overseas qualifications and experiences, finding first job and establishing new social contacts and networks. This chapter has focused on women’s experiences of social inclusion at the time of the interview. The majority of women felt settled in Australia. Their everyday challenges mirror those of the general population and women in particular, such as career growth, balancing life and work, being a single mother or raising a disabled child. In addition, professional female migrants face challenges associated with being a migrant, such as lack of social support, ageing in a different culture and experiencing racism. The next chapter continues to present the data analysis focusing on people’s sense of belonging, identity and perceptions of social inclusion.

Chapter Nine: Identity, Belonging and Social Inclusion

The previous three chapters have explored professional female migrants' experiences and perceptions of social inclusion. This chapter drills down to explore professional female migrants' perceptions of *themselves*. The literature suggests that 'identity' and 'belonging' are closely related. Identity is people's relationship with others as one can only define himself/herself in relation to other people (Weeks, 1990). Identity forms a connection between the individual and society and locates a person in social space. The sense of identity is important because of its close relation to the social context and, therefore, to a sense of inclusion/exclusion (Holland, 1997). My participants described themselves as having multiple identities mostly associated with their gender, ethnicity, social and professional status as well as their personal qualities such as being a strong, resilient and determined person. The findings support the literature that suggests that people have multiple identities with some more evident than others depending on the social circumstances they find themselves in (Stets & Burke, 2000; Thoits & Virshup, 1997; Verkuyten, 2005). The second part of the chapter brings together the data on perceptions of social inclusion and perceptions of identity to show professional female migrants' perceptions of what social inclusion means to them. Their perception of social inclusion to a great extent mirrors the meaning of social inclusion presented in the social inclusion policy frameworks. In addition, professional female migrants identified cultural inclusion and expanding social contacts beyond one's ethnic group as the necessary conditions for social inclusion to occur.

Identity and perception of self

Professional female migrants perceive themselves as having multiple identities: identities associated with their gender, identities associated with their ethnicity and identities associated with their professional status.

Being a woman; Being a mother

As discussed in previous chapters, female migrants' experiences and settlement are critically shaped by their gender (Ho, 2004). In this study, women use a variety of ways to

describe their gender identity, but the trio of ‘mother’, ‘wife’ and ‘professional’ dominated their narratives. For example, Roya defines herself by using all three terms in one sentence:

I am a mother of three. I am a wife. I am a professional woman (Roya, 57, 25 yrs. in Aus.)

Clearly, all three terms are important to Roya. They are related and represent who Roya is.

For Ayla, on the other side, the gender identity as a professional *woman* dominates:

I see myself first and foremost as a professional woman. I describe myself to others as a professional woman, who came here 20 years ago and with 20 years of professional experience in Australia (Ayla, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

Ayla introduces herself to other people as a professional woman. In contrast to Roya, who has had to renegotiate her professional status, Ayla had never lost her professional status as a result of migration. She came to Australia 20 years ago and has worked as a professional ever since.

Cecilia used words such as ‘very good’ to emphasise her sense of herself in the roles of mother and wife:

I am a very good mother. This is important to me. I am a mother. I am a wife. And I am happy (Cecilia, 47, 15 yrs. in Aus.)

Sudha described forming her gender identity through positioning herself with other women who have similar experiences:

And I found as women we are all good for the same thing. Whether it is a relationship, or struggling with children, with family (Sudha, 39, 10 yrs. in Aus.)

Participants were particularly proud of being able to successfully balance their caring responsibilities at home with their professional commitments and ambitions: this points to the gendered nature of what is understood as ‘successful migration’.

Suzie and Blaga define their gender identity using words like ‘working mum’ or ‘mum who works full time’. For Suzie, being a mother and being a working woman comes together in one definition of a ‘working mum’:

I see myself as a working mum, because I have been extremely successful in both areas. And I cannot compare both. Both are important to me (Suzie, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

This is similar to the situation for Blaga, who defines herself as mum who works full time. Both categories intertwine to define who she is:

I am a mum who works full time (Blaga, 42, 8 yrs. in Aus.)

Women used words ‘very’ and ‘good’ to emphasise their sense of themselves in the roles of wife and mother. Significantly, almost all women modified the idea of themselves as a worker in terms of gender – so they are professional women, not professionals, or they are a ‘working mum’. They express and negotiate their gender identity of mother, wife and professional woman every day of their life. This finding supports the argument presented by Finkelstein and Goodwin (2005) that individuals do not simply learn their identities. They actively negotiate, construct and express their gender identity throughout their life.

Ethnic identity

Secondly, the professional female migrants’ ethnic identity remains strong, even for those of them who have been living in Australia for more than two decades. Their ethnic identity mostly manifested through women’s attachment to their culture, language and their sense of belonging. The ethnic identity is multifaceted, as outlined by Verkuyten (2005), and refers to being (visible characteristic), feeling (commitments and importance), doing (food, participation in the church) and knowing (culture). It is also dynamic and changing. Women’s responses are the evidence of this:

I am very proud to be Egyptian Christian. It is something you cannot deny. But it is fading now. Honestly, compared to the first few years. Most of my friends are Egyptian. Not only Egyptian. Arabic in general. Because of the culture. And my

main social life in the church. I am very active member in the church (Roya, 57, 25 yrs. in Aus.)

Manel identifies with being South African of Indian origin:

Although I fully embrace the value system of Australia and I like being here, but I would probably say that I am South African of Indian origin (Manel, 44, 4 yrs. in Aus.)

Sudha, in contrast, noticed that her ethnic identity is changing:

I feel that earlier I lived with the Indian mindset. And now my friends are of very different nationalities. So, I am not able now to have that concept of isolating myself as a nationality anymore (Sudha, 39, 10 yrs. in Aus.)

Being 'transnational'

Some women revealed their transnational identities. They strongly identify with and are committed to both their own country and their host country, thus supporting the argument presented in the literature (Constant, Gataullina, & Zimmermann, 2006a; Vertovec, 2009, 2010) that the commitment to the home country does not exclude the commitment to the host country. Cecilia, for example, loves both countries:

I am from Peru. I speak a second language and I live in Australia. I love Peru, but I love Australia too (Cecilia, 47, 15 yrs. in Aus.)

Marianne, looks positively into her future in Australia, whilst without forgetting her base and roots:

I will always say that I am from South Africa because I think I will always be in my heart of hearts. That is where my base is. That is where my roots are. But I think my branches of my tree are in Australia. And I try to flower here and bear the fruit here and do the best I can here (Marianne, 47, 6 yrs. in Aus.)

Sylvia feels at home in Australia, but a part of her will always feel Italian and at home in Italy:

I do feel at home but I also feel a part of me will always feel Italian and at home in Italy (Sylvia, 43, 6 yrs. in Aus.)

Participants' comments, thus, reflect the argument presented in Chapter Three that many migrants display their transnational identities and coexisting attachments through strong identification and commitment to both their own and host countries.

Being 'a migrant'

All women exhibited resilient migrant identity although not all of them saw themselves as migrants in Australia. Verkuyten (2005) argues that social identity is negotiated between an individual and the environment and emphasises what the person is and how he or she is socially defined. Social identities are neither inevitable nor fixed but, to the contrary, are 'like unresolved issues in an ongoing debate' (Verkuyten, 2005, p.54). As a slippery concept, identities are changeable and indeed negotiable, and therefore can be deconstructed and reconstructed (Thoits & Virshup, 1997). The migration process may be considered as a strong example of an individual's ability to redefine and negotiate their changing identities. Migrant identity, therefore, would be a part of a social identity. The migrant identity is renegotiated through the process of facing a new context, new challenges, new views of self by self and by others. However, although migrant identity is not fixed and is constantly changing, most women have not transitioned from being a migrant, thus supporting the literature (Constant, Gataullina, & Zimmerman, 2006b) that women display close bonds to their native identity. Indeed some women emphasise their migrant identity. For example, Blaga has been living in Australia for 8 years:

I always see myself as a migrant. And I am very proud being a migrant who came from Macedonia (Blaga, 42, 8 yrs. in Aus.)

Amira talked about her feelings of being a migrant and the comfort she finds when surrounded by other migrants like her. She belongs to her specific migrant society:

I am a migrant. My place of work gives me that protection. Comfort. Being in the workplace where everyone is like you. But going out to mainstream is a huge challenge because I am going to step out of my comfort zone. I feel migrant being outside (Amira, 44, 15 yrs. in Aus.)

