

The adjustment of African women living in New Zealand: A narrative study

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ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare that this is my own work and that to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person or material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the acknowledgements.

Signed: _____

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ABSTRACT

Migration has been a recurrent phenomenon since the beginning of human existence and involves a major life transition. In recent times, migration has been identified as a major factor for facilitating economic growth, counteracting the adverse effect of an aging population and increasing contribution to the development of enterprise and innovations, as well as strengthening New Zealand's international links.

Immigration of Black Africans in New Zealand is recent because the immigration policy favoured people of British origin. However, the 1970s witnessed the influx of Africans as a result of the adoption of a formal refugee quota in 1987 and as a result of outbreak of wars and genocide in countries like Ethiopia, Somalia and Rwanda. Black Africans are also migrating to New Zealand for educational purposes and as skilled migrants.

Alongside identifying the potential gains of immigration, the need for reducing distress and ill health in individual immigrants has been recognized. It is important to explore the factors impacting immigrants' wellbeing and adjustment to New Zealand

This research uses a narrative method based on Africentric philosophy and a unique storytelling tradition that reflects the beliefs, values and ritual of African people to understand the experience of the African immigrant women as it relates to their psychological adjustment to New Zealand.

Arising questions for the study are factors that motivate African women to migrate to New Zealand, major stressors that African women encounter upon arriving in New Zealand, the impact of these stressors on their person and the coping strategies they employ to handle the particular demands of adjusting to a new environment.

The research found that the main purpose for African women, to migrate to New Zealand was career development which could be realized through educational achievement. While the most significant stressor spoken about by the women was missing home and the losses associated with it. The most significant coping strategy the women used is communalism. Although the paths the African women immigrants travelled comprise of conflict, trauma, and emotion. This research is concerned with the triumph, and extraordinary personal achievement of African women participants revealed in their narratives that this research is concerned with.

By giving African women immigrants a voice to tell their stories about their experiences of

migration to New Zealand and understanding the meaning they make of them, it is possible to better understand the nature of the support that is helpful for them. It is hoped that this research will help to encourage Government and other agencies to provide resources to facilitate African women immigrants and their families' adjustment into New Zealand culture. This thesis also contributes to a body of knowledge on a cultural and ethnic group that has often been neglected by researchers. Further, it offers opportunity for New Zealanders to increase their understanding of cultural differences, helping to promote an acceptance of a multi-cultural society in New Zealand.

The significance of this study is that through discerning how stories are constructed, understanding of how African women immigrants perceive their experience has been revealed. Their stories reflect strength, resilience, resourcefulness, and the community networks used in achieving their goals of migration. That they have coped with immigration issues and challenges shows they are true heroines. It is believed that this research process has been an empowering one for the women involved.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The title for this study is '*The adjustment of African women living in New Zealand: A narrative study*'. My interest in this topic stems from my personal experience of migration to New Zealand from Nigeria, in 2001.

Since the 1960s, there has been a surge in the number of Asian and African migrants arriving in New Zealand. This was partly due to the adoption of a formal refugee quota in 1987, followed by outbreak of wars, famine and / or unrest in a number of African countries, for example Ethiopia, Somalia, Rwanda. However, prior to 1990, there were not many Black Africans in New Zealand.

Discrimination, racism, sexism, unemployment and lack of social support from the host country have been identified as factors predicating poor adjustment among migrant groups, and placing migrants at greater risk of various psychological problems. Migration has been identified a highly stressful experience that influences immigrant well-being. Rumbaut (1991) stated that migration is one of many life events that can produce profound psychological distress among the most motivated and well prepared individuals, even in the best of circumstances. Immigrant women may experience loneliness, loss of self-esteem and stress as a result of cognitive overload, a sense of being uprooted and a fear of being unable to function competently within the new culture. Immigrants often have to cope with social-acculturation stress, as well as having to overcome differences in cultural values, beliefs, and practices associated with the realization of becoming members of a minority group. Feelings of being uprooted, loss of identity, unhappiness, and anger are common consequences which sometimes lead to depression (Akhtar, 1999; Espín, 1999; Narayan, 1997; Thomas, 1995).

This current study suggests that it would be beneficial to conduct further investigation into how immigrant women from Africa are adjusting to New Zealand and the meaning they have accrued to the experience. This may assist in identifying areas of vulnerability and resilience in the adjustment process.

Research Questions

How do African women construct their experience of immigration to New Zealand; and what does that reveal about their wellbeing?

Arising questions are:

- What factors motivate African women to migrate to New Zealand?
- What major stressors do African women encounter upon arriving in New Zealand and what is the impact of these stressors on their person?
- What coping strategies do African women employ to handle the particular demands of adjusting to a new environment?

Research Aim

The aim of the study is to explore how African immigrant women construct their stories of adjustment in New Zealand, and to elucidate the factors they describe as barriers to this adjustment. Further to this is the manner in which they describe dealing with barriers, tensions and issues related to adjusting to immigration stressors. The assumption drawn from applying a narrative methodology is that it will reveal psychological well-being in its different phases through the way the women frame their stories and through the content of those narratives.

The research findings will assist agencies working with African women in regards to their settlement, as well as help design appropriate resources in supporting their adjustment to a new environment.

Rationale and Significance of the Study

Migration has been a recurrent phenomenon since the beginning of human existence and involves a major life transition. In recent times, migration has been identified as a major factor for facilitating economic growth, and counteracting the adverse effects of an aging population in New Zealand (Fletcher, 1999; Henderson, 2004). Despite the gains of immigration, recent research has highlighted the need for reducing distress and ill health in individual immigrants (Pernice, Trlin, Henderson, & North, 2000). A review of relevant literature reflects a lack of research on the challenges facing African women immigrating to this country.

A Black woman's experience of immigration has been described as that of triple invisibility – as a black, a woman, and a foreigner, whose experiences have not been dealt with in any direct and significant way (Beal, 1970; Nwadiora, 1995). Although there has been a recent

grounded theory study exploring Indian women's experience of immigration to New Zealand (Nayar, 2005), there is little research available on African women in New Zealand; the research which does exist primarily focuses on refugee women specifically from Somalia in North Africa. I have not found any research on immigrant women in New Zealand from other areas of Africa. There are still many unanswered questions about why African women may choose to migrate to New Zealand and the barriers they experience in the process of settlement in New Zealand.

The influence of gender has not been well documented in relation to immigration experiences (Willis & Yeoh, 2000). Compared to their male counterparts, the adaptation experiences of women as a response to the immigration process have not been well documented (Simon & Brettell, 1989). Most research on immigration, acculturation and adjustment of immigrants failed to examine how gender impacts on the pattern and process of these issues (Foner, 2001). More light is needed on how immigrant women adjust to taking up new roles, accessing employment, sometimes having to retrain in a relatively new profession due to the lack of acceptance of the qualifications they have gained from their home countries, as well as changes in social status and class.

Furthermore, immigrant women from all parts of the world are usually addressed as a homogenous group, emphasising their financially dependent status and isolation from the host culture. Traditionally, women are seen as family dependants that migrate only to join their husbands. The almost exclusive focus on low-wage female immigrants, in contrast to a lack of attention on skilled female immigrants, reflects a commonly held stereotype of immigrant women and fails to acknowledge that there are women who have migrated on their own due to the fact that they are highly skilled and have migrated for the purpose of working in their chosen profession (Ngo, 1994; Reynolds, 2006; Shin & Shin, 1999).

Most immigration research has been carried out using quantitative methods; however, critical voices argue that knowledge generated by the sole use of quantitative methods fails to capture the complexity of human behaviour and experience (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Quantitative methods cannot adequately investigate the subjective accounts of immigrants' experience and the strategies they employ in adjusting to their new environment. Therefore, this research study has been carried out using narrative theory based on African frameworks.

The significance of this study is that through discerning how stories are told, understanding of how African immigrant women perceive their experience of making this transition is revealed. Their stories highlight the difficulties they experience in the process of settling in New Zealand. From such accounts the researcher will bring particular focus on how psychological well-being is portrayed. This will potentially enable mental health services to gain insight capable of enhancing the quality of care African women receives in New Zealand. However, the women's own strength, resilience, resourcefulness, and the community networks used in coping with immigration issues will also be highlighted, showing they are not necessarily dependent on mental health services. It is believed that the process of sharing their stories has been an empowering one for the women involved.

By giving this group of African immigrant women voice to tell their stories about their experiences of migration to New Zealand, and understanding the meaning they make of them, it is possible to better understand the nature of the support that is helpful. It is hoped that this research will help to encourage Government and other agencies to provide resources to facilitate women and their families' adjustment into a new culture. This thesis also contributes to a body of knowledge on a cultural and ethnic group that has often been neglected by researchers. Further, it offers opportunity for New Zealanders to increase their understanding of cultural differences, helping to promote the acceptance of a multi-cultural society in New Zealand.

In conclusion, it is important to know how African women talked about their experience of immigration to New Zealand, and to know what this reveals about their well being.

Research Methodology

The research methodology employs assumptions consistent with the theoretical paradigm of narrative methodology. Stories are told in a particular way, putting the focus on some aspects and ignoring others, ordering to build to an argument, expressing passion or being matter-of-fact; thus, laying emphasis on both the content of the story and the form of telling it. The women were allowed long stretches of talk in order to create a story that related their immigration experiences and their consequent feelings and the sense they have made of such experiences. Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggested that this method of qualitative research can be used to better understand any issue about which little is known.

By telling their stories, the participants were offered freedom to present themselves in the way they would like to be known, as well as in the historical and present context that has had tremendous impact on their lives. Riessman (1993) argued that an individual's narrative is influenced by the interview interactions as well as by social, cultural and institutional contexts.

Fifteen women were interviewed from both Southern and Western Africa. They were between the ages of 21 and 60. The number of women interviewed is relatively small to allow for an in-depth analysis of the individual narratives (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The women have been residing in New Zealand for a period of one to five years.

Participants were interviewed individually over a period of time. The individuality and continuity of the interviews not only facilitated the participants' notion of the opportunity to refine their identity but also helped develop a deeper understanding of the women, as well as establish stronger bonding that facilitated telling stories of their experience.

Undoubtedly, any narrative inquiry analysis is often deeply influenced by the researcher (Crossley, 2000; Yardley, 1997); as an African immigrant woman in New Zealand, I am aware of the possibility of bias having gone through some of the same stages of adjustment since I migrated to New Zealand. I am mindful that this has had an impact on the research process.

My Story

I migrated to New Zealand in 2002 to join my husband who was then a practice nurse. Prior to migrating to New Zealand, I was a lecturer with the Counselling Department, at Ijanikin College of Education, Lagos, Nigeria. I was also working as a Christian counsellor at the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Ijesha Lagos, working with women on various issues. My journey to New Zealand was an interesting one, in the sense that my visa, and that of our three children, was approved immediately my husband secured employment. The down side was that we could not afford flight tickets for all four of us. As a result, I decided to leave our two girls who were 8 and 5 years in care of my in-laws and my siblings, and to travel with my youngest child who was only 11-months old at that time, and was still being breastfed.

On departure day, the whole family – mine and my in-laws – were at the airport; and while I

was prepared to travel, I was not prepared for the drama that occurred at the airport. At the point of boarding the plane, the airline discovered that my 11-month old son did not have a transit visa to South Africa which meant he could not travel with me. There was nothing I could do to influence the decision because it was on a Sunday and most immigration offices were closed. I felt sad but I had to decide on the next line of action. I looked at my mother-in-law who had my baby on her back and asked if she could also look after the boy. Without hesitating, she accepted, I left the boy with his two sisters. The journey was with mixed feelings; it was like leaving everything behind in Africa to join my husband.