Interestingly, Blaga and Amira not only accept their migrant identity, but also find a comfort in being surrounded by other migrants.

Being a migrant is often associated with being a different or coming from a different culture and having different values. Nadine, for example, sees herself as a migrant because her values are different from those in Australia:

I see myself as a migrant because my values are different from the wider society. I respect that people have a right to live their lives by their own values but it does make me feel different. I am very proud of myself that I have developed a respect for other cultures (Nadine, 45, 14 yrs. in Aus.)

Most of the existing literature does not engage with questions about assuming or rejecting a migrant identity, and thus what migrant identity means goes unchallenged. This study, however, did not take migrant identity for granted, but sought to interrogate what it meant for the participants. Some women voiced their concerns regarding migrant identity being forced on them by the members of the society. The concept of being perceived by others as 'migrant' challenged women's self-identity, particularly those who mostly identified themselves in terms of their personal and professional significance:

The identity of a 'migrant' is certainly what I acquired without asking for it. I see it as a part of the package of the process I chose to undertake 14 years ago. My close friends can see the person behind this migrant, but not the general population (Nadine, 45, 14 yrs. in Aus.)

I had to do a second degree because I had to define myself. I am very ambitious. I feel Australian. Middle class Australian. And I like to help people. I am a helper. Professional and skilled- you have to be both...I do not see myself as a migrant. I do not believe the migrant is a person who has an accent. I feel migrant is an identity I

have not chosen. It is an identity forced on me. People want to be different, that is why they put labels (Shelo, 50, 21 yrs. in Aus.)

In summary, while some women appear to embrace their migrant identity, others reject being defined as migrants in Australia. This finding can, firstly, reinforce the argument in the literature (Verkuyten, 2005) that identities are constantly constructed and reconstructed. Women's migrant identity and picture of self are changing as they actively negotiate their integration and settlement into Australian society. Secondly, this finding challenges the literature that assumes that migrants freely and willingly accept their migrant identity. This supports the argument that identity is not fixed or natural. Instead it is constructed, changeable and unstable (Taylor, 1994, cited in Odmalm, 2005).

Professional identity

Some women, however, do not identify themselves with a migrant identity. To the contrary, they see themselves in relation to their professional and personal qualities. For example, as some women said:

I do not see myself as a migrant here. I see myself as a social worker, I am a mother, and I am a wife and I am happy. I am a very good mother. This is more important to me. And I am also a very good professional (Cecilia, 47, 15 yrs. in Aus.)

I am a professional woman. I do not see myself as a migrant. Migrant is a person who settled in a new country permanently. I do not see my life in Australia as a permanent settlement. At present I just live and work here (Maria, 48, 11 yrs. in Aus.)

I see myself as a competent worker in my field. I rarely think of myself in 'migrant' terms, although my accent is still a giveaway (Catherine, 54, 18 yrs. in Aus.)

I do not see myself as a migrant. I would describe myself using my qualities, personality attributes and job. I would say ex-South African (Jodie, 28, 5 yrs. in Aus.)

As evident, professional identity is very important to women. It appears that the professional identity overrides other forms of identity such as a migrant identity. Being a professional makes these women less migrant. The literature provides the following explanation of this phenomenon. Firstly, although the stereotype of 'typical' migrant woman is changing, it is still greatly associated with poverty, peasant origins, little education, poor English and lack of professional skills (Hawthorne, 1996). Thus, if you are higher class, you are less migrant. Secondly, as discussed in Chapter Three, identities are not fixed and are part of an imagined community that are constantly constructed and reconstructed. According to Finkelstein and Goodwin (2005), ethnic boundaries are more silent in some situations than other boundaries such as social class and occupation. Therefore, some participants prefer to underplay their migration status for its association with low class and emphasise their professional identity for its association with higher class.

As mentioned earlier, most participants described themselves as having multiple identities or combined identities:

Every day, every day I shock myself. Yes, undoubtedly, my strengths have always been there. Migration brought out my independent strengths, it brought out huge amount of strengths in me, in my parenting skills as well. Some leadership skills, taking charge. Independence. So, it is bringing out qualities in me that were dormant within me, that are now active. It brought up humility in me as well. A sense of humbleness as well. It brought in me this deepest sense of respect as well for human beings. I became a better person. I became a survivor (Manel, 44, 4 yrs. in Aus.)

I am determined, optimistic, and very strong. Professional and skilled- you have to have both (Shelo, 50, 21 yrs. in Aus.)

Sudha described herself as being an ethnic, a migrant, a professional:

I am a migrant. Australian national with Indian ethnicity. Professional. I look brown on the outside, but I moved away from a lot of Indians. And I feel foreign (Sudha, 39, 10 yrs. in Aus.)

In summary, it could be said that the majority of women displayed multiple identities as they have been managing commitments to both their home and host countries. Although all of them identify with culture and values of the host country, they remain strongly committed to the culture and values of their home countries. These findings support the two dimensional theory of ethnic identity that defines ethnic identity as a balance between commitment to and identification with the culture of the country of origin and commitment to and identification with the culture and society of the host country (Constant et al., 2006a).

Belonging

This research has a particular interest in understanding the importance and the degree of professional female migrants' sense of belonging in Australia. As outlined in previous chapters, the literature (Kelly, 2009; Verkuyten, 2005; Bromley, 2000) offers a variety of concepts to describe individuals' attachments to place, culture and environment. The concept of belonging is presented in the literature as a multilayered and complex phenomenon that may manifest itself through a sense of belonging, multiple belonging, transnational belonging, and unbelonging or dislocation. Within this framework, participants' responses to their sense of belonging could be grouped into four major themes:

- 1) feelings of belonging;
- 2) feelings of unbelonging;
- 3) feelings of partial or multiple belongings, and
- 4) feelings of dislocation.

Half of the people interviewed stated that they feel they belong in Australia. Interestingly, some women who saw themselves as migrants felt they belong to a broader Australian community. For example, Lorena, who did see herself as a migrant and did not identify herself as Australian, said that she felt she belong here:

Yes, I feel I belong here (Lorena, 54, 25 yrs. in Aus.)

In the case of Lorena, it seems possible that the feelings of being a foreigner may coexist with feelings of belonging to the broader Australian society. As highlighted in a previous chapter, Lorena's experience of settling in Australia was a challenging one. She described

her experience as being ‘very, very difficult’. She has not been able to work in her occupation. Lorena also experienced racism. According to Lorena, it took her 14 years ‘to start living in Australia’. Nevertheless, she is now working in a multicultural environment and is in a multicultural intimate relationship. The literature (Verkuyten, 2005; Bromley, 2000) describes the phenomenon of being a migrant with feelings of ‘partial belonging’, arguing that although all humans want to belong and feel at home, a full sense of belonging can be compromised by entering a different culture, lack of recognition and respect, negative stereotypes and discrimination. Alternatively, living in a multicultural environment does not require migrants to conform to one cultural identity (Kelly, 2009). Lorena’s strong identification with her ethnic identity coincides with feeling of being at home in Australia. This phenomenon has been identified in the literature as ‘transnational belonging’ (Blom, 1999; Favell, 1999; Kelly, 2009) suggesting that individuals can have several coexisting attachments.

Rosa, on the other side, feels absolutely she belongs here:

Absolutely, I feel I belong here (Rosa, 54, 19 yrs. in Aus.)

Cecilia did not see herself as a migrant. She felt she belongs in Australia:

I am an insider. I live here. This is my country (Cecilia, 47, 15 yrs. in Aus.)

Nadine, who saw herself as a migrant and raised concerns about the migrant identity being forced on her by members of the society, nevertheless stated that she developed a sense of belonging to the Australian society:

I have developed a reasonable level of a sense of belonging to this country (Nadine, 45, 14 yrs. in Aus.)

However, a few women reported not feeling they belong in Australia. For example, Sudha, who previously identified herself as being a migrant here:

I feel foreign (Sudha, 39, 10 yrs. in Aus.)

Maria, who did not see herself as a migrant and viewed migration as a temporary move,

consequently did not feel she belongs in Australia:

I do not belong here (Maria, 48, 11 yrs. in Aus.)