I was very hopeful about joining my husband in New Zealand and while I looked forward to it, I realised that I needed to find suitable employment in order to raise money for our children to join us in New Zealand. After my first week here, I started looking for counselling/social work jobs because I have a MSw. Social Work degree. The experience was a harrowing one in the sense that it was difficult to find any suitable employment. After searching for employment and receiving numerous regret letters, I decided to enrol in a care giving course. The course was for a month and thereafter, I secured a job as a caregiver in a rest home in Auckland. It was a very difficult time for me emotionally because I missed my children. I had not only lost my good job back in Africa; I had lost my status as well by becoming a caregiver because I could not find any suitable employment in the professions for which I had trained. I continued my search for a counselling/social work job until I volunteered for a migrant resource centre. It was through this that I secured my first employment as a community worker and have progressed to my present employment as a lecturer.

My children eventually joined us in New Zealand six months later. Adjusting to their relocation was not difficult because my sister-in-law who stayed with came to New Zealand with them. With her support, I was able to concentrate on my development as a migrant woman in a new environment.

The women I interviewed in this study have shared their challenges around living in New Zealand and some elements of my story are similar to theirs. I am looking at this research from a counselling perspective; it would be good to determine how African women have used counselling services through the process of adjusting to New Zealand.

The purpose of counselling is to create an environment of trust where clients can learn more about their thoughts, feelings, and their life. Through this process, the client is able to take actions to achieve her goal or to solve her problem(s). I consider my work as a counsellor to be educational, developmental, and preventive; rather than clinical, remedial, and medical (Seiler & Messina, 1979). I also align my work with the mental health counselling concept of a multifaceted, holistic process of promoting healthy life-styles, identifying individual stressors and personal levels of functioning. This involves the preservation or restoration of mental health in which the person is conceptualized both developmentally and holistically, taking into consideration the contextual influences on persons' lives (Hershenson & Power, 1987; Seiler & Messina, 1979). Working from this perspective has shaped my understanding of the adjustment of African immigrant women in New Zealand.

From the systems perspective, clients are embedded within and influenced by their family, societal, historical, cultural, and socioeconomic context; which means that knowledge and access to community resources can be useful in treatment. Simultaneously, the individual can be viewed from multiple domains such as emotional, physical, social, vocational, and spiritual – that results in a more or less healthy lifestyle. The focus of my work is also African centered psychology which is based on strengths and wellness, as springing from the multiple aspects of the African person. It is very important to know what makes an African woman because this could be used to explain her thoughts, actions and the values she has chosen to preserve since her immigration and how she may have used some of these values to ensure adaptation and survival in a new culture, that of New Zealand. This is related to what makes an African person. The interaction and interdependence of an African person with her environment is important in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. In the next session, I will discuss African psychology and personhood from African perspective.

African psychology

Though the politicians, poets and writers of Africa have been able to raise their voices, and are heard worldwide, "the voice of the African psychological community on the ideological assumptions underlying their discipline has been relatively muted" (Holdstock, 2000 p. 144). Also, presently in New Zealand, knowledge about African psychology is non-existent. African Psychology is the psychology of people of African descent that builds conceptual models that organize, explain, and facilitate understanding of the psychosocial behaviour of

Africans based in the primary dimensions of an African world view. There is a unique, coherent, persistent psychological perspective or worldview that is uniquely African (Garner, 2002). Culture is a complex constellation of mores, values, customs, tradition, and practices that guide and influence a people's cognitive, affective, behavioural response to life circumstances. The tradition and practices of Africans is reflected in their behaviour, attitudes, feelings and values and it provides them with a way of interpreting reality and relating to others, as well as a general design for living (Gerner, 2002).

Baldwin (1986) defines African Black psychology as a system of knowledge concerning the nature of the social universe from the perspectives of African cosmology. Black psychology is nothing more or less than the uncovering, articulation, operationalization, and application of the principles of the African reality structure relative to psychological phenomena (p. 242).

The African ethos and the African worldview centres on: emotional vitality, interdependence, collective survival, oral tradition, perception of time, harmonious blending and the role of the elderly. The foundation for the African worldview is centred on the fact that there are individual differences indeed; however there are more commonalities than differences (Kambon, 1998).

The African worldview in psychology, and in general, entails living holism, a holism that is based in the lived experience in contrast to privacy-oriented Westerners. People in the African realm are characterized by a dynamic intrapersonal dimension: they have "other-centeredness." *Ubuntu* is the concept that expresses the African way of human relatedness: it involves humaneness, care, compassion, gentleness, respect, and empathy (Hanks, 2008).

All human life processes including the spirituality, mental, biological, and genetic and behaviour constitutes African psychology" (Azibo, 1996, p. 6).

Personhood from African Perspective

Having a good understanding of who an African person is from a cultural perspective, reveals the foundation for actions, character and identity; these have a major impact on an African's well-being. There are two philosophical concepts of personhood in the African culture, these have been identified as the descriptive metaphysical and the normative (Ikunobe, 2006). The purpose of the descriptive metaphysical is to examine, analyse and determine the essential ontological make up of an individual. However, the normative concept seeks to understand a

person based on the interdependent normative relationship between her and her family, the elements in the community and her ancestors. Such normative relationships provide the foundation for African “people’s actions, characters and identity” (Ikunobe, 2006, p. 117).

The normative is dependent on the metaphysical concept, in the sense that a person must meet the descriptive metaphysical criteria such as volition, autonomy and morality, and must be capable of rational deliberation before she can be recognised to have met the communal criteria of personhood. Ikunobe (2006) argued that the absence of the features of the descriptive metaphysical concept implies that the person cannot rationally act to meet communal obligation. Although the normative concept is dependent on the descriptive metaphysical concept, Ikunobe (2006) posited that it is the normative concept that is more important among African communal traditions because personhood is a status earned by complying with certain communal norms.

Ikunobe’s (2006) concept of ‘communal person’ is contradictory to the individual person, which is the main focus of western psychology (Holdstock, 2000). While this concept has been recently criticised in the field of psychology, Jahoda (1986) posits that most indigenous psychologies often have a very different and more socially oriented concept of what constitutes a person. It is the independent and self-sufficient person who is classified as the unit of the social system within western psychology; on the other hand, among Africans, it is the interdependent person that has volition and is thus capable of taking on responsibilities within a community that can attain personhood status (Holdstock, 2000). The concept of an ‘individual person’ would be strange and unrealistic to African women in this research because their concept or orientation about who a person is, is that of an interdependent self who fits in with others and lives harmoniously in his or her community, because a recognised self is the one in relation to others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

Presbey (2002) argued that it is not sufficient for an individual to meet the descriptive dimensions of personhood but they must also satisfy the communal norms based on the description of intergroup recognition. A community is a collective of persons, principles, processes, and structures that defines social norms, moral expectations, responsibilities, ways of life, and modes of reasoning (Ikunobe, 2006). The ‘self’, in relation, implies the acceptance of the responsibilities of the welfare of others within the community; because a “being-in relation” individual emerges and expresses itself communally (Ogbonnaya, 1994,

p. 74). Holdstock (2000) noted that the interdependence and normative relationships place great responsibilities on the individual to discover and maintain the good relationship with the multiple strands of the network of relationship. This is in agreement with Richards (1981) who described how a person becomes relevant among African people thus:

the person alone in his or her 'isolated being' lacks power. It is only as a part of the whole; that is, by being understood as representative in his or her being of the whole, that he or she gains force, takes on meaning, or become relevant (p. 223).

In other words, it is only in being part of the whole, that is the community, that an individual finds fulfilment.

The recognition of a person implies satisfying group norms for action; ways of seeing and doing things, such as values of respecting elders, giving a befitting burial to one's elders, and sharing with less privileged members of one's family. It also includes taking both emotional and financial responsibility for one's kinsmen. These are 'normal' standards expected of members of a community to ensure the growth and development of individuals and the community at large. It is through meeting these communal norms that a person gains communal recognition and acceptance.

It is not enough to have descriptive features such as cognitive categories of understanding, rational conceptual scheme, and metaphysical freedom; morality is an important aspect of the normative concept and it is determined when a moral person is considered to be an emotionally autonomous person who has been sufficiently shaped and equipped by the norms, attitudes, structures and realities of his community. A moral person is the person who appreciates communal interest and reality and internalises the requisite attitudes and values of the community.

Menkiti (1984, p. 172) spoke about a 'dangling person' – a person directly opposite to the interdependent normative person – as someone who is abstracted from his/her community and not shaped by community norms and interests. He stressed that a dangling person has no place within African cultures because the community's interest involves the interests and responsibilities of individuals. In other words, a 'dangling person' is not able to apply communal norms to guide his conduct for personal interests and communal needs; he is not truly a person in the African view. The idea of mutual relationship between an individual and community could best be understood by the saying, "I am because we are, and since we are,

therefore I am” (Mbiti, 1969, p. 109).

Menkiti (1984) concluded that there is a crucial distinction “between the African view of man and the view of man found in western thought: in the African view, it is the community which defines the person as a person, not some isolated static quality of rationality, will or memory” (p. 176). The whole existence, from birth to death, of an African person is sustained by a series of associations, and life can only have full value when these close ties are nurtured and sustained. Communal living is one of the most vital features of the African heritage (Mbiti, 1969).

Chinua Achebe (1959) aptly described the nature of an interdependent, moral African when he said:

A man who calls his kinsmen to a feast does not do so to save them from starving. They all have food in their homes. When we gather together in the moonlit village ground, it is not because of the moon. Every man can see it in his own compound. We come together because it is good for kinsmen to do so. (p. 55)

It is to be noted that the idea of community living, prevalent in Africa, has intrinsic value; it is a product of African humanism which is concerned with the preservation of life because life is of ultimate concern, and life can only grow in relationships. It is important to know how African women have used their ‘personhood’ status to initiate and sustain relationships in New Zealand and the impact of these relationships on their well-being.

Definitions of Terms

In this section, I will define some terms that I have used in this thesis, such as Africentric theory, African feminism, Ubuntu, Psychological adjustment and African women.

Africentric Theory

An Africentric worldview is a set of beliefs, values and assumptions founded on African cultural traditions; it relates to definitions of the self and others. The relationship of self with the environment reflects life experiences, history and tradition as the centre of analysis and responsibility, to ‘center’ self in its own subjective responsibilities and potentialities, and through the re-centring process reproduce and refine the best of human essence (Nobles, 1998; Schiele, 2000). Dimensions of Africentric theory include: spirituality, affect, oral

tradition, harmony, time as a social phenomenon, rhythm and stylistic expressiveness (Hanks, 2008; Mbiti, 1986; Randolph & Banks, 1993). Within an Africentric worldview are principles that are essential codes of conduct for daily life. These principles are sets of values that Africans need to build and sustain their family, community and culture (Schiele, 2000). It is the nature of one's interaction with others; this code of ethics is described as 'Ubuntu'.

Ubuntu

Ubuntu is a positive human quality with the very essence of enabling human beings to become 'abantu' - humanised beings, living in daily self-expression of love, and efforts to create harmony in the community (Mnyandu, 1997; Prinsloo, 1998). Ubuntu is not an expression of individual attributes, but an advocate of harmonious interactions that benefit not only the individual but the greater community (Hanks, 2008).

Psychological Adjustment.

The psychological adjustment of individuals could be understood in terms of optimal function, well-being and capacity to adapt. A sense of control over one's behaviour, environment, thoughts and feelings is essential for good psychological adjustment (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Maddux, 1995). In psychological research, adjustment refers both to an achievement or outcome as well as a process. As an achievement, psychological adjustment is a phrase used to denote positive mental health. The concept of positive mental health refers to an individual's state of mind and overall well-being. As a process, psychological adjustment reflects the relative adaptation of an individual to changing environmental conditions and whether an individual is able to cope effectively with the demands of the environmental context as well as with the stress created by these demands. Psychological adjustment as a popular outcome measures self-esteem or the absence of distress, anxiety or depression as indicators of adjustment. An individuals' level of adjustment or well-being in response to some stressful event, such as immigration could also be explored (Seaton, 2009).

It is useful to understand the interaction of African women with situational factors of immigration in New Zealand; this interaction determines positive mental health. Kambon (1998) posits that positive mental health among Africans in America consists of: an African-centered worldview that demonstrates congruent racial-cultural survival ideas and behaviour, an active practice of Africentric values of spiritualism, a collective self-consciousness and collective responsibility, a pursuit of racial-cultural self-knowledge, an involvement in the

perpetuation of Africentric institutions, a value system that prioritizes interconnectedness and interdependence of African life, and an oppositional posture toward all anti-self (racial-cultural) forces. In other words, under conditions of white supremacy, people with low African self-consciousness are more prone to mental illness than people with high African self-consciousness. Thus, African psychology recognises a human being as existing within a cultural context rather than a universal human being void of cultural specificity (Nobles et. al., 2009).

African Women

The status of women in indigenous African societies has been addressed from different perspectives. Some writers have portrayed African women as ‘jural minors’, who fall under the guardianship of their fathers and husbands respectively while others portray African women as independent having control over their own lives and resources (Sudarkasa, 2004). Despite these concepts around the status of African women, it is to be noted that in some cultures, during the pre-colonial era, African women were conspicuous in high places. They were queen mothers, queen sisters, princesses, chiefs and holders of other offices in towns and villages, occasionally warriors and in some cases supreme monarchs (Rojas, 1994; Sudarkasa, 1996, 2004). In pre-colonial times, African women had greater right to land and family inheritance, wielded power and influence in the political arena, and there were no restrictions to their movement (Amadiume, 2005; Okome, 2005).

During the pre-colonial era, social and economic production was centred on women (Amadiume, 2005; Strobel, 1982). Traditionally, African women are expected to work outside the home to fulfil their economic role and ensure the complementary role between them and their men (House-Midamba & Ekechi, 1995; Sudarkasa, 1987; Terborg-penn, 1996). However, this complementary nature of the respective roles appears to have been ignored by some scholars; with men being ascribed a better and higher status, while women are portrayed as being “saddled with home and domesticity” (Sudarkasa, 2004, p. 73). African feminists have challenged this notion that women were outside the home as well as in it.

It has also been depicted that the relationship between women and men was hierarchical. Therefore, complementary domains for women have been challenged. It has been argued that

women occupy the domestic domain and men, the public domain. Therefore, because power and authority were vested in the public domain, women had defacto lower status than men (Sudarkasa, 1973).

In the following sections, I examine the position of African women and their roles in their families and their status within their cultures. I also challenge the notion of sexual stratification that I consider inappropriate for describing male/female relationships in most African cultures.

Women in African Kin Group

Within identified kin groups, African women have rights, roles and responsibilities towards the members of their lineage, which are independent of men. Female members are expected to meet some obligations similar to that of men by contributing financially or materially to the development of their siblings. During naming ceremonies, marriages and funerals, they actively take part in discussions around family affairs. Within matrilineal societies, some women hold leadership positions and exercise authority equivalent to that of men (Sudarkasa, 1975). Both patrilineal and matrilineal interpersonal relationships, on a daily basis, tend to be regulated by seniority as determined by order of birth rather than by gender; hence, an elder sister outranks her younger brothers. For example, in cultures where males prostrate before their elders as a sign of respect, they do so for both females and males (Oyewumi, 2003).

In extended families, women occupy roles defined by consanguinity as well as conjugality. They are mothers as well as wives and sometimes co-wives. The position of wife refers not only to the conjugal relationship to a husband but also to the in-law relationships – male and female in the husband's lineage. This will be further explored under African feminism. In addition to their roles within their kin groups, African women were involved with the economic development, spirituality and governance of their villages, towns and cities.

Economic Role of African Women

In indigenous Africa, women were at the centre of trade and merchandise (Eldredge, 1991). They were responsible for setting the rules of trade among themselves like market taxes and tariffs; they practically organised and managed the market system. These women had and utilised highly developed business acumen for the economic upliftment of their various communities (Strobel, 1982; Sudarkasa, 1987). Among the Yoruba's (in West Africa) and

Kikuyu of Kenya, women were major food producers; they had ready access to land and authority of how the land was used and cultivated (Hakansson, 1994; House-Midamba & Ekechi, 1995).

Spiritual Role

Women were often the most powerful spiritual figures in the land. There were a select few who were responsible for announcing dates and times of ceremonies, rites, rituals; they were oracles, spirit medium, 'knower's', seers and advisors. They had power to place and remove curses. Africans are known for their spirituality and love for religion. This is one of the ways dominant feminine energy in the spiritual sphere helps ensure the protection of women's interest (Akyeampong & Obeng, 1995).

Governance

In terms of macro-political organisation, previously, most African societies had a dual sex political system, which allowed for substantial female representation and involvement in governance and administration (Sacks, 1979). The position of the queen mother, seen across Africa in Ghana, Egypt, Rwanda and Nigeria, gave women prominent and visible political authority in running nations. In most cases, the queen mother was older than the king and biologically related to him. She often had her own land from which she gained revenue through tax. She had her own court, and it was only through her court that decrees, especially death sentences made by the king, could be annulled. As a result, although the king had the technical power over the lives of his subjects, the queen mother could give someone back his/her life. She also ensured the well-being of women and children in her domain, as well as enjoyed the opportunity of selecting the king successor (Amadiume, 2005; Okome, 2005). African women were involved in many aspects of their families and communities, their involvement promoted the survival and well-being of their people.

African Feminism

African feminism can be defined as an ideology which encompasses freedom from oppression based on the political, economic, social and cultural manifestation of racial, cultural, sexual and class biases (Terborg-penn, 1996). Traditional African descent based societies used gender flexibilities to liberalize where biological gender would have restricted women in occupation of economic and political position. Such gender inclusiveness promotes the social equality and power inclusiveness that are necessary for promoting and achieving

equitable development for the survival of African communities (Amadiume, 2005). Oyewunmi (2002) stated that feminist researchers use gender as the explanatory model to account for women's subordination and oppression worldwide. The assumption is that both the category 'woman' and her subordination are universal. But gender is first and foremost a socio-cultural construct (Amadiume, 1987; Steady, 1981). Woman, as the 'other', are universally subordinate and third-world women are portrayed as even more subordinated, clinging to traditions and living in the past (Dossa, 2002) while the women's emancipation movement belongs to modernity and the future (Oyewumi, 2002). To counteract this notion of women as the 'other' in feminist discourse, there have been counter debates from African writers writing from their experiences as daughters, wives, and mothers.

Amadiume's (2005) book *Male daughters, Female husbands* examined the influence of gender in pre-colonial power structures and dynamics, and shows that roles were neither rigidly masculinised nor feminised. The flexibility in African gender reveals that culture can write and rewrite biology towards inclusiveness. A man can play a mother's role and women can be sons as well as husbands. Here, the language of kinship and descent becomes the mode for government administration and state. Through the concept of male daughters, a woman can lead the descent group which could be translated symbolically and in reality into a woman head-of-state. Likewise through the concept of female husbands, women can be heads of financial companies and corporation (Amadiume, 2005).

Contrary to the assumption of the African women in the traditional period as being the 'other', Oyewunmi (2002) argued that feminist concepts of gender emerged out of the logic of a patriarchal nuclear family; a family form that is inappropriately universalised. She drew from her research on Yoruba society of South-western Nigeria, West Africa. The traditional Yoruba family can be described as non-gendered because kinship roles and categories are not gender-differentiated. Significantly, power centres within the family are diffused and are not gender-specific. Moreover, because the fundamental organising principle within the family is seniority based on relative age, and not gender, kinship categories encode seniority not gender. Seniority is the social ranking of persons based on chronological ages; its principle is dynamic and fluid, unlike gender; it is not rigid or static.

With regards to categorising husband and wife within the family, the category which is usually the English husband, is non-gender-specific because it encompasses both males and

females. 'Iyawo' categorised as females in English refers to in-marrying females. The distinction between 'oko' and 'iyawo' is not one of gender but between those who are birth members of the family and those who enter by marriage. The distinction expresses a hierarchy in which the 'oko' position is superior to the 'iyawo'. It is to be noted that the hierarchy is not gender related because even a female 'oko' is superior to the male 'iyawo'. In larger society, the category of 'iyawo' includes both men and women, in that devotees of the 'Orisa' deities who are men are called 'iyawo' (Oyewunmi, 1997). Sudarkassa (1996) contrasted the characteristics of an Africa-based family system and European-based family system. I agree with her analysis based on the fact that the nuclear family is a conjugally based family which is built around a couple - the conjugal core. Amongst the Yoruba's of West Africa, it is the lineage that is regarded as the family. The lineage is a consanguinally based family system that is built around a core of brothers and sisters. If there was one role-identity that defined females in the African tradition, it was the position of mothers - which is that of authority (Oyewunmi 1997).

It can be argued that this type of feminism has the potential to emphasise the totality of human experience, portraying the strength and resilience of the human spirit resounding with optimism for the total liberation of humanity. It is a "humanistic feminism which is intrinsically a moral and political statement for human survival and wellbeing" (Steady, 1982).

Summary of Chapters

Chapter 1 (Introduction) provides a very basic background to the thesis; the abstract, research questions, aim of the research, rationale and significance, research methods and concept of self from African perspectives; African women, their status and roles, as well as definitions of key terms.

Chapter 2 (Literature Review) reviews previous research and relevant literature centred on African migration to New Zealand, factors that motivate African migrants, stressors and adjustment strategies.

Chapter 3 (Methodology/Methods) describes the research methodology - methods utilised to collect and analyse data and to assure accountability. Overall, the section looked at planning, preparing and recruitment required for the study.

Chapter 4 (Narrative) describes narrative methodology from African perspectives and its philosophical background.

Chapter 5 (Finding) describes the onset of journey/conflict at home, is the first findings chapter presenting qualitative data. Narratives include common themes, sub-themes, and supporting quotations from the African women who were interviewed on factors that motivated them to migrate to New Zealand.

Chapter 6 (Finding) the second findings chapter describes—‘Home sweet Home, living with loss’, presents findings on the stressors that African women experienced while adjusting to living in New Zealand.

Chapter 7 (Finding). The third findings chapter addressing stressors is named ‘I Had Someone to Clean My House’.

Chapter 8 (Finding) presents data reflecting the coping strategies of communalism/affect and spirituality utilised by African women.

Chapter 9 (Discussion) includes a summary and discussion of the findings, an overview of the study’s limitations, and recommendations for future explorations.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter I will review literature and past research on migration, that is the New Zealand immigration scene, African immigration to New Zealand, factors that motivate Africans and other migrants to migrate, the stressors that immigrants experience and the coping strategies.

Migration has occurred since the beginning of human existence. The factors that motivate people to migrate include: educational opportunities, economic reasons and political exile. For the process of migration to be understood, personal, familial, social and cultural factors have to be taken into account (Bhugra, 2003).

The immigration outcomes sought by the New Zealand Government include, increasing New Zealand human capital, contributing to the development of enterprise and innovations, as well as strengthening New Zealand's international links while maintaining social cohesion (Fletcher, 1999). Alongside identifying the potential gains of immigration, the need for reducing distress and ill health in individual immigrants has been recognised (Pernice et al., 2000). It is important to review literature relating to immigrants' well-being and adjustment.

New Zealand Immigration Scene

Maori are thought of as the major first settlers to arrive in New Zealand, arriving from various eastern Polynesian Islands between 750 and 1350 AD (O'Connor, 1990). In 1769, the British naval captain James Cook and his crew were recorded as the first Europeans to arrive in New Zealand and his discovery led to later links of New Zealand with Britain (McGill, 1982). The period between 1800 and 1840 witnessed the emergence of sealers and whalers in New Zealand seeking to exploit local resources (O'Connor, 1990). Many of them worked out satisfactory arrangements with Maori, who were needed to provide local knowledge, food and labour, and to guarantee the newcomers' safety. Among these immigrants was Edward Gibbon Wakefield who founded the New Zealand Company in 1837 with the aim of colonising New Zealand. Under that company insignia, 15,000 immigrants were assisted to New Zealand (McGill, 1982).