In contrast, a few women, however, reported coexisting attachments to their old and new countries. The literature refers to coexisting attachments as *transnational* or multiple belongings. These women reflected on their feelings of being a citizen of the world and belonging to the world rather than to a particular country. For example, Ayla, who described herself having a migrant identity, experienced belonging depending on the social environment in relation to membership of the 'specific' Australian society:

We have a lot of non-Turkish and Anglo-Saxon friends and participate in community activities, but there is often a bit of a feeling of being an outsider... I love living here and by large feel included but there are times when the conversations make me feel different and not one of the group (Ayla, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

It is interesting to see that for Ayla transnational belonging equals unbelonging:

I do not belong anywhere. Neither back in Turkey, nor here. I suppose I have dealt with it by focusing on being a world citizen and thinking that I belong to both cultures or that I could function across cultures (Ayla, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

For Olga, there is no need to belong:

I do not feel I belong. And there is no need for me to belong. I am comfortable. Yes, I would like to go to Europe. It is not difficult for me to get moving again. I am adventurous. If opportunities are good. I am not attached to Australia (Olga, 49, 9 yrs. in Aus.)

Olga does not feel she belongs in Australia, and she is comfortable with not belonging. There is no need for Olga to belong. Olga has no attachment to Australia. She could easily move to another country, if opportunities are good. Olga's response can be explained by the phenomenon of cosmopolitanism previously discussed in the literature chapters. The literature (Kendall et. al., 2009, p.152) present the cosmopolitan as an individual who is

‘cold’ rather than ‘hot’ in terms of loyalties and who finds ambiguity and uncertainty challenging and interesting. It is unclear, however, whether Olga expresses her cosmopolitan viewpoint or whether it is a pragmatic attitude to living wherever good opportunities present themselves. It is likely to be a combination of both.

Some women, on the other hand, talked about feelings of dislocation rather than belonging to this country. Manel, for example, who described herself having multiple identities, but not being a migrant, saw herself belonging to her family unit and not anywhere else. In relation to her migration experience, she felt living in limbo after migrating to Australia 4 years ago:

Four years down the line, I am still a little bit in limbo. I feel more belonging to the universe, I suppose. I belong to my family. I know I may die in this country not really belonging anywhere, other than to my family unit (Manel, 44, 4 yrs. in Aus.)

Amira, on the other side, has lost her sense of belonging as a result of migration:

It is hard to say where I belong, because I do not know where I belong (Amira, 44, 15 yrs. in Aus.)

An important conclusion could be reached based on participants’ responses. Although all women demonstrated a high level of economic participation in Australian society, it seems that economic participation itself does not guarantee developing a sense of belonging to this country. Being a professional, on the other hand, provided women either with a chance to be included or the opportunity to be or not to be included. We turn now to what it means for women to feel included.

What does it mean to be a professional female migrant in Australia?

The concept of the professional female migrant in Australia has been characterised by participants through the following features: lack of social support, being in a similar economic position as professional female Australians or professional male migrants, managing challenges such as tough competition and underemployment, and possessing strong coping skills. Thus, some women said that there is no significant difference between

professional female migrants and professional female Australians or professional male migrants. As Jodie and Sylvia stated:

I feel the same as a female professional Australian (Jodie, 28, 5 yrs. in Aus.)

Australia is a country that guarantees gender equality, so I do not think that my experience of migration was different from a male migrant. Australia gives me all the opportunities I need to be successful professionally and socially (Sylvia, 43, 6 yrs. in Aus.)

However, where differences were referred to, the distinctions were all about being competitive, strong and resourceful:

It means you are strong, competent, resourceful, resilient woman (Sudha, 39, 10 yrs. in Aus.)

I think if you are in a profession where there is a lack of skills from the Australian born and where females are underrepresented, you may have a competitive edge. Otherwise, it can be very tough and I think most female professional migrants get underemployed (Ayla, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

Competition is everywhere. You have to prove your skills. You have to fight for everything, whether you are professional or not professional (Olga, 49, 9 yrs. in Aus.)

You have to be determined, optimistic, and very strong. Professional and skilled- you have to have both (Shelo, 50, 21 yrs. in Aus.)

The above quotes highlight two distinctive things: firstly, that personality matters and, secondly, how tough and competitive the Australian environment is.

Participants' recommendations: What will make the immigration process successful?

As discussed in Chapter Two, the literature defines successful immigration as a process associated with migrants' movement toward full participation and equitable access to Australian society and depends on the conjunction of the migrant's life cycle (age and family status), individual characteristics (education, occupation, wealth and language skills), and Australia's economic cycle (labour market demand, business opportunities, availability of housing and the supply of welfare benefits). The following major themes have been identified from participants' interviews in relation to what will make the immigration process successful: personal strengths and determination as an essential part of successful immigration and settlement; support including financial, social support and social participation; strong language skills; strong educational credentials including 'right' qualifications; and relevant work experience and economic participation/job acquisition. Most women discussed successful immigration and settlement as a result of a combination of those factors rather than some individual factor in isolation. Overwhelmingly, personal qualities of being resilient, strong and determined have been identified by women as crucial in making the immigration process a success story. Manel, for example, talked about needing to have an internal drive:

You have to have an 'internal drive'. I started to apply for anything and everything although worked in a very specialised area prior to coming. I applied to work with alcoholics and to work with children as well. I have sent out numerous, numerous resumes. It was almost like I had to be a chameleon, a chameleon that can change its colour. I said to my husband: 'I am starting to think like a chameleon now'. So, it is up to individual and the drive you have within you. And I speak reasonably good English. It is amazing even though the person may have a sound knowledge base, but supposedly not projecting it well enough because of the limitations of language (Manel, 44, 4 yrs. in Aus.)

Sudha, Cecilia and Shelo spoke about determination, being proactive and demonstrating personal strengths:

I think I was a success story. We are all migrants a success story because we are

determined. For me it is a combination of factors: language is important, recognised qualification, being proactive, being determined and personal qualities and strengths (Sudha, 39, 10 yrs. in Aus.)

I think anyone can come and be very successful in this country. It is all up to you... And be positive and optimistic. Do not get depressed and frustrated. Take time to look for resources. Do it for yourself. Go and find what is available to you. Everyone can be successful. It is all up to you. It is all inside you. You have to be very determined to fight and get what you want (Cecilia, 47, 15 yrs. in Aus.)

I do not think English as a first language would make it easier. I do not think language is a critical issue. It is more than language. Take initiative and do it for yourself. You have to have this driving force. Do not take 'No' for answer. Be arrogant and assertive. It is different for men and women. I think women have much stronger drive than men. It takes a lot of internal, personal strengths to make it work (Shelo, 50, 21 yrs. in Aus.)

Lorena commented on how personal and emotional insecurities complicated her settlement experience:

Many times we do not have to wait for the opportunity to come to us. We have to look for the opportunity. I can see now that because of insecurity and me emotionally struggling, I put more barriers to the settlement process (Lorena, 54, 25 yrs. in Aus.)

The importance of support was obvious:

Support at the beginning. Two years period when Centrelink is not helping is very difficult. Migrants need someone to help them and to keep them in a paid work at the beginning. There was no information provided by the embassy on how to start a new life in Australia (Blaga, 42, 8 yrs. in Aus.)

More assistance, material and emotional, upfront, when people need it most (Ayla, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

Good informal support. Multicultural support on settlement, culture, seeking jobs, etc (Jodie, 28, 5 yrs. in Aus.)

Furthering the possibilities of social inclusiveness for migrants from all backgrounds. Educating general population in seeing migrants as people with skills who contribute to the wider stream (Nadina, 45, 14 yrs. in Aus.)

Getting into employment in another country, even in the same career, it would be helpful, perhaps, if something could be offered. Something like a crash course, or similar to get up to speed with technology, resources, just how things work. Before stepping into the first job. I had to reinvent the wheel and find everything for myself. But also the basics, like how society works. Acculturation. The same thing for the children. For them to find out how things work. Social practices. Like 'bring the plate'. A sense of humour is different. It is about understanding the way of thinking (Marianne, 47, 6 yrs. in Aus.)

Strong language skills were identified by participants as a key factor in determining the immigration settlement process outcome:

Great barrier for migrants is language. Language is huge. There are other things associated with language. Because of the language, migrants do not know about their rights. They are not aware of the services available to them, the information, the opportunities, how the system works. Especially hospital and health systems. The health system is totally different to many countries. Language links to other aspects of life (Lorena, 54, 25 yrs. in Aus.)