More English speakers of an Anglo-Celtic origin including English, Scottish, Irish and Welsh, arrived in New Zealand from 1840 to 1914 and settled in Auckland, Taranaki,

Hawkes Bay, Wellington, Nelson, Otago, Westland and Canterbury. Most of these migrants were involved in occupations of agriculture, buildings, craft, as well as white-collar jobs (Phillips, 2007).

There was an influx of immigrants to the South Island in search of gold in 1860 (Ng, 2001). Among these were Chinese gold miners who were among the first non-European immigrants (Ng, 2003). The Chinese were invited to New Zealand by the Provincial Government to aid in the development of horticulture and agriculture in the province (McGill, 1982). The initial Chinese migrants were men who arrived in New Zealand with the intention of making money and then returning to China. Another of the Asian cultural groups who were among the early settlers in New Zealand was Indians who were from Punjab and Gujarat; their various employment are noted to be peddlers, hawkers and domestics (Roy, 1978).

Although there was some variety in culture throughout the mid to late 1800s and until the 1970s, immigrants to New Zealand arrived mainly from Great Britain. This favouring of one group by restricting immigration largely to people of British origin relates to the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 by the British authority, which gave British immigrants legal rights as citizens in New Zealand (Phillips, 2007).

Cultural and economic reasons played a vital role regarding those allowed to migrate to New Zealand. Those who were encouraged to migrate were expected to adapt to life in New Zealand without difficulty. To achieve this goal, the 1899 Immigration Restriction Act was put in place, demanding that prospective immigrants should fill in an application form in the English Language. The motive behind this was to discourage migrants, not of British origin, from migrating to New Zealand. However, it became difficult to enforce and defend this policy. Thus, the Immigration Amendment Act of 1920 was put in place to replace the English language policy, introducing the system of permits for immigrants not of British birth. Permanent residence was granted based on the approval of the Minister of Customs (Nayar, 2005). The New Zealand government kept its 'white' policy through assisted migration schemes and entry permits from 1899 until 1987 when a point system was introduced (Nayar, 2005).

The Immigration Restriction Amendment Act was in use until the 1987 Immigration Act was introduced (Burke, 1986; Trlin, 1992). At this stage a point system was introduced promoting

the selection of immigrants based on merit rather than the tradition of selection based on their country of origin. Points were awarded for educational, trade or work qualification, family links, command of the English language and the applicant's ability to successfully settle in New Zealand (Ho, Lidgard, Cowling, & Bedford, 2003). Though migrants to New Zealand continued to be primarily of British origin, the 1960s and 1970s witnessed the arrival of immigrants from the Pacific Islands.

In December 1994, Statistics New Zealand (2005) recorded 64,380 permanent and long term immigrants residing in New Zealand. In December 2004, this number had increased to 80,480. Among these numerous immigrants to New Zealand were many from the African population (Phillips, 2007).

Africa is a vast and varied continent with a huge diversity of culture and ethnicities. In 2004 there were 44 different African nationalities represented in New Zealand, most were from South Africa, Somalia, Egypt, Zimbabwe and Ethiopia (Phillips, 2007). The first Africans in New Zealand were African Americans working on New England whaling ships in the 1830s and 1840s. More African arrivals were students who came to New Zealand through the special Commonwealth African Assistance plan in 1962. After completing their courses, some students returned while some remained, married and settled in New Zealand. Before the 1990s there were not many Black Africans in New Zealand because, as already discussed, the 'traditional source country' immigration policy favoured people of British origin. In the 1970s whites fleeing the Rhodesian war arrived in New Zealand after President Idi Amin mandated Asian Africans should leave Uganda in 90 days (Phillips, 2007).

The adoption of a formal refugee quota in 1987 and the outbreak of wars in countries like Ethiopia, Somalia and the genocide in Rwanda, resulted in an increase in the number of African refugees arriving in New Zealand. In the next section I review research and literature on the reasons for migrating.

Reasons for Migrating

Many researchers have attempted to understand why people migrate (Adepoju, 2004; Bhugra, 2003; Dzvimbo, 2003). Some of the factors that motivate people to migrate have been identified as adverse domestic conditions, political, social, economic and cultural factors, and for the pursuit of education (Bhugra, 2003; Lee, 1966; Reynolds, 2002)

The idea of pull and push factors is commonly used to understand the motivation for migrating (Lee, 1966). The pull factors include the promise of freedom, hope for new life, better educational opportunities or search for professional development, freedom from political instability or oppression. In addition, selective immigration policies have been used to attract highly skilled workers (Bhugra, 2004; Dzvimbo, 2003; Reynolds, 2006).

The ‘push’ factors have been identified as a “lack of life chances, low living standards, political and social instability, a lack of opportunities to utilise skills, natural disaster and environmental or ecological deterioration” (Dzvimbo, 2003, p. 8). In the next sections, I highlight potential push and pull factors that may be relevant to African immigrant women in New Zealand.

Economic Reasons

Economic reasons for migration out of Africa have been identified as lack of food, employment and lack of land (Adepoju, 2004; Makinwa-Adebusoye, 1995). The gender-based division of household responsibility is a reason for women to seek employment and use migration as a strategy for increasing their personal income to fulfil their economic responsibilities (Makinwa-Adebusoye, 1995; Reynolds, 2006). Other factors motivating women to migrate from African nations have been identified as increased demand for rural resources, particularly land, the reduction in public social expenditure due to economic crises and the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programmes which results in inflation in some African nations like Nigeria (Makinwa-Adebusoye, 1990). Among Nigerians, women from Igbo and Yoruba ethnic groups, tend to migrate autonomously to fulfil their own economic needs and not for the purpose of joining husband or a family member (Adepoju, 2004).

Social Cultural Reasons

Though the personality of an individual has been identified as an influential factor for migration, various studies have established that family ties determine the destinations of immigrants (Dzvimbo, 2003; Komolafe, 2008; Reynolds, 2002). Having a relative abroad usually acts as a possible tie to the potential destination of immigrants. Komolafe (2008) noted that there was chain migration among Nigerians because of family members who were already in Ireland. Boneva and Frieze (2001) argued that those who desire to migrate do so to be reunited with their immediate family in another country. Reynolds (2006) demonstrated how cultural expectations for financial contribution and the financial management of their

households has contributed to the migration of an upper-echelon of women from highly educated, wealthy and influential African families to migrate. Immigrants tend to migrate through existing family networks in order to receive vital practical support like housing, transportation and job information.

Political Reasons

It has been suggested that the reasons for migration from Africa are primarily due to economic necessity compounded by political insecurity and instability (Akokpari, 1998). Economic necessity and political insecurity has led to the deterioration in human rights and has increased the number of people seeking asylum or refuge. In the 1960s through to the 1980s, most African states were confronted with destabilising forces of colonialism, neo-colonialism, apartheid, the Cold war and political authoritarianism (Okechukwu, 2004). The Cold War led to brutal armed conflicts in Ethiopia and Somalia, and apartheid in South Africa. The result of the civil war, chaos, anarchy, bloodshed, horror and devastation has led many to migrate. Inter-state conflicts are an additional source of violence and instability in Africa (Okechukwu, 2004). Makina (2007) found that political reasons were the most cited reasons for Zimbabweans immigrating to places like South Africa.

Search for Professional Development

It is important to have emotional fulfilment and professional satisfaction in employment. Inadequate educational opportunities, poor remuneration, poor working conditions, insufficient career development opportunities, have been identified as reasons for migrating. Brown and Cornell (2004) studied doctors and nurses from the Pacific Island nations of Fiji, Samoa and Tonga and found that nurses and doctors were not only motivated to migrate based on economic reasons, they tended to have trained abroad and so had experienced superior working conditions. Loeffler (2000) also suggested that doctors used their qualification as a passport to freedom, intellectual and emotional fulfilment and professional satisfaction. The absence of intellectual and emotional fulfilment has led to the migration of many professionals to destinations where they could experience professional satisfaction.

Psychological Reasons

Some researchers have explored the impact of war, natural disaster, domestic violence, political instability and gender oppression as reasons for migrating (Makina, 2007; Maydell-Stevens, Masgoret, & Ward, 2007; Okechukwu, 2004). These factors impact on the

psychological well-being of individuals. Javis (2005) noted that women who experienced aggression, threats, insults and forced sex, as a result of domestic violence, had reason to migrate with their children . Anxiety, low self-esteem, and feeling like nobody as a result of lack of safety and security, were given as major reasons for migrating for Russian immigrants in New Zealand (Maydell-Stevens et al., 2007).

Acculturation of Immigrants

Moving from one location to another involves adapting to changes like physical and economic changes. There are two distinct aspects of intercultural adaptation that have been identified as socio-cultural adaptation; the first reflects the cultural learning approach and the ability to constructively interact with a different culture. The second is psychological adjustment, “which facilitates the individual’s sense of well-being, positive appraisal of situations and general satisfaction with life” (Maydell-Stevens et al., 2007, p. 1).

Berry’s (1980) acculturation model is often used to understand the outcomes of acculturation. This model is comprised of assimilation in which the immigrant forfeits his/her cultural identity to embrace the host’s cultural values. Integration is when immigrants fit into the host society’s social framework and still maintain their cultural identity. Rejection occurs when the immigrant withdraws from the host society. Marginalisation refers to a rejection of both the culture of settlement and the culture of origin. The integration strategy has been identified as predicting positive outcomes in psychological and socio-cultural adaptation of migration (Berry, 1997). On the other hand, separation, assimilation and marginalisation are often associated with poor adaptation, which can lead to psychological disturbances (Berry, 1997).

Berry’s model is useful in analysing the outcomes of adaptation. Alternatively (Ward, 1996) model examines the different variables, which influence the acculturation process; factors like reasons for migration, language fluency, acculturation strategies and cultural identity, in addition to situational factors for example, length of contact, cultural distance and social support. This model also incorporates the stress and coping framework, various factors important to both cultures of origin and settlement, and psychological and socio-cultural outcomes of acculturation (Maydell-Stevens et al., 2007).

Although it is to be noted that migration does not necessary compromise psychological well-

being among immigrants, psychological acculturation may involve factors that are highly stressful (Berry, 1990; Berry & Kim, 1998).

Psychological adaptation of immigrants has been considered as important because previous research has noted that immigrants suffer from higher levels of emotional distress and poorer mental health than the host population. Psychological adjustment is defined as the presence of wellness and could be used to describe positive psychological functioning. Its characteristics have been identified as autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life and self-acceptance (Ryff, 1989). Successful acculturation is defined in terms of mental and physical health, psychological satisfaction, high self-esteem, competent work performance, and good grades in school (Liebkind, 2001). It is proposed that there are different strategies of adaptation leading to different adaptation outcome. For the individual, such strategies have been identified as adjustment, reaction and withdrawal (Berry, 1976). The process of adopting any of these strategies may cause various difficulties for immigrants which may jeopardise their psychological well-being.

Factors such as racism, sexism, discrimination based on employment and lack of knowledge of resources in the community have been identified as predicting poor adjustment among migrant groups (Pernice et al., 2000). Systemic forces such as oppression and discrimination also impact immigrant women's mental health (Yakusho & Chronister, 2005). Fernando (1991) noted that the impact of racism and discrimination is to reduce self-esteem and to undermine one's confidence and self-image. One of the major acculturative stresses associated with psychological symptoms such as increased anxiety, depression, feelings of marginality and alienation among immigrants is when they perceive themselves to be targets or victims of discrimination by the host national (Dion, Dion, & Pak, 1992). Some of the changes that occur due to acculturation are physical, biological, political, economic and cultural. As migrants adapt to these changes, their way of life is altered (Nwadiora, 1995). Furthermore, loss of language, social and professional status, are regarded as stressors that could impact immigrants' mental health (Creese & Kambere, 2003). Berry et al. (1987) noted that for these stressors to qualify as acculturative stress, the changes that occur should be related in a systematic way to known features of the acculturation process.

Stressors Impacting Well-being of Migrant Women

Immigrant women's migration and acculturation experiences may threaten their physical, emotional, and mental health (Lewis, 2000; Nwadiora, 1995). Other factors influencing women's migration experiences include feelings of loneliness, loss of self-esteem, strain and fatigue from cognitive overload, uprootedness and the perception that they are unable to function competently in the new culture (Wong, 2000; Yakusho & Chronister, 2005).

Researchers have identified many factors impacting the psychological well-being of immigrant women at different locations at different times (Essien, 2003; Nwadiora, 1995; Waldron, 2002; Wong, 2000). Essien's (2003) study of five African immigrant women, including herself in Bradford, London, found that racism is endemic in British society. She argued that Black women from Bradford are more likely to be socially excluded due to socio-economic stressors such as low incomes, poor housing and deprivation, that prevent immigrants from becoming included in the social economic development of its host society.

African immigrants' oppression and subordination in other countries like Canada cannot be underestimated. To have a better understanding of the plight of Africans in Canada, possible explanations have been offered for poor health (including mental health) status among Blacks. These explanations include racism, socio economic deprivation, social exclusion and persistent marginalisation (Waldron, 2002). Ochukpue (2004) noted that Africans living in the United States (US) appear to be happy with their relocation decisions but they were not necessarily happy with their present life having experiences of alienation from their surroundings, a sense of powerlessness, marginalisation, and alienation from mainstream white society (Arthur, 2000). Nwadiora (1995) found that African women were more vulnerable to alienation and experienced negative effects of stress more than Black Caribbean women in the US. The women in Nwadiora's study reported intense feelings of isolation, distress, loneliness, and frustration which are negative emotional experiences. She also established that among African immigrants there was a high incidence of alienation and self-estrangement from the host society's culture.

To cope with America's culture, Africans in the US use maintenance of duality of reference which enables them to 'straddle two worlds'. Despite using this coping strategy to adjust to American culture, psychological conflicts are manifested as a consequence of such an inherently ambivalent identity (Ochukpue, 2004). Aparaku (1991), in the preface to African

Émigrés in the US, noted:

The African emigrant in America, like a child of two worlds, is torn between America and Africa. On the one hand, he loves the political freedoms, the civil liberties, and the economic prosperity he enjoys in the United States, although he does feel a sense of alienation and discrimination. He also feels ignored, under-utilised, unrecognised, and unfulfilled. On the other hand, he loves his country, his family, his friends and the culture that he left behind him. However, he resents political dictatorship and abuse, corruption, economic mismanagement, tribalism, and civil wars that are pervasive in Africa today (p. xvi).

It has been noted that racism is an important factor impacting immigrants' psychological adjustment. I will focus on how the different types of racism impact the psychological well-being of people of African descent at different locations and at different times.

Racism

There are three categories of racism experienced by African immigrants in places like the United Kingdom, US and Canada. These are: inter-personal racism, institutional racism and internalised racism (Essien, 2003; Lewis 2000; Waldron, 2002). Waldron's (2002) study of Africans in Canada highlighted their experience of racism and the pervasive nature of its impact on their psychosocial well-being. Ochukpue (2004) noted that "incidents of racial discrimination and violence inflicted upon African immigrants have been well documented, and surveys of African born individuals in the United States reveal their resentment and anxiety about victimization at the hands of whites" (p. 70).

African immigrants' experience of inter-personal racism in Canada were varied and ranged from personal threats or insults, being deliberately ignored, and name calling, to perceiving subtle changes in people's expressions (Waldron, 2002). The African women in Lewis' (2000) study highlighted how they were called names like 'Nigger', and were insulted by being asked to go back to where they came from. They also experienced tremendous hostility from Black Americans who challenged them to go back to their country. Being discriminated against by Black Americans was considered to be very painful because Black Americans are brothers and sisters (Lewis, 2000).

Africans also experience institutionalised racism, which is related to different access to the goods, services, and opportunities of society (Jones, 2000). Institutionalised racism in the health care system includes a range of practices that affect access to services by immigrant

groups. Examples of such practices are lack of cultural competency on the part of care providers, diminished access to health services, and inadequate funding for appropriate community services (Galabuzi, 2004; Ochukpue, 2004).

The African women interviewed in Creese and Kambere's (2003) study noted that they felt there was no future for them in Canada. They had no sense of belonging and struggled to overcome the stressful situations in their lives. However, the more they tried to cope with the situations the harder it became for them. This was as a result of barriers in the Canadian institutions which prevented their upward social and economic mobility. Such barriers have been identified as not finding their place within the community, inability to find suitable employment in the profession that they have been trained in, lack of opportunity to utilise their skills, and difficulty with having their pre-migration qualifications accepted.

One of the participants in Creese and Kambere's (2003) study noted that as an African migrant woman in Canada, though she gained her university qualifications from Canada and had been resident in Canada for 13 years, the main obstacle was that "you never become a citizen or a Canadian" (p. 8). This remains a block preventing women from participating in the economic development of Canada. They noted that the importance of belonging and not being marginalised and excluded from the society is important. Creese and Kambere (2003) noted that from the narratives of the women's experience:

It becomes clear that belonging is rooted in a range of material practices, institutional arrangements and discursive constructs: access to employment, access to desirable jobs, scope to develop skills and potential, to have pre-migration educational credentials recognised, to be able to develop good networks of support and information, to leave behind the perpetual "immigrant" label, the quest to be in and not just among the community (p. 10).

The lack of access to credible, culturally sensitive research was also evidence of racism experienced by Africans. African women in Canada tried to cope with institutionalised racism by adopting one form or another of resistance, but this remained an enormous burden which impacted their psychological well-being (Ekpo, 2000).

It will be worthwhile to know if African women migrants in New Zealand also experience institutionalised racism in the form of non-recognition of their qualifications and not being able to utilise their skills. To this end, I will explore whether they feel they belong in the New Zealand society and if they have the opportunity to contribute to the system.

Another type of racism affecting the mental health of African women is internalised racism (Ekpo, 2000). This is the acceptance of negative messages about one's own abilities and negative worth, which is often manifested in such behaviours as self-devaluation, resignation, helplessness, and embracing the dominant culture's values.

Ekpo (2000) noted that growing up in a segregated society such as Nova Scotia, Canada, "the Blacks knew the work that was available to them, which was menial jobs" (p. 120). They could only work in the laundry, as a maid in a hotel or as a family maid. The fact that they were educated was no guarantee that they were going to get the kind of jobs for which they were trained. For example one of the women in Ekpo's study who wanted to train as a doctor, noted that "it would be a waste of time on our parts to try to become doctors, lawyers, physiotherapists, nurses. It was not available; the only profession that was available for Blacks was becoming a Black teacher in a Black school" (p. 120).

One of the participants in Creese and Kambere's (2003) study expressed her frustration at the stigma and discrimination and "hints of resignation" as she suggested that she should lower her expectations and "find a way to be an immigrant" (p. 10). However, she noted that:

On the other hand, it is okay, because I am an immigrant, so I have to live as an immigrant despite (it) and find a way to be an immigrant, which is new status to me, because I have never lived as an immigrant. So now I have to live as an immigrant. (p. 8)

The indication of internalising racism means she has to accept being socially excluded, not having the desired job, not having the opportunity to use her skills, or non-acceptance of the qualification with which she came to Vancouver.

This episode could be related to my experience and that of some African women. When I arrived in New Zealand, the impression that I got from some Africans was that, as an African with an overseas qualification, I might not be able to find employment here unless I retrained in another profession. During my interaction with some Africans I was told to go and train as a caregiver because that is "our job"; I was advised to throw into the rubbish bin the Master of Social Work certificate that I had from Nigeria, as I would never be able to secure a job with that certificate. Another African stated during my discussion with him that if New Zealand employers are not ready to accept our qualifications we cannot force them to.

This sentiment reflects the impact of internalised racism and the resignation of some African

women in New Zealand, especially in the area of finding employment that is suitable to pre-migration qualifications. It would be interesting to know the influence of this form of racism on how African immigrant women perceive and locate themselves within the New Zealand system.

Another stressor that immigrant women experience is the persistent feeling of loneliness as a result of leaving behind established social networks.

Loneliness

It has been noted that immigrant women experience persistent feelings of loneliness and isolation following immigration (Lynam, 1985). Lewis (2000) found that loneliness was the major psychological difficulty mentioned by African women in the US. These women emphasised the loss they experienced leaving behind established social connections like family and friends, and their frustrations at unfamiliarity with norms and mores of American culture and the loss of freedom to roam around their neighbourhood in Africa without fear. This sense of loss leads to feelings of isolation.

Dossa (1999) noted that Iranian women refugees in Canada mentioned feeling lonely due to being separated from their older adult children, who could not find employment in Canada and had to go to other countries for employment. Furthermore, they did not want to go through the trauma of immigration in the process of reuniting with their adult children. Being excluded because structural barriers restricted Iranian women from constructively engaging in economic development in Canada and further impacted the mental health of the women, in the sense that they were not able to find employment. Even though they tried to improve their English skills, there were many barriers preventing them from achieving their goals. Because of this, the women became isolated, resulting in loneliness on their part. Wong's (2000) study among Ghanaian women in Toronto found that eight of the 16 women interviewed had, at one time or another, left their children behind in Ghana; the length of separation ranging from five to eleven years. Their narratives revealed the sadness, despair, frustration and loneliness experienced by these women due to the separation from their children. One of the women expressed that leaving family and being without relatives was hard.

Feeling lonely as a result of uprootedness has a great impact on the psychological well-being of migrant women. Another scene of struggle for these women has been identified as

maintaining their cultural identity.

Maintaining Cultural Identity

It has been identified that leaving behind familiar food, native music, social customs, known history, one's attire and language, and being faced with strange tasting food, different music and cumbersome language, have been identified as causing mental health issues among migrants (Akhtar, 1999). Lewis (2000) found that African women in the US have had to seek ethnic carnivals, foods and newspapers by visiting friends and family at home. These have helped in keeping their identity.

It would be interesting to know how Africans have maintained their cultural identity in New Zealand in the face of such pressures. Another significant factor impacting on immigrant women's psychology is English Language competence.

English Language Competency

Creese and Kambere's (2003) study of issues affecting African women in Vancouver explored the views of 12 focus group participants. Most of them had advanced post-secondary qualifications and masters' degrees undertaken in Canadian and American universities. Their length of residence in Canada varied from two to 13 years. Their experiences with employment, housing, and settlement services, and mothering, changing gender relations, language and policy were covered. This study found that participants identified accents as a perennial problem. They noted that the women experienced language as a problem in their daily life, not because they could not express themselves or comprehend what was being communicated to them, but because their African English accents marked them as immigrant and African. Black women are perceived to have low English competency. Accent is considered a site through which racialized power relations are negotiated (Creese & Kambere, 2003). "African English" accents imply limited English skill and the most common response to "African English" was that, when Africans spoke, they were ignored and corrected, rather than their listeners responding to the context of speech. One of the women noted, "The language is a barrier to integrate in the society because if you speak English in your accent people know that you are from Africa ... and by accent they cannot give you a job, or a house" (Creese & Kambere 2003, p. 3).

It would be interesting to know how many African women have been socially excluded in New Zealand, either because they are perceived not to have the level of competency in English language, or are not being promoted at their work places because they are considered incompetent in English language. Most African women have decided to migrate to ensure better living condition for themselves and their family; however most of them have faced barriers to achieving this goal.

Economic Issues

Economic difficulties and difficulty in securing work have been identified as factors impacting immigrant women's psychological well-being. Sometimes this is related to not being able to work because they have to look after the children. Other times, they experience difficulty passing certification examinations and gaining work experience (Creese & Kambere, 2003; Dossa, 2002; Lewis, 2000; Wong, 2000).