Language is a big advantage. Number one is language. My believe is that language is power. Once you know the language, you know how to talk, how to write a letter. You speak, you argue, you read, you communicate. This is language. I think the language is a major point of success in this country. When you have the language, you do not have to be perfect. With language, you need to have confidence in yourself. Personal ability (Roya, 57, 25 yrs. in Aus.)

In addition to strong language skills, the 'right' qualification and work experience would

contribute to migrants' successful settlement experience:

In my circumstances, the knowledge of English was a big bonus. I think that if I do not speak English, it would be an absolutely daunting experience. And you have to be strong and have a qualification that is recognised in Australia. We had work experience that allowed us to apply for jobs (Rhani, 46, 5 yrs. in Aus.)

In summary, the professional female migrants identified that personal qualities of strength and resilience, strong English language skills, 'right' qualification and work experience as well strong social support would make a positive contribution to making the immigration process a success story.

The meaning of social inclusion for professional female migrants in Australia

As discussed in Chapter One, social inclusion refers to a policy focus on enabling the full participation of citizens in the life of the nation including economic, social, cultural and political participation. However, how is it understood by the professional female migrants? What do they think social inclusion means to them? This section attempts to answer these questions in participants' own words.

All participants highly value the need and advantages of being socially included in Australia. Their responses on their perception of what social inclusion means for them were analysed and could be presented grouped into three themes. The themes are presented in order of importance to the participants:

- social support and social network;
- cultural participation; and
- economic participation.

The themes that emerged from women's responses are closely associated with the Australian social inclusion framework (Australian Government, 2009). However, an additional component of cultural participation was identified as a critical part of the social inclusion experience. This section of the chapter will present professional female migrants' perceptions of social inclusion in greater detail given the significance of the experience of being included for both migrants and the broader society.

Most people I interviewed feel included with only some feeling uncertain about their relationship with the Australian society. It is important to mention that more women felt included than belonging. Nadine, for example, talked about the importance of people feeling socially included in society:

I think it is extremely important for people to feel socially included and to participate to the extent they feel comfortable (Nadine, 45, 14 yrs. in Aus.)

Social support that includes social participation as well as maintaining and expanding social networks has been identified as a key component of the social inclusion agenda. Many women talked about strategies they utilised to include themselves in community life. For example, Catherine and Jodie disclosed their ways of reaching inclusion through opportunities and engagement:

I make opportunities through friends and starting a book club and a film club. I feel I am included within the Australian society as I am working, can speak the language and know my way around the system and how to find information that I need (Catherine, 54, 18 yrs. in Aus.)

I feel included. Social inclusion is encouraged through the use of humour and meeting people on common ground (Jodie, 28, 5 yrs. in Aus.)

Shelo revealed a similar approach to achieve social inclusion by being proactive and taking the initiative:

I feel included. I do not want people to include me. I chose to be included and I find ways to include myself. I do a lot of volunteer work. I involved in daughter's school. I chose to get engaged in my church and in my community organisation. I am a member of the Australian Services Union (Shelo, 50, 21 yrs. in Aus.)

Marianne emphasised the significance for migrants to be proactive themselves and to reach out for opportunities to engage with a broader community:

I think on the way it also depends on the person. If you do not want to mix with

other Australians, if you just keep to your group, you will never integrate.
(Marianne, 47, 6 yrs. in Aus.)

Cultural participation that incorporates feelings of belonging, good English skills and expanding contacts beyond one's ethnic group was identified by participants as an essential component of the social inclusion theme. As discussed earlier, cultural participation is often interwoven with social participation. Such, Rumaliza and Blaga emphasised the importance of language and cultural interactions:

I strongly believe that new arrivals must break out and seek opportunities to mix with society but we all must be patient and tolerant of each other language and cultural needs. It is good for all cultures to share their customs and beliefs - it makes an interesting life (Rumaliza, 40, 11 yrs. in Aus.)

Language is the most important thing to be successful and to be a part of the society. If you do not have a language, then you exclude yourself from the society (Blaga, 42, 8 yrs. in Aus.)

Rosa discussed her experience of breaking cultural differences:

I try hard to fit in. I go to the Australian church. When I say: 'My sons married Australian girls', people say: 'Or, no. They have this different culture'. But they are fantastic. Help people to see successful stories within the community (Rosa, 54, 19 yrs. in Aus.)

Here is what Lorena had to say regarding her perception of social inclusion. Lorena separates social inclusion as a higher psychological need compared with basic survival needs:

I think this is very personal. You feel when you do not just do the basic survival things, but you start to explore other opportunities for interest, for hobbies, etc. This is an indicator for me that someone is living here and feeling being part of the society. Not just when you work. I feel included when I do drama. I belong to the theatre group. Food, money, job are just basic survival. Social inclusion is a step

further. The different level of need. It is more a psychological need, rather than physical need. Higher level of need. I, for example, do not feel fully being part of this country. But I feel comfortable (Lorena, 54, 25 yrs. in Aus.)

Participants also stated that employment, secure job and economic participation play a fundamental part within the social inclusion context:

To be socially included the person needs to have a secure job and social support (Lorena, 54, 25 yrs. in Aus.)

I am included through work (Maria, 48, 11 yrs. in Aus.)

Yes, I feel included. All my workplace people are Australian people. Workmates are very important. My close friends are at work (Suzie, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

An interesting perspective on social inclusion was presented by Sylvia who asserts that the level of social inclusion is determined by the individual's perception of freedom and their ability to make decisions free of cultural and social limitations:

I definitely feel included with a great circle of friends and the possibility to make any personal and professional choice I want. My level of inclusion is determined by my perception of freedom. I am able to make my own decisions and not being afraid to make them. I can choose to be alone but, if I want, I have a lot of support from friends and indirectly from my family in Italy. I do understand that people with different perceptions or coming from countries where they are used to certain cultural or family constraints do not have the same idea of social inclusion as me. The need of a supportive community and help in creating social support and integration depends on the individual. Social exclusion is given by physical, mental, cultural limitations of an individual to express themselves, seek and obtain social support (Sylvia, 43, 6 yrs. in Aus.)

Thus, the meaning of social inclusion for participants to a great extent mirrors the meaning of social inclusion presented in social inclusion policy approaches. In addition, the professional female migrants identified cultural participation and expanding contacts

beyond one's ethnic group as necessary conditions for social inclusion to occur. Significantly, the participants did not equate social inclusion to belonging. This argument will be reinforced further in the conclusion chapter.

Different stories/ Different experiences of social inclusion

The literature suggests that economic participation remains the most significant prerequisite for social inclusion. This research, however, may challenge this assumption as only one third of professional female migrants displayed a deep level of social inclusion in Australian society despite all but one being in paid employment for an extensive period of time. Cultural differences and the experiences of racism seem to impede inclusion even among mostly integrated migrants in Australia. As social inclusion refers to participation in economic, social and cultural life, the criteria of: working with cultures; socialising with cultures; experience of racism; and the self-perception of being included or excluded has been applied to determine participants' level of social inclusion in Australia. This concept of inclusion as participation is very different to existing ways of defining inclusion as integration into the mainstream society. Most importantly, the typology developed out of this study takes multicultural society as a given. It characterises the society in which migrant women will be participating to be multicultural. It includes working and socialising with people of diverse backgrounds.

The findings revealed several distinctive types of inclusion associated with participants' experiences of life and settlement in Australia: namely *deep inclusion*, *borderline inclusion*, *marginal inclusion* and *shallow inclusion* (Table 21). There appeared to be no evident association found between the level of inclusion and English being a first language. The length of residence in this country also seems not to be a determining factor in the level of inclusion experiences.

Table 21: Experiences of Social Inclusion

Type of inclusion	Patterns of working with different cultures	Patterns of socialising with different cultures	Experience of racism	Self-perception of 'social inclusion'
Deep inclusion	Working with other cultures	Socialising with other cultures	No experience of racism	See themselves as socially included
Borderline inclusion	Working with other cultures	Moderate social contact with other cultures	Some experience of racism	See themselves as socially included
Marginal inclusion	Working with other cultures or migrants	Socialising only with own culture	Some experience of racism	Do not see themselves as socially included
Shallow inclusion	Working with migrants only or not working at all	Socialising only with own culture	Strong Experience of racism	Do not see themselves as socially included

Deep inclusion

As mentioned earlier, the experiences of one third of professional female migrants participated in this study can be portrayed as experiences of *deep inclusion*. Deep inclusion can be characterised by the individual's experience of working and socialising with different cultures including participation in multicultural leisure activities, and multicultural intimate relationships. Deeply included individuals have not experienced racism in Australia and perceive themselves as socially included.