It has been demonstrated that some of the immigrant women have higher degrees, but they find it hard to gain employment in the field in which they have been trained. Most immigrant women are employed in part-time or informal jobs, which are often unstable, poorly paid and cannot provide them with important social benefits (Wong, 2000). It has been noted that immigrant women are expected to hold demeaning and low paying jobs . When these end jobs were not available, they end up having no jobs (Bannerji, 1995). Most immigrant women are forced into voluntary work. One of the Iranian women interviewed by Dossa (2002) narrated her experience of how a service provider had suggested that she do volunteer work at a day care centre. The service provider advised her that she should not worry if she thought her English was not that good; she could hold babies. This is despite the fact that the interviewee had three professional qualifications. She noted that despite updating her language skills in Canada she was unable to find employment.

In my capacity as a leader and a counsellor in my community, I have had the opportunity to listen to stories of migrant women working hard to pass re-certification examinations, to practise as nurses, teachers, psychologists, and in other professions. The process of re-certification has proved traumatic for some of these women; some have managed to pass the required examination after many attempts. Some have had to wait until they have permanent residence before going back to retrain in the profession where they are sure of available employment. In most cases, the family had to depend on one source of income which was

barely enough to meet their needs. This has been both my own and other migrant women's experiences in New Zealand, which we find emotionally crippling. Under employment and frustration of hiring policies have been identified as salient issues creating stress with both emotional and physical consequences (Graham & Thurston, 2005).

Increased Workload

Immigrant women experience increased workload due to their multiple roles as mother, wife and daughter and a student and full time worker. Immigrant women, who have children, have been noted to experience exhaustion and frustration in fulfilling their multiple role obligations in their adoptive country (Shin & Shin, 1999). Shin and Shin (1999) studied six well educated middle-age Korean wives residing in New York and found that a majority of these women had stayed at home in Korea but now had to work outside of the home to improve the family's financial situation in the US. The fact that these women have to take up a new role of being responsible for the family's financial problems, household duties and children's education resulted in feelings of exhaustion and frustration. Immigrant women's increased workload also indicates the unavailability of support from extended family members back in their country of origin. The lack of support for childcare and housework in the host country creates a vacuum the women have to fill. Graham and Thurston (2005) noted a strong element of self-sacrifice in some of the women's actions as they try to keep their family together, the women's actions was seen as a source of stress. I am keen to explore the self-sacrificing actions employed by African women to keep their families together. .

In the above sections I have highlighted the impact adapting to a new culture has on immigrant women. Berry's (2001) acculturative model has been used to understand the influence of strategies of acculturation, which are assimilation, integration, marginalisation, and I have established that the integration strategy is considered to effect positive outcomes of acculturation.

I have also highlighted the factors impacting the psychological adjustment of African immigrant women in countries such as the United Kingdom and the US. The importance of this for my study is to be aware that there is a possibility that African immigrant women in New Zealand may have the same experiences of racism, sexism and discrimination that may reflect in their underemployment or unemployment as their counterparts who have migrated to some of these countries mentioned. In the following section I review the coping strategies

to migration stressors.

Responses to Stress of Acculturation

Stress has been identified as “external events that cause disequilibrium in the life of the individual” (Lewis, 2000, p. 3). Earlier studies on stress have identified the differences in how individuals cope with stress and the differences within individuals in the way they handle particular situations (Lewis, 2000). There are different types of coping strategies. “Coping strategies can be constructive which increase the likelihood of positive outcomes, or maladaptive leading to increased psychological distress” (Maydell-Steven et al., 2007, p. 15). Coping responses may be classified in many ways such as appraisal-focussed strategies, problem-oriented strategies and emotion-oriented strategies (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Moos & Billings, 1982). I will review coping strategies that are consistent with Africentric philosophy that is the framework of this study.

An appraisal focused coping strategy is when the individual identifies the cause of the problem and finds a positive solution or decides not to do anything to solve the problem by ignoring the threat (Moos & Billings, 1982). Problem focussed strategies are directed towards managing the problem by seeking verification and guidance from others, and when the individual redirects his/her activities towards a more productive task, towards finding a solution to the problem. This usually results in positive adaptation and successful resolution of problems (Breznitz & Golberger, 1982; Schmidt, 1992).

Emotion-focused strategies, on the other hand, are used to reduce the level of emotional distress to a particular stress in order to control its psychological impact. This may include ventilating feelings like anger (Breznitz & Golberger, 1982; McCrae & Costa, 1986; Schmitz, 1992). Berry (1997) suggested that coping could also be considered a psychological adaptation that includes tools that equip the individual with a clear sense of self. Personal and cultural identity, good awareness of self and the determination to achieve and succeed have been identified as examples of such tools.

Coping and acculturation are closely related. Coping with a new culture demands learning new responses and skills, as well as having access to new information (Taft, 1977). Some researchers have noted that the acceptance of migrants by host nationals is usually linked

with positive self-esteem and lower acculturative stress (Searle & Ward, 1990).

Immigrants may experience difficulties during the process of adjusting to a new culture and this could lead to significant stress (Kosic, 2004). Furnham (1986) noted that reasons such as the expectations of the migrants, negative life events, available social support, social skill deficit and clash of values, could be related to immigrants' losses and bereavement. Bhugra (2003) noted that the response of individual migrants to intergroup contact could lead to assimilation, segregation and integration.

I am going to focus in my analysis on how immigrants have used coping strategies such as cognitive strategies, appraisal focused and emotion oriented strategies to cope with the stress they experience when adjusting to the culture of their host country.

Cognitive Strategies

Cognitive strategies have been identified as the conscious, rational techniques used to alleviate problems by immigrants. Some techniques adopted have been identified as positive thinking, optimism, self-persuasion, and reframing in the form of priorities (Maydell-Stevens et al., 2007). Maydell-Stevens et al. (2007) noted in a study of Russian immigrants in New Zealand the importance of being in contact with people who have a positive view of life and a constructive attitude to problems. This study noted that focusing only on the negative aspects of migration and the negative nature of the host country would have a negative impact on immigrants. Instead, the importance of identifying the positive aspects of migration, to set goals ahead, and to move forward was recognised.

Self-persuasion is another cognitive strategy used by immigrants to cope in a new environment (Datta et al., 2007; Graham & Thurston, 2005). This is when migrants affirm that they were doing the right thing, despite going through stresses related to immigration, which they did not envisage or prepare for. For example Ochukpe (2004) study of African professors in two historically Black institutions in a South-eastern State in America, found that despite feelings of powerlessness, low self-esteem, and alienation, they were able to affirm that they were doing the right thing by migrating to the US. It was considered better for them to be an academic in the US compared to being an academic in their home country. One of the participants in Maydell-Stevens et al. (2007) study noted, "I gave myself a directive: here, there are people for whose sake I live, my family" (p. 16). To help overcome

the initial problem, immigrants have engaged in reframing or concentrating on priorities by putting things in perspective (Graham & Thurston, 2005; Lewis, 2000).

I will be careful to note during collecting data if cognitive strategies have been identified as a coping skill used by African women migrants to adjust to New Zealand. Besides this coping skill, there are different ways that migrants solve their problems regarding housing, employment and child care.

These strategies of problem solving have been identified as coping strategies used by immigrants in adjusting to a new culture and could be in the form of utilising available social networks to solve problems related to employment, accommodation, education and other problems encountered by immigrants during the process of adjusting to a new environment (Maydell-Stevens et al., 2007). I will be exploring the extent to which immigrants have used social network support, religious coping and dual frame of reference to cope in a new culture and the relevance of such coping skills for recent African women migrants in New Zealand.

Social Networks Support

Maintaining a good social network support has been identified as a resource that migrants could use to cope during the acculturation process (Odera, 2007). When an individual is able to mobilize strong supportive resources from his or her social network, possible negative effects on health are reduced. Maintaining a good social network has been found to have positive effects on the outcome of migration. Social support could be in the form of using social, environmental or external coping resources to enhance mastery of some tasks which may include immediate and extended family members, friends, and community members.

Maydell-Stevens et al. (2007) identified that the Russian immigrants in New Zealand used social support of their family members through two different pathways: instrumental support and emotional support. These types of support included receiving financial assistance, provision of initial accommodation, help with the immigration process, arrangement of necessary documentation needed to settle in the host country, and care of the younger children by their grandparents.

It is to be noted that when an individual is able to mobilise strong supportive resources from

his or her social network, possible negative effects on health are reduced. Using social support in the process of adaptation has been identified as an important factor that moderates the relationship between acculturative stress and mental health among immigrants (Hovey, 2000; Odera, 2007).

I am of the opinion that African women migrants will benefit from using social networks as a coping strategy when settling in New Zealand. Coming from a collective society where things are done in common and where each individual takes responsibility for her neighbour. It is expected that people of African descent would bond to support one another regardless of which country they might come from. They also feel obligated to care and support one another through times of crisis. This is reflected in how people pool their resources to support their families. For example it is not strange to have my friend's children at my house after school hours to enable their parents to stay at work and be sure their children are being looked after in a safe environment. Among the social networks used by African women migrants in New Zealand are their faith based religious groups; religion has been identified as an important part of Africans.

Religion and Coping

Religiosity is another coping style employed by immigrants to deal with the stress of acculturation (Odera, 2007). Religion is the belief system that includes shared, institutionalised moral values about a God or a Higher Power and involvement in a faith community (Pergament, 1997). According to Pergament (1997) religious coping is when one utilises religious beliefs and activities to manage stress. In this situation, the responsibility for solving problems is placed on God, with the individual remaining inactive in the process.

The benefits of religiosity to health and well-being are found to be related to reduction of psychological distress and increased psychological status in many ways (Odera, 2007). The benefit of belonging to a religious group could help provide specific cognitive resources that are useful in the problem solving or emotion regulating aspects of coping with stress (Ellison, Boardman, Williams, & Jackson, 2001). Kamya's (1997) study among African immigrants in the US identified that participation in organised religious activities has a positive influence upon stress coping ability.

The use of religion as a coping strategy is reflected in the number of faith led organisations

like churches, which are branches of churches from African countries in Auckland. It is not strange to identify some churches like the Christ Revival Church Auckland as the Ghanaians' church, or the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Auckland as the Nigerians' church. Through these churches, new immigrants receive tremendous financial, emotional and spiritual support. For example in the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Auckland, which is pastored by my husband and me, we offer free family and relationship counselling. We educate recent African migrants about settlement support in New Zealand, we sometimes accommodate people that are new in the country and support them to find employment. There were occasions where church members had to raise tuition fees to support international students. The church supports members to organise weddings and stand as family members. Women have received tremendous support from the women's group during pregnancy and childbirth. Some families have lost their family members and have been supported through the process of grief and organising the funeral ceremony and sometimes church members have contributed money to take the corpse to their country of origin.

As pastors of the church we also educate ourselves about New Zealand policies, especially immigration policy, to educate and support people that are planning to invite their family members. This is particularly important when their application to invite their spouse or other family members has been declined by the Office of Immigration.

Other ways that immigrants receive support is through participating in the prayer meetings that take place during the weekdays and on Sundays. There are special programmes, titled the *Holy Ghost Service* during the last Friday of every month. Through such church programmes, immigrants have been encouraged and motivated by sermons portraying the stories of immigrants like Joseph, Esther, Ruth and Daniel in the bible, and how God had helped them to adjust and become prominent people in the land of their sojourning. Such teachings and prayer meetings have encouraged immigrants to cope with the stress experienced by them in their host country and have helped resolve many problems related to immigration, employment, family issues and adjusting to New Zealand culture.

Maintaining Dual Reference

This is when immigrants compare their life circumstance and status to their experiences prior to immigration (Arthur, 2000). Arthur (2000) noted that despite African immigrants' sense of powerlessness, marginalisation and alienation from America's mainstream society, they were

committed to participating in the educational and economic opportunity structure presented to them by the host country. Ochukpue (2004) noted that recent African immigrants to the US usually compared their achievement in the States, with that of their peers in Africa. They also compared their current status to what they aspired to attain in the host country. Most of the participants in Ochukpue's (2004) study noted that the decision to migrate to the States had been worthwhile because they had access to research, resources, economic and other benefits. She also noted that while the study participants noted being 'better off' pursuing an academic career in the US, they maintained a good relationship with friends and families that are still in Africa. The participants accord high value to the opportunity to assist their relatives, villages and colleagues that are still at home.

This coping strategy could be explained by an adage in my tribe which says "Ajo ko le dun dun ko ni le gbagbe Ile" meaning, regardless of how pleasant or rewarding a land of sojourn is, a sojourner must remember his root (homeland). Africans take pride in remembering their root because it helps in reassuring them that they are not alienated from their roots.

Changing Household Structure

This is when a household takes a major decision related to improving their economy, and to ensure their survival in the face of economic hardship as well as balancing productive and reproductive responsibility (Datta et al., 2007). Immigrant families have changed the household structure at one time or the other to save on expenditure related to childcare, food and paying rent. Jarvis (2005) noted that the cost of childcare in London is prohibitive and that immigrant families have employed some strategies whereby their children are being cared for by their friends and family members to save on such cost.

Datta's et al (2007) study among migrants in London noted that 39% of the participants identified as having dependent children living abroad. Wong (2000) highlighted that among the Ghanaian women in Toronto, being separated from their children by time and space is a common experience. At the time of the interview, half the women were separated from their children. Wong noted that the lack of secure jobs, financial resources and inadequate support led these women to sharing of motherhood responsibilities with kin and friends in Ghana. In response to transnational parenting, the majority of migrants were sending remittances to their home country.

It is interesting to explore how African women replicate similar experiences of transnational parenting in New Zealand. Transnational parenting creates an enabling situation whereby immigrant women could concentrate on the settling down in a new environment.

I will be looking to identify if the African women that I interview are using this strategy to cope with their productivity and reproduction roles in New Zealand. There are stories of women migrants inviting their mothers and others to have them look after their children. Such applications have been declined, based on the claim that New Zealand immigration is not sure that such mothers will return to Africa. It is also a policy that individuals inviting their parents should deposit the sum of \$5,000 as bond before a visitor's permit can be issued. Paying such an amount is difficult for most young immigrant families. Apart from the stressors related to childcare, the cost of rent is also of great concern to immigrants. One way that many migrants have responded to this is by sharing a house with other migrant families to lower the cost of rent. Datta et al. (2007) noted that some immigrants had to live with their family upon arrival in London and then found subsequent accommodation which they shared with other immigrant women. They reported that family and friends "who were hard up" were incorporated into an existing household until they could establish themselves independently.

This could be the experience of new African immigrants in New Zealand because most immigrants that arrive usually need to start looking for employment, and this takes time. In the case of international students who have to pay school fees, which are three times that of the domestic students, some of these students are being offered accommodation by family, friends or church members, pending the time that they are able to find a job that could sustain them in paying their bills.

Immigrants are faced with challenges of coping with significant changes in their lives, which require mobilising resources that will help them to adjust in the host country. Researchers have identified that mobilising resources in the process of adjusting within the host country may also help in alleviating the effect of stress on migrants. Utilising the coping strategies discussed earlier may enhance psychological adaptation and reduce the rate of mental illness among the migrant group (Bhugra, 2004). In recognition of the impact of acculturative stress on migrants, it was noted that it is important that appropriate and accessible mental health services be available.

Ubuntu

Although I reviewed literature on the strategies that immigrant women have used to cope with stressors, I have used some elements of Ubuntu (refer to definition, chapter 1, p. 11) and how African women have used coping strategies such as communalism, affect and spirituality to cope with immigration stressors. These coping strategies are consistent with Africentric philosophy and psychology.

Communalism

Communalism from an Africentric perspective indicates “a basic commitment to interdependence and emphasis on social involvement, willingness to assume social duties, and beliefs in promoting inter-dependence” (Thompson, 2003, p. 133). The importance of these principles is evident in many ways such as interdependence, connectedness, cooperativeness, mutual support, collective sharing, respect for others, the importance of the extended family and oral tradition (Holdstock, 2000; Schiele, 2000; Thompson, 2003).

Affective Dimension

The affective dimension of Africentrism refers to the significance of emotional receptivity and expressiveness (Boykin & Ellison, 1995). A growing body of psychological research has noted that emotion and emotional regulatory styles are predictive of health outcomes (Consedine, Magai, & Horton, 2002). The affective dimension indicates that one is in touch with his/her affective tone, as well as being in touch with the affective tone of others (Jagers, Smith, Mock, & Dill, 1997). The presence of the affective dimension is signified by sensitivity to emotional sincerity, the interweaving of thoughts and feelings (Thompson, 2003). The affective dimensions deal with the psycho-emotional aspects of feelings understood by others and implies cognitive and emotional congruence in a social situation. It is a cognitive basis of perceived emotional support among individuals (Thompson, 2003).

Spirituality

Spirituality is an element of the Afro-cultural ethos (Thompson, 2003). From an African perspective spiritual orientation includes a belief in the continued presence of the deceased, praying or requesting for God’s help and respecting God’ force in others (Jagers, Smith, Mock, & Dill 1997). “Myths, proverbs, invocations, prayers, incantations, rituals, songs and dreams are the religious-cultural world-view of Africans and these belong to the realm of

African spirituality” (Pobee, 1979, p. 21). Spirituality serves as a potential buffer from insufficient and affective and interpersonal relationships, and it is positive identity maintenance and enhances self-esteem (Thompson, 2003). To further understanding of the women’s stories I will explore the supernatural characteristics of the African epic as it relates to the place the supernatural holds among African societies’ spiritual and religious practice (Deme, 2010; Kunene, 1991). Okpewho (1979) noted that “the essential mark of the heroic personality in many African folk epic is in its reliance on supernatural resources” (p. 119). It would be useful to know how African women have maintained their heroic personality by relying on supernatural resources to cope with the stressors that they experienced. These elements are considered crucial in helping the hero/heroine discover their identity and integrate in the place of foreign sojourn (Kunene, 1991; Seydou, 1983).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have reviewed literature and past research on migration, that is the New Zealand immigration scene, African immigration to New Zealand, factors that motivate Africans and other migrants to migrate, the stressors that immigrants experience and the coping strategies they have employed to cope with immigration stressors. Moreover, I have written on the coping strategies that I consider culturally appropriate to understand how African women migrant have cope with migration stressors. In the next chapter I will write on narrative methodology as a unique storytelling tradition that reflects the beliefs, values and ritual rooted in African societies.

CHAPTER THREE: NARRATIVE METHODOLOGY

It is only the story that can continue beyond the war and the warrior. It is the story that outlives the sound of war-drums and exploits of brave fighters. It is the story... that saves our progeny from blundering like blind beggars in to the spikes of the cactus fence. Does the blind man own his escort? No, neither do we the story; rather it is the story that owns us and directs us. (Achebe, 1987, p. 114)

Introduction

Stories are the foundation of qualitative studies and the study of stories people tell about their lives is important. Africans are story tellers by nature. There is a unique storytelling tradition that reflects the beliefs, values and ritual rooted in African societies. Although African migrants' arrival in New Zealand is recent, their oral tradition should be explored to reveal the depth of their experiences. My goal in this chapter is to first discuss the philosophical background of narrative methodology, second, storytelling and story making from an African perspective; and third, outline the story collection and analytical method used in this research for gathering and interpreting stories rooted in African oral tradition.

The Philosophical Background of Narrative Methodology

This research is rooted in African oral tradition rooted in Africentric philosophy. The Africentric framework is a genre of thought and knowledge created out of experience rooted in the cultural image and interest of people of African descent. The basis of this framework is grounded in an African worldview (Carroll, 2008).

African worldview is a "structure of philosophical assumptions, values, and principles upon which a way of perceiving the world is based and the index of normal functioning of African families at home and in Diaspora" (Montgomery, 1990, p. 39). These assumptions, values and beliefs, founded on African cultural traditions, are needed to build and sustain family, community and culture and relate to definitions of the self, others, and the relationship of the self with the environment (Schiele, 2000). Deviation from an African indigenous world view orientation is considered abnormal and represents a psycho-cultural disorder (Kambon, 1992). Although the majority of writing on Africentric perspective is focused on African Americans, the basic principles are applicable to Africans in Diaspora and could be used to understand Africans in New Zealand.

Some of the dimensions of the Africentric worldview are spirituality, affect, oral tradition, and harmony, time as a social phenomenon, rhythm, stylistic expressiveness, interpersonal orientation and communalism. These dimensions determine the choice of assumption about African research methodology (Dixon, 1976). Dixon (1976) argued that the dominant value-orientations for homeland and overseas Africans, is the man-to-person relationship, being, felt time, communalism and harmony-with-nature. In regards to the grounds or method of knowledge are affect-symbolic imagery and cognition. Symbolic imagery is the use of phenomena such as words, gestures, tones, rhythms, and objects to convey meaning (Owens-Moore, 1996). This method of knowledge is best represented by storytelling rooted in African oral tradition, a significant dimension of African world view.

Storytelling, an important aspect of oral tradition, has been entrenched in the African cultural community. The oral tradition is a way of life for people of African descent, and telling stories is an important part of African tradition (Alidou, 2002; Banks-Wallace, 2002). Afrocentric communication scholars proposed that the spoken word ‘Nommo’ is a fundamental tenet of Afrocentricity (Asante, 1987; Shaw, 1995). The spoken word is considered the greatest power on earth to be able to speak harmony where there is chaos and disorder (Knowles-Aborishade, 1991; J. Robinson & Hawpe, 1986). It is expected that as African women traverse the physical, psychological economic spaces through their immigration they will experience chaos and disorder in some aspects of their lives; but through having a voice to tell their stories, it is expected that they will be able to speak harmony to the chaotic and disordered experiences.

Narrative Methodology

I intend to employ a narrative methodology in this research; this will enable African women to share their experiences as immigrants, from their own viewpoint and will stress giving voice to their life experiences. By telling their stories, the participants will be free to present themselves the way they like to be known. The stories shared by them will represent both the historical and present contexts that have had an impact on their lives.

Qualitative research is an approach that enables researchers to study phenomena in natural settings and to make sense of the meanings people bring to the events, people and things that

are being studied (Hanley-Maxwell, Al Hano, & Skivington, 2007). Qualitative researchers have contributed to many health related fields. Through such research, stories are used as means of understanding human responses to health and illness (Banks-Wallace, 1999).

Recently, there have emerged a large number of publications on narrative writing and research based on the need to see the world from different perspectives (Ridge & Ziebland, 2007; Wolf, 2006). A narrative approach, in contrast to a quantitative research approach, is in favour of research that deals with human beings as agents (Polkinghorne, 1988). A narrative approach allows the researcher to focus on the impact and importance of the person as a knower (L. Richardson, 1997). As a result of the complexity of human nature, the human person cannot be fully represented by quantitative methods. A narrative method is appropriate when a researcher is concerned with people's stories (Polkinghorne, 1988). Human beings are storytellers by nature. Stories can be in the form of folktales, legends, myths, epics, history, motion pictures and television programmes, and can be seen in every human culture (McAdams, 1993). Stories are suitable means of organising different kinds of information; they are fundamental to how we express ourselves and our worlds to others (McAdams, 1993).

Structuring experiences into stories is known as storying (Livo & Rietz, 1986). This structuring helps make sense of human behaviour; it also brings together disconnected and independent elements (Polkinghorne, 1988). One of the reasons for using the narrative method as my guiding research tool is to get at the African way of knowing the world of the women. I plan to do this by telling my story and the stories of other African women concerning their psychological adjustment to immigration to New Zealand. Such an approach gives the self, that is located in African culture and society, an opportunity to be listened to so that the women's actions and their meanings can be related to individual's context or sense of self (Mensah, 2007).