Catherine, 54 years old, came to Australia 18 years ago. Catherine currently works with other cultures and has many contacts beyond her ethnic group. She feels included and belonging:

I feel I am included within Australian society as I am working, can speak the language and know my way around the system and how to find information that I need. I feel I belong in Australia... I make opportunities through friends, and starting a book club and a film club, but I do not gravitate to people from my country of origin... I am able to be what I want to be and do the most of what I want to do (Catherine, 54, 18yrs in Aus.)

Cecilia, 47 years old, moved to Australia 15 years ago. She works with other cultures, has extensive social contacts with the broader community and feels deeply included in Australian society:

I feel being part of the community. I feel included. Or, yes, yes. And my family too. I guess because I have two kids and I have been through sport, church, community, all those activities at school. I have few friends from Peru who speaks Spanish, but mainly my friends are from different cultures. I love this country. I am very happy here. My family is happy. I am an insider. This is my country now. I am happy here. I am staying here (Cecilia, 47, 15 yrs. in Aus.)

Shelo, 50 year old, came to Australia 21 years ago. Shelo also works with other cultures and takes the initiative to participate in multicultural social events:

I have more friends from other backgrounds rather than my own. I have really moved. I have a lot of friends... I definitely feel being a part of the society. I feel included. I do not want people to include me. I chose to be included and I find ways to include myself. I do a lot of volunteer work. I involved in daughter's school. I chose to get engaged. In my church. In my community organisation. I am a member of the Australian Service Union. I have chosen to make Australia home, to be a part of the society (Shelo, 50, 21 yrs. in Aus.)

Rumaliza, 40 years old, arrived in Australia 11 years ago. Her experience in Australia is another excellent example of deep inclusion in society. Rumaliza revealed that she did not have a strong identity in terms of culture and country because she lived in different countries over the years. She now works with other cultures and socialises with other cultures including participation in leisure activities. Rumaliza definitely feels she is 100%

Australian:

I feel as if I am 100% Australian- I have citizenship and a passport. I am a keen member of a swimming club and active in the academic and professional world of nursing. I have Australian friends and many of my friends are immigrants from Japan, Europe, USA and Canada. I like it that way because I like to understand different cultures if I can (Rumaliza, 40, 11yrs in Aus.)

Marianne, 47 years old, moved to Australia only 6 years ago. She works with a range of cultures, participates deeply in the Australian life and perceives herself as settled and included:

I really feel we are a part of the Australian society. I work. My children go the school. They mix with their friends. At church we integrate. In sport. My children play sport. They integrate on that level. My husband sits in the choir. Community choir. In that sense he integrates. I also did study through University. In that way it also helped me a great deal. I think the opportunities are there. Everywhere where we wanted to participate, we were really welcomed with open arms. This is how I experience it (Marianne, 47, 6 yrs. in Aus.)

Sylvia, 43 years old, arrived in Australia just 6 years ago. She views her migration experience as a successful adventure at both personal and professional levels. Sylvia marvels at the Australian multicultural environment and is absolutely content with her Australian life. She now works with other cultures and enjoys multicultural social contacts:

I probably have more contact with people of different backgrounds. My workplace and the place where I live are very multicultural and this is one of the things that I enjoy. My local council is one of the most proactive in the matter of multiculturalism. I like Australia a lot. I like its freedom and its multiculturalism. I definitely feel included with a great circle of friends and the possibility to make any personal or professional choice I want (Sylvia, 43, 6 yrs. in Aus.)

Borderline inclusion

Eight participants displayed *borderline inclusion*. Borderline inclusion can be characterised by individual's experience of working with, but having only moderate social contacts, with different cultures. The participants who fall into this category may also work with other cultures and socialise with other cultures, but experience racism in their Australian life. This is an interesting and important finding that people may feel included and have a sense of belonging while also experiencing racism. Would the experience of racism otherwise jeopardise inclusion? Can a migrant woman feel included if she experiences racism? Can racism and inclusion coexist? These important questions of racism and its impact on inclusion will be discussed further in the conclusion chapter.

Jodie, 28 years old, is an example of borderline inclusion. The journey of settlement in Australia has not been easy for Jodie who came from a different culture and at first experienced social isolation and sadness over leaving friends, family, home and her culture behind. However, just in 5 years, Jodie has made a remarkable adjustment to the Australian way of life. She works now with different cultures and her partner is Australian. It was the experience of racism that placed Jodie in this category of borderline inclusion:

I feel settled and I like Australia. Australia is now my home. I feel included and belonged, however this is bizarre as Australia is such a multicultural society there is still a high level of racism. I would even go so far as saying that racism in Australia is higher than in South Africa (Jodie, 28, 5yrs. in Aus.)

Roya, 57 years old, has been in Australia for 25 years. She works with other cultures, but socialises only with Arabic people from her church. Roya feels included but still in spirit she is fighting as she has experienced racism during her settlement in this country:

I feel included. I have a good job. Most of my friends are Egyptians. Not only Egyptians. Arabic in general. Because of the culture. And my main social life is the church. I feel being a part of the society. Still fighting though. But different fighting... As a migrant, if you do not put 150%, you are not even good enough. We all speak English, but their language like a jargon, we do not understand it. Because you do not speak this language and because you do not participate in their stupid

funny things, you can be excluded... I tried to do a Master Degree of Counselling. I did try. I went to Uni but I did not have enough luck. A lecturer was very racist (Roya, 57, 25 yrs. in Aus.)

Sudha, 39 years old, moved to Australia 10 years ago. Sudha works with other cultures, but her social contacts have been mostly with other migrants. She feels foreign:

I feel Indians back home progressed more than Indians who are here. Indians here are more stuck because we will never be Australians (Sudha, 39, 10 yrs. in Aus.)

Suzie, 57 years old, has been in Australia for 20 years. She works with other cultures and feels a part of the society, however has little contact with other cultures outside her work environment:

I have been a doctor for 35 years. All my workplace people are Australian people. Workmates are very important. I feel Australian. This is my home. We also have a strong Sri-Lanka Tamil community. I take part in that community because of the culture and religion. (Suzie, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

Ayla, 57 years old, settled in Australia 20 years ago. Ayla works with other cultures and has extensive social contacts with other cultures. However, she often feels an outsider and not one of the group:

Remaining in contact with my language and Turkish friends gives me a solid sense of belonging. We have a lot of non-Turkish and Anglo-Saxon friends and participate in community activities, but there is often a bit of a feeling of being an outsider. Maintaining connection with people of a similar background and who have shared similar experiences makes me better centred... I love living here and by and large feel included but there are times when the conversations make me feel different and not one of the group... It has at times left me thinking I do not belong anywhere, neither back in Turkey, not here (Ayla, 57, 20 yrs. in Aus.)

Nadine, 45 years old, came to Australia 14 years ago. Nadine works with cultures and takes part in community programs and festival celebrations. Nevertheless, she is acutely aware of

value differences between her own and Australian culture. One day she may decide to return back to India:

I participate in community programs, festival celebrations and individual socialising. I am well knit into the broader Australian society. I personally do not feel socially excluded as I have made efforts to join community groups and reach out to my community through my profession. Ageing in a different culture, though, is one of my fears. I may feel more comfortable in my country of origin as I age... I see myself as a migrant, because some of my values are different from the wider society. I respect that people have a right to live their lives by their own values, but it does make me feel different. I am very proud of myself that I have developed a respect for other cultures (Nadine, 45, 14 yrs. in Aus.)

Rosa, 54 years old, arrived in Australia 19 years ago. Rosa works with migrants and has only moderate contacts with other cultures outside her work. Both of her sons married Australian women. Despite her working and social life being mostly surrounded by migrants, apart of her contact with her daughters-in-law, Rosa feels included and belonging. She feels Australian:

I love Australia. Both of my sons married Australians. Instead of having dilemma 'I am lost between two cultures', we took it as a blessing we have two cultures to choose from. I am Australian. When people ask me: 'Where are you from?' I say: 'From Riverwood'. I am an Australian with a black hair. With an accent. I belong here. Absolutely. I try hard to fit in. I go to Australian church, for example (Rosa, 54, 19 yrs. in Aus.)

Marginal inclusion

The experiences of five participants can be portrayed as *marginal inclusion* that can be characterised by an individual's experiences of working with other cultures, but socialising only with their own culture, or working with migrants and having limited social contact with other cultures. The participants who identified with a marginal level of inclusion usually do not see themselves as included. They may also experience racism in their settlement in Australia.

Lorena, 54 years old, has been in Australia for 25 years. She works with other cultures, however socialises mostly with other migrants and does not see herself as Australian.

Lorena also experienced racism:

I do not identify myself as Australian. I identify myself as Latin American. I do not feel Australia is my home. And I do not feel being fully a part of this country. I am aware of my limitations. For example, the limitation of English language. I repress sometimes. Before it was more. I repress myself to participate, to voice my opinion. My friends, however, are from different cultures. Not just Spanish speaking. My boyfriend is from Iran. Now I am living in a multicultural world... Australia, however, is a racist country. Some people are racists, but not everyone. Even some other ethnic groups. Coming back to label migrants (Lorane, 54, 25 yrs. in Aus.)

Rhani, 46 years old, moved to this country only 5 years ago. Although Rhani has achieved a remarkable success in her career in Australia by reaching a senior management position after just 5 years of being here, she remains strongly connected and belonging to her culture. Rhani has also experienced racism in Australia:

I do have friends from different backgrounds. I actually do not integrate that much with Indian South African community. I have a strong connection with my family in South Africa though... I do not know if I feel included. And I do not know if I want to. A part of me feels if I do become Australian, and here come the Australian values, then I do have my own. I do not think I am ready to separate. I thought it is time to integrate. But I still feel I have made a sacrifice. I made the sacrifice, but nobody put a ball and chain on my leg or handcuffed me and brought me here. I came on my own... And I do not like racism. There is a lot of racism in Australia. And especially in big departments like RTA. They tend to practice it. And at school. Australia is more racist than South Africa. There is discrimination of people looking down on different people (Rhani, 46, 5 yrs. in Aus.)

Maria, 48 years old, moved to Australia 11 years ago. She works with other cultures and respects cultural differences. Maria's integration with the broader community has been predominantly through employment and training opportunities. She possesses a strong cultural identity and socialises mostly with her ethnic friends who share her values and

worldview:

It is very, very important for me to remain in contact with my culture, language, people. Only here, in Australia, very far from home, I realised how much I love my country, my culture. I do not belong here in Australia, although I am included at work. I like being an outsider. I like being a foreigner. I think it is up to people to make themselves included or excluded. You need to make it work for you (Maria, 48, 11yrs. in Aus.)

Manel, 44 years of age, came to Australia only 4 years ago. Although Manel works with other cultures and has a broad circle of friends, she feels living in limbo. The experiences of racism and of being uprooted place Manel into the category of marginal inclusion:

Although I fully embrace the value system of Australia and I like being here, I would probably say that I am South African of Indian origin. Four years down the line I am still a little bit in limbo. So, I feel more belonging to the universe. I belong to my family. What about the sense of uprootedness. As long as you have distinguishing features that make you different, even you could be living here for generations and generations, you still feel different. I think racism plays a role too. A lot of us will not say it. It is a hush reality. The discrimination is very much alive. I think at school it is very much alive, which also gets you thinking as a parent, because you know what you have removed your children from and if they still experience it then you start to ask yourself: 'Have I done the right thing here?' (Manel, 44, 4yrs. in Aus.)

Blaga, 42 years old, arrived in Australia 8 years ago. Blage works with migrants and socialises predominantly with her ethnic group:

I like the country. Many people say: 'There is discrimination and this and that'. I have not experienced any discrimination. I feel I am a part of the Australian society. I am very proud being a migrant (Blaga, 42, 8 yrs. in Aus.)

Shallow inclusion

Finally, only two participants can be portrayed as displaying *shallow inclusion* that can be

characterised by working with migrants, or not working at all, as well as having social contacts predominantly only with their own ethnic group. These participants retain strong cultural identification and perceive themselves as not included.

Olga, 49 years old, moved to Australia 9 years ago. Olga does not work as she cares for her son and is well aware of cultural differences between her home and host countries. She does not feel being attached to Australia as she could easily move again to another country. Olga does not feel connected and there is no need for her to connect. She feels comfortable not being included nor belonging in Australia:

My culture is so different compared to English culture. I had problems with my son. No-one was helping me. They were trying to push me out. I found people being indifferent. A lot of people are cruel. I had to fight. I do not think I belong to Australia. I belong to God. And there is no need for me to belong. I am comfortable (Olga, 49, 9 yrs. in Aus.)

Amira, 44 years old, settled in Australia 15 years ago. Amira works with migrants and her friends are only people from her cultural background. Her comfort zone is with the migrant community. Amira feels as a migrant being outside:

My friends are Macedonians because of the culture and the language. I do have other friends at work, but they are colleagues. Not really people that I invite to my place. My comfort zone is with migrant community. I feel migrant being outside. I am living with ethnic community more than with Australian community (Amira, 44, 15 yrs. in Aus.)

In summary, the analysis of professional female migrants' experiences of inclusion revealed that one third of professional female migrants developed a deep inclusion in Australian society, one third developed a borderline inclusion and one third developed a marginal and shallow inclusion.

Conclusion

This chapter presented an analysis of professional female migrants' sense of identity,

belonging and social inclusion in Australian society. The majority of women displayed multiple identities mostly associated with their gender, ethnicity, social and professional status as well as their personal qualities such as being a strong, determined and resilient person. Half of the women interviewed developed a sense of attachment or belonging to Australia with one third of all professional female migrants who participated in this study displaying features of deep inclusion. Professional female migrants experience different levels of social inclusion depending on whether or not they work and socialise with different cultures, are involved in multicultural activities and whether or not they perceive themselves as socially included. Deeply included migrant women work and socialise with different cultures, are involved in multicultural activities and perceive themselves as socially included. In contrast, shallow inclusion is displayed by women who work with migrants or do not work at all, and have social contacts predominantly only with their own ethnic group. These women retain strong cultural identification and perceive themselves as not included. This finding challenges the literature that suggests that economic participation remains the most significant pre-requisite for social inclusion. My study, in contrast however, found that for migrants, lack of social and cultural participation in multicultural Australia might impede inclusion even among mostly economically integrated migrants. The next chapter concludes this study by bringing all the arguments together.

Chapter Ten: Conclusion

As explained earlier in the thesis, Australia is an immigrant state. For 200 years Australia has been building its population through immigration. Since the 1990s the focus on skilled and professional migrants has become dominant and remains at the heart of the Australian immigration program. Skilled immigration has been increasingly ‘feminised’ as Australian immigration policies that encourage admission of highly skilled and professional workers are opening a wide range of occupational choices to professional female newcomers. Nevertheless, despite the extent of research and debate about different kind of migrants, very few researchers and commentators recognise the presence and significance of professional female migrants in Australia. What this thesis has offered is a detailed account of professional female migrants’ experiences of social relations and social and economic inclusion in Australia thus taking the literature forward to capture experiences beyond the workplace. By looking through the lens of ‘social inclusion’ the thesis added new knowledge for migration theory. The study suggests that the social inclusion framework enables a more detailed and multi-dimensional exploration of the migration experience than the existing predominantly economic migration-integration approaches. The benefit of the social inclusion framework is that it looks at and incorporates not only economic but social and cultural dimensions of migration and settlement experiences.

The qualitative research approach enabled me to elicit detailed narratives from the participants thus offering an individual insight into their unique experiences and perceptions. The narratives present a rich and revealing picture of modern Australian immigration. Contemporary studies, relying on quantitative data, cannot tell us how migrants themselves experience the process of settling in a new country. My study aimed to address this gap in the orthodox understanding of migrants’ experiences in Australia, by gaining qualitative data from talking with migrants themselves and listening to their narratives of living, working and socialising in a new environment. This approach enabled professional female migrants to tell their stories entirely in their own words rather than being summarised and edited. Telling their stories enabled participants to be heard, recognised and acknowledged (Atkinson, 1998). The experiences portrayed in this study indicate how significant this kind of research is: talking with professional female migrants about their experiences reveals uncertainties, complexities and subjective experiences,

which offer us a largely different portrait of contemporary Australian immigration.

Gender and migration

As discussed throughout the thesis, migration is a gendered phenomenon and the experiences of migration and settlement are strongly influenced by gender. This thesis contributes new information to the debate on gender and gender relations in Australia. It examines the impact of gender on the migration experience by providing a gendered perspective and by positioning gender at the forefront of this experience. My study has added new knowledge to the significance of gender and the implication of skilled migration policies for female applicants by exploring the major issues that impact on life and settlement of professional female migrants in Australia. The study is distinctive and goes beyond the existing analyses of professional female migrants' workplace and economic participation. It recognises the lived experiences of migrant women beyond the workplace and explores how the migration experience contributes to and is constitutive of women's wider social realities and identities. It explores how living in Australia affects professional female migrants in cultural, identity and status terms and what determines their life chances, employment prospects and the feelings of economic and social integration into Australian life. The study found that the majority of women felt settled in Australia. Their everyday challenges mirror those of the general population and women in particular, such as career growth, balancing life and work, being a single mother or raising a disabled child. In addition, professional female migrants face challenges associated with being a migrant, such as lack of social support and living and ageing in a different culture.

Migration and experiences of social inclusion

My study has also added to the understanding of the concept of social inclusion from migrants' perspective and by illuminating the relationship between the phenomenon of social inclusion and the experiences of professional female migrants in Australia. First and foremost, the study revealed that migration in general disrupts social inclusion. The disruption of social inclusion is predominantly evident through the disruption of social support and economic stability enjoyed by individuals prior to their migration to Australia.

The meaning of social inclusion defined by the professional female migrants to a great

extent mirrors the meaning of social inclusion presented in the dominant social inclusion framework. First of all, economic inclusion remains a key part of social inclusion. In addition, however, the participants identified cultural inclusion with racism-free experiences and expanding contacts beyond one's ethnic group as basic conditions for social inclusion to occur.

Four distinctive types of inclusion associated with professional female migrants' experiences of life and settlement in Australia have been identified: *deep* inclusion, *borderline* inclusion, *marginal* inclusion and *shallow* inclusion. There was no evident association found between the level of inclusion and English being a first language. Neither does the length of residency in this country seem to be a contributing factor to the level of inclusion experience.

The study identified that one third of the professional female migrants interviewed can be portrayed as deeply included in Australian society. These women work and socialise across cultures within the Australian multicultural context. They see themselves as socially included and their experiences of inclusion are racism-free experiences. My study found that racism, lack of respect, lack of social support, lack of shared values, and lack of economic participation threatens the very foundation of social inclusion.

Migration and identity formation

Throughout this thesis I have explored the concepts of identity and belonging and discussed debates about the meaning and significance of identity and belonging for understanding and interpreting the experiences of social inclusion, migration and settlement. The social inclusion framework enables us to look across dimensions and, in particular, to capture the experiences of identity. As discussed in Chapter Three, regardless of migrants' gender, cultural and professional backgrounds, the migration process involves significant personal changes related to people's sense of identity. Migration is often viewed as an assault on identity as cultural relocation shakes its very roots (Levy-Warren, 1987, p.301). The psychological context, in which the individual's sense of identity was originally formed in their homeland, had to be reintegrated and reorganised within new cultural, social, economic and political settings. My study found that professional female migrants' experiences of migration and settlement had a profound impact on their sense of identity and belonging.

Relocation to a new cultural and social realm forced professional female migrants to reorganise their sense and picture of self. Multiple identities have been formed as a result of migration. Some of their identities remained mostly unaffected by migration such as being a woman, being a mother, and for some being a professional. Simultaneously, new identities have been shaped as a result of migration, but it appears that a 'migrant' identity is one of the most distinctive identities. From my study, it appears that 'migrant' identity is a significant social category and identification in Australian society. Being (or not being) a migrant is an important way in which people are recognised in the community. In this study, all women exhibited- to a greater or lesser extent- a 'resilient migrant' identity, suggesting that social inclusion in Australia does not equal a transition from being a 'migrant' to being 'Australian'. Moreover, all participants maintain a strong contact with their homeland and remain committed to their original culture. Ethnic and cultural identities mostly manifested through women's attachment to their culture, language and their sense of belonging. No individuals gave up their ethnic identity, indicating that social inclusion does not equal assimilation. This finding suggests that although social inclusion does not equal assimilation or a transition from being a migrant, social inclusion *is possible* in the context of cultural and ethnic differences.

Migration and belonging

The study also found that social inclusion in Australia can only be understood in the context of transnational relationships. Migrant identity is strongly associated with the development of transnational identities revealing that although participants identify to various degrees with the culture and values of the host country, they remain strongly committed to the culture and values of their home country. The concept of identity associates closely with a sense of belonging. This thesis brings new knowledge to the debate on belonging by arguing that the professional female migrants' sense of belonging has been developed in the context of sound economic participation, expanding social contacts and remaining in contact with their original culture. The participants displayed various levels of 'belonging' in multicultural Australia: a sense of *belonging*; a sense of *unbelonging*; a sense of *multiple or transnational belonging*; and a sense of *dislocation*. Thus, although professional female migrants demonstrated a high level of economic participation in Australian society, it seems that economic participation itself does not guarantee the development of a sense of belonging in Australia. In addition, my study found that social inclusion does not equal

belonging.

The relevance of social inclusion framework for analysing the experiences of migration

This thesis has added new knowledge to the understanding of critical areas of social policy in Australia- migration policies, employment policies, settlement policies, and social inclusion policies. It particularly contributes to the policy debates in relation to social inclusion as a policy framework useful for addressing inequalities and exclusions, and for analysing the experiences of migrants in Australia.

Three major conclusions can be drawn on the usefulness of the social inclusion framework for analysing the migration experiences of professional female migrants. Although the social inclusion framework adds emphasis on culture and identity, my study concludes that the dominant social inclusion framework is only partly relevant for analysing the migration and settlement experiences as it prioritises economic participation as a route to social inclusion. This research, however, found that being professional provided women either with a chance to be included or the opportunity to be or not to be included. The participants did not talk about economic inclusion as a primary route to social inclusion. They did not talk about political inclusion either. Instead, women talked about recognition and respect. They talked about values and they talked about the existence of racism in Australia as an extreme lack of respect. The social inclusion framework, consequently, failed to recognise the cultural dimension of social inclusion by assuming that social inclusion in Australia can be achieved and maintained by focusing predominantly on sound economic progress and active economic participation of Australian citizens.

The study found that cultural inclusion as an important dimension of social inclusion in Australia is to be secured by embracing shared social and cultural values by all its citizens in order to maintain the cohesive nature of Australian society. Most professional female migrants remain strongly attached to their original culture. Culture connects women to their language, traditions and values. Shared ethnicity has a positive impact on participants' settlement experience and their sense of belonging. As cultural diversity is now a permanent feature of contemporary and future Australian society, cultural inclusion is to be assured in the context of the Australian multicultural environment.

Culture connects people to their religion. My study found that religion plays a meaningful role in professional female migrants' cultural life. Yet, the role of religion and religious diversity in social inclusion is problematic as it plays a complex role in both challenging and promoting social inclusion (Bouma & Ling, 2007). As religious diversity is often perceived as a source of division and as evidence of society's weakness, the endorsement of interreligious group relations becomes increasingly important.

Furthermore, the social inclusion framework does not take into account transnational residents. Inclusion by nature and definition assumes individual's sense of belonging and permanent residency. Although inclusion was an inspirational goal for most participants, it was not the priority, nor the need for all of them. Some of the professional female migrants did not view their migration as a permanent move and have not made commitments to remain in Australia indefinitely. The social inclusion agenda needs to imagine itinerant professional workers and to make sure they are included.

Although political participation is seen as an important indicator of the integration of subcommunities into the host community (Grootaert, Naraya, Nyan Jones, & Woodcock, 2004; Larsen, 2004) this study did not manage to capture the depth of the political dimension of social inclusion. The findings revealed no political interest/engagement of professional female migrants. Women instead revealed a lack of interest in politics and poor involvement in political activities. One of the reasons for women's lack of political interest in Australia could be their lack of political engagement in the country of origin. This could be considered as a limitation or a weakness of this study as the scale of participants' political participation has not been fairly explored. Another limitation of the study is that I did not integrate the theoretical perspectives of non-English scholars. After coming to the end of my thesis I was introduced to Raewyn Connell's (2007a) Southern Theory where the author sees metropolitan theorising as fundamentally flawed as it neglects the southern perspective of the social world and culture. The material analysed in this thesis utilised predominantly theoretical perspectives from the North. Future research could be directed to investigate both North and Southern perspectives on this topic.

To conclude, I would argue that gender remains at the forefront of the migration experience. The study is of benefit to women, to the workplace and to Australian society. I am

optimistic that research such as this can enhance policies and practice including policy development at the organisational level and within the workplace.

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Appendix 1



The University of Sydney

Human Research Ethics Committee
Web: <http://www.usyd.edu.au/ethics/human>

ABN 15 211 513 464

Gail Briody

Manager

Office of Ethics Administration

Marietta Coutinho

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Ref: PB/PE

29 June 2009

Dr Susan Goodwin
Faculty of Education and Social Work
Education Building - A35
The University of Sydney
Email: S.Goodwin@edfac.usyd.edu.au

Dear Dr Goodwin

Thank you for your ethics application that was considered at the meeting of the University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee held on 16 June 2009.

Title: Professional Female Migrants in Australia: Social Inclusion or Social Exclusion? (Ref. No. 11912)

Approval of this project has been deferred for the following reasons. The Committee will give the application further executive consideration when these concerns have been addressed. **Please provide one (1) original of your response.**

1. Please add reference to reimbursement for time/travel on the Participant Information Statement (a \$20 gift voucher).
2. Please update the complaints clause in the Participant Information Statement. As the Ethics Office has moved, the Manager, Ethics Administration, can now be contacted on 61 2 8627 8175 (Telephone), 61 2 8627 8180 (Facsimile) and gbriody@usyd.edu.au (Email).
3. Please remove the words "Chief Investigator's/Supervisor's Name" from the Participant Consent Form and Participant Information Statement.
4. Please add age criterion (21 years and over) to the advertisement.

The above concerns should be addressed in dot point form referring to the corresponding points above. If the Committee has requested amendments to particular questions in the application form, submit the relevant pages and underline the changes. DO NOT re-submit the entire application.

If the Committee has requested that you amend any additional documents, such as the Participant Information Statement or Consent Form, you are asked to underline these changes to assist the Committee's checking of the amended documents.

Your reply should be sent to the Ethics Office, Human Research Ethics Committee, Level 6, Jane Foss Russell Building – G02.

Please note that if the Ethics Office does not receive a response from you within three months, the application will lapse and a new application will be required.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Philip Beale". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

**Associate Professor Philip Beale
Chairman
Human Research Ethics Committee**

Copy: Mrs Marina Jurman Marina.Jurman@sswahs.nsw.gov.au

Appendix 2



The University of Sydney

Human Research Ethics Committee

Web: <http://www.usyd.edu.au/ethics/human>

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Ref: PB/PE

5 August 2009

Dr Susan Goodwin
Faculty of Education and Social Work
Education Building – A35
The University of Sydney
Email: S.Goodwin@edfac.usyd.edu.au

Dear Dr Goodwin

Thank you for your correspondence received 27 July 2009 addressing comments made to you by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). After considering the additional information, the Executive Committee at its meeting on **28 July 2009** approved your protocol entitled “*Professional Female Migrants in Australia: Social Inclusion or Social Exclusion?*”.

Details of the approval are as follows:

Ref No.: 07-2009/11912
Approval Period: July 2009 to July 2010
Authorised Personnel: Dr Susan Goodwin
Mrs Marina Jurman

The HREC is a fully constituted Ethics Committee in accordance with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans-March 2007* under Section 5.1.29

The approval of this project is **conditional** upon your continuing compliance with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans*. We draw to your attention the requirement that a report on this research must be submitted every 12 months from the date of the approval or on completion of the project, whichever occurs first. Failure to submit reports will result in withdrawal of consent for the project to proceed.

Chief Investigator / Supervisor's responsibilities to ensure that:

- (1) All serious and unexpected adverse events should be reported to the HREC as soon as possible.
- (2) All unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should be reported to the HREC as soon as possible.
- (3) The HREC must be notified as soon as possible of any changes to the protocol. All changes must be approved by the HREC before continuation of the research project. These include:-
 - If any of the investigators change or leave the University.
 - Any changes to the Participant Information Statement and/or Consent Form.
- (4) All research participants are to be provided with a Participant Information Statement and Consent Form, unless otherwise agreed by the Committee. The Participant Information Statement and Consent Form are to be on University of Sydney letterhead and include the full title of the research project and telephone contacts for the researchers, unless otherwise agreed by the Committee and the following statement must appear on the bottom of the Participant Information Statement. *Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact the Manager, Ethics Administration, University of Sydney, on (02) 8627 8175 (Telephone); (02) 8627 8180 (Facsimile) or gbriody@usyd.edu.au (Email).*
- (5) Copies of all signed Consent Forms must be retained and made available to the HREC on request.
- (6) It is your responsibility to provide a copy of this letter to any internal/external granting agencies if requested.
- (7) The HREC approval is valid for four (4) years from the Approval Period stated in this letter. Investigators are requested to submit a progress report annually.
- (8) A report and a copy of any published material should be provided at the completion of the Project.

Yours sincerely,



**Associate Professor Philip Beale
Chairman
Human Research Ethics Committee**

Copy: Mrs Marina Jurman Marina.Jurman@sswahs.nsw.gov.au

Encl. Approved Participant Information Statement
Approved Participant Consent Form
Approved Advertisement
Approved Interview topics

Appendix 3

The University of Sydney

Faculty of Education and Social Work

ABN 15 211 513 464

CHIEF INVESTIGATOR'S /SUPERVISOR'S NAME

DR. SUSAN GOODWIN

SENIOR LECTURER IN THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK

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**RESEARCH STUDY INTO THE EXPERIENCES OF PROFESSIONAL FEMALE
MIGRANTS IN AUSTRALIA**

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT

You are invited to take part in a research study into the experiences of professional female migrants in Australia. The aim is to examine female migrants' experiences of social inclusion and social exclusion. The research focuses on issues such as employment and education, social and cultural participation, access to support services, settling in and perspectives on the future. The results will help inform our understanding of those experiences and so, hopefully, increase awareness among policy makers and those who work with migrants. The study is being conducted by myself, Marina Jurman, and will form the basis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work at the University of Sydney under the supervision of Dr. Susan Goodwin, Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Education and Social Work.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to take part in an interview. This will take place in an office at either the University of Sydney or a meeting room in the local library. The interview will last approximately 90 minutes. The focus is on interviewees' own experiences. I am interested in your thoughts, ideas, opinions, feelings about, and perceptions of the migration experiences. There are no right or wrong answers. While I do not anticipate that the interviews will be stressful, I acknowledge that talking about the migration experience may raise some discomfort or unresolved issues for you.

All aspects of the study, including results, will be strictly confidential and only the investigators named above will have access to information on participants. A report of the

study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and – if you do participate - you can withdraw at any time. Withdrawal will not result in any penalty.

You may stop the interview at any time if do not wish to continue, the audio recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study.

When you have read this information, Marina Jurman will discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact Marina on ph: 02 9828 4782, email: Marina.Jurman@sswahs.nsw.gov.au

<p>Any person with concerns or complains about the conduct of a research study can contact the Manager, Ethics Administration on (02) 8627 8175 (Telephone); (02) 86278180 (Facsimile)</p>

This information sheet is for you to keep.

Appendix 4



The University of Sydney

Division of Graduate Studies
Faculty of Education and Social Work

ABN 15 211 513 464

CHIEF INVESTIGATOR'S /SUPERVISOR'S NAME

DR. SUSAN GOODWIN

SENIOR LECTURER IN THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK

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PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I,[PRINT NAME], give consent to my participation in the research project

TITLE: THE EXPERIENCES OF PROFESSIONAL FEMALE MIGRANTS IN AUSTRALIA

In giving my consent I acknowledge that:

1. The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.
2. I have read the Participant Information Statement and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researcher.
3. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without affecting my relationship with the researcher or the University of Sydney now or in the future.
4. I understand that my involvement is strictly confidential and no information about me will be used in any way that reveals my identity.
5. I understand that being in this study is completely voluntary- I am not under any obligation to consent.

6. I understand that I can stop the interview at any time if I do not wish to continue, the audio recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study.

7. I consent to-

- | | | | | |
|------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| i) Audio-taping | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ii) Receiving Feedback | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If YES, please provide your details i.e. mailing address, email address at the bottom of the page.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

Feedback Option

Address: _____

Email Address: _____