Narrative as an African Paradigm

The genre and process of storytelling, the tradition of orality, is one characterized by the conjuring of image, by stylistic rhyme and thematic poignancy..... It is the griot's song, retelling the story of those who have come before and reinvigorating the essential wisdoms for the life of the human community and its future (Farrar, 1995, p. 23)

Storytelling as a Fundamental of Afro centrism

Storytelling, an important aspect of oral tradition has been entrenched in the African cultural community. Afro centric communication scholars posited that the spoken word 'Nommo' is a fundamental tenet of Afro centricity (Asante, 1987; Shaw, 1995).

The Origin of the Spoken Word/Nommo

The creation of 'Nommo' has been explained by myths from different African perspectives, but I will explore the origin of the word from Dogon tribe perspective. The Dogons are from Mali in West Africa.

According to the Dogon myth, the creator god, Amman, used his word to shape and fertilize a placenta or 'egg of the word' in which he placed first creatures' seeds, the placenta would become the earth. Two twins emerged from the fertilization. The first twin was named 'Pale Fox'; he was a figure of rebel, by experiencing incest with his mother and was involved in criminal acts. As a result of his rebellious and criminal acts, disorder was introduced to the world. The other twin is 'Nommo', whose activities were opposite to that of Pale Fox's. He descended onto earth in an ark carrying humanity's first ancestors, as well as the fauna and flora destined to populate the world. Nommo was the 'father' of language and civilization to man, he represents order and fertility. The myth posits that the first human beings could not speak but only expressed themselves through "screams" and "grunts", like infants or deaf-mutes.

Nommo in the primordial pond expectorated threads of cotton and wove them together using his forked tongue like a shuttle. His word, incorporated into the interstices of the cloth, was heard by one of the ancestors whose drum echoed it back and communicated it to other beings (Peek & Yankah, 2004, p. 517).

The first word spoken was also the first woven strip and the first musical rhyme. After Nommo's creation of the spoken word, society became organised and the ancestors became cultivators and learned how to build houses.

The human voice is considered the key element in an oral tradition; the oral tradition is the custom of the people, prescribed pattern of behaviour. Ndlovu (cited in Peek & Yankah, 2004) warns that people who do not heed custom are consumed; they have not followed the

pattern of behaviour prescribed in ancient times. He concluded that “nothing goes well for those who do not listen to the values of the people of old” (p. 427). Listening to stories about their culture, values and ethics, is an indication of well-being for African peoples.

Africans have been primarily vocal people throughout their history. Oral tradition relies on human voice to communicate various messages. Hence my aim to give the African women voice to tell the story of their psychological adjustment to immigration in New Zealand. It is important to know how African women in New Zealand have used their ‘voices’ to narrate their experiences to New Zealand society.

In African societies, the oral tradition is the method by which history, stories, folk tales and religious beliefs are passed on from generation to generation (Olupona, 1990). The history of a people is (re)constructed through oral testimonies and cultural data supplied by individuals or groups, which is basic for future construction, using oral transmission (Gbadegesin, 1984). In most African cultures the main function of stories is to educate, perform ritual and entertain, but Silko (1977) argued that stories are not just entertainment: “They are all we have... to fight off illnesses and death,... if you did not have a story, you do not have anything” (p. 2).

A renowned African storyteller, Kabo, expressed that a story is “like the wind”. It comes from a far off place. He continued to express his understanding and relationship and the elements within story:

I am waiting for the moon to turn back for me, so that I may return to my home and listen to all the people’s stories when I visit them. When the weather gets a little warmer. I sit in the sun, sitting and listening to the stories that come from a distance. Then I catch hold of a story that floats out from the distance place- when the sun feels warm and when I feel that I must visit and talk with my fellows (Bleek & Lloyd, 1911, p. 301). Kabo’s expression demonstrates the context and environment that is important to storytelling; he highlighted the physical environment and the people in the community as essential elements in telling stories. Storytelling is not a private affair in Africa, it involves the story teller and the audience that the story is ‘gifted to’ (Banks-Wallace, 2002), as well as the communal space of storytelling. It involves the community and it is dialogical, involving the storyteller and the listeners or story takers (Banks-Wallace, 2002; Mensah, 2007).

Ritual of Inviting Stories

There are specific ways of sharing stories from an African perspective, the most common one is the process of inviting children, women or elderly men within the 'village' to be part of storytelling. There are rituals performed to invite stories. This process is unique from one village to another or one storyteller to another. But the common feature among most cultures is the call and response technique.

Call and Response

Storytelling is interwoven with the storyteller's environment because the process is not a private individual affair. To begin the process it is important to call in to assemblage immediate neighbours (Mensah, 2007). Mensah (2007) presented the story situation in a typical Ewe situation (a tribe in Ghana).

Storyteller: Mise gli loo. (Listen to this story).

Community response: Gli ne VA! (Let your story come).

Storyteller: Gli tso wuu, vadze Kofi dzi, vadze Afeno Serwa dzi, daze, dude me to wo dzi... (The story is about Kofi, Serwa and people of a certain town....).

Community response: Gli ne va! Mele tefe.... (Let your story come, I was a witness...). (Mensah, 2007, p. 46)

The process indicates that story telling as a communal affair involves the assembly of the community, a suitable communal space and the storyteller. The community members are present to listen, confirm or correct the story, they are active and not passive participants in the process. This is an indication that the process of a meaningful storytelling is dialogical.

Story as Dialogue

In all this participation of the audience is essential. It is common for members of it to be expected to make verbal contribution-spontaneous exclamation, actual questions, echoing of the speaker's words, emotional reaction to the development of yet another parallel and repetitious episode. Further, the audience contributes the choruses of the song so often introduced in to the narration and without, in many cases, the stories would be only a bare framework of words. (Finnegan, 1970, p. 385)

In storytelling, the narrators and audience are co-performers (Fretz, 1994). During the process the active responses from audience makes an excellent performance. Many performers would

not start a session without the presence of the audience. Kapchan (1996) noted that in Moroccan market the audience defines the “halqa” which is the ‘space of play and pleasure’. “The performer must draw and elaborate the introduction to his/her spiel until a large number of audiences has been lured to the space of play. The encircling audience and the performer together create dialogic performance” (Kapchan, 1996, p. 38)

The audience role in the process is very important. “The mood of the audience, either sad or happy impacts that of the storyteller” (Akivaga & Odaga, 1982, p. 10). In many African narrative performances, the audience and the performer create the stories, with the periodic ‘answering’ (egbe) from a participatory and active audience; without this, a narrative cannot be fully realised (Peek & Yankah, 2004). Peek and Yankah (2004) posited that the audience acts as a stimulus, a catalyst, and aid the creativeness and imaginations of the artist. The audience are allowed to participate in the performance by breaking in with questions, comments and by singing the chorus that accommodates songs (Noss, 1970). It is a process that involves the narrator and the audience singing, calling and responding, and in the midst of the tale with the audience interjecting, singing and clapping to affirm the tale been told or to correct it (Peek & Yankah, 2004).

Tools of a Storyteller

The materials needed for effective storytelling are identified as depending on the ‘remnant’, ‘relics’, and shards of ‘human experiences’ that represents the lived life, the mythic images that reflect, define and shape it. It is the role of the storyteller to knit these materials into stories that give meaning and context to it all. Through storytelling human’s victories are song and their abasements are recorded (Peek & Yankah, 2004).

The storyteller needs a key to unlock:

a people’s collective memories, giving listeners the opportunity to both celebrate and revel in their past. The storyteller has experienced hate, and although the storyteller “never turns her eyes from melancholy”, her word gives hope as she focuses on “changes they regularly experience” (Peek & Yankah, p. 443)

Through this process I am keen to listen to stories that reflect the form and content of the women stories and a reflection of African people’s collective memories.

The Role of African Women in Storytelling

Using a narrative methodology is suitable for seeking better understanding of the experience of African women's adjustment to New Zealand because traditionally African women play an important role in storytelling. Storytelling within the oral tradition is a way of life for women of African descent (Alidou, 2002; Banks-Wallace, 2002). Telling stories is an important part of being a woman in African tradition. In the Hausa tradition of Nigeria and in the Ewe tribe of Ghana the oldest woman of the household or neighbourhood, the 'grandmother' is the master storyteller (Alidou, 2002; Barber, 1991; Mensah, 2007; Peek & Yankah, 2004).

The grandmother is the bearer of the culture, a mediator and transmitter of knowledge. The matriarch uses her skills to mentor, instruct, criticise, praise, scorn and entertain through her narratives; she has the role of conveying information on survival and cognitive skills to the younger generations and educating about the cultural standards, worldviews, morals, and values (Alidou, 2002; Dasylyva, 2007). The grandmother is experienced and uses the collective wisdom of her community to uphold the connection between the cultural or historical past and the present (Alidou, 2002; Canon, 1988).

It is to be acknowledged that the conception of woman as nurturer and first teacher are confirmed by her association with storytelling which captures morality, fantasy, wit and creative communication (Alidou, 2002). In African cultures, women are recognised as the custodians of oral traditions and fictional narrative. In Ghana, for example, the Asantehema, or queen mother of Asante, has a court of her own where she is consulted on historical facts crucial to the stability of the state (Peek & Yankah, 2004).

Having an understanding of the role of African women in storytelling is important. It is essential to highlight the function of storytelling from the women's perspectives and how it is going to be beneficial to African women in New Zealand as they use this method to tell the stories of their psychological well-being since arrival in New Zealand.

Functions and Roles of Storytelling

Nurturing the spirit self is a primary role of storytelling (Baker & Greene, 1987). Banks-Wallace (1998) suggested that we could also voice our hopes and fears through telling stories and that storytelling has evoked feeling and memories of what it is to be a woman of African descent across time and space within the research setting. Telling a story among women is

significant in the sense that it helps in inscribing, re-scribing self, redefining womanhood and in developing self-identity (Banks-Wallace, 2002; Dasylva, 2007). Naming and articulating experiences through storytelling has been identified as a critical aspect of regaining a sense of self-worth as women (Traeder & Berry, 1995). It is important for African women to use the act of storytelling as a means of voicing their hopes and fears, to construct and cultivate their history and carve out a space in patriarchal, racist, sexist and classist environments (Canon, 1988; Dasylva, 2007; Gbadegesin, 1984). Story telling also establishes a common experience and bonding between the teller and listener (Banks-Wallace, 1999). I hope by using the narrative method in this study that the African women will be able to construct their history, because they are members of an ethnic group whose arrival in New Zealand is relatively recent and not much has been written or known about them.

It has been advocated that any analysis of African women must place the women at the centre of such analysis. I intend to use some African frameworks to understand the stories that the women shared with me. The frameworks I will be using are the journey motif of the African epic, the African oral epic analysis laying emphasis on Oriki performance, the functions and style of storytelling. I consider these African frameworks critical and I will seek to understand and analyse some of the women stories from a critical theory perspective.

The Journey Motif of African Epic

The African epic is situated between history and the myth, attributing the entire cultural experience of a society to one character who has made a mark on his/her time concentrating a maximum of cultural data that serves as symbol of a community identity (Seydou, 1983).

I intend to use this frame work to understand the women's stories around their historical facts and cultural data of their communities as it relates to their well-being since they arrived in New Zealand. The question that some African scholars asked me regarding this framework is, why use it since it has often been used to represent male heroes? Although African scholars, such as Balogun (1995), Okpewho (1979), Ngugi (1986) and Achebe (1959), have represented the African epic as a male purview, and notions such as heroism are seen and understood only from a male perspective, these scholars have written, explored and analysed the heroic deeds of men, their characters and actions while failing to note and appreciate the full extent of women's roles in the epic. On the other hand Mbele (2006) argued for a framework that pays attention to women's role, actions and contribution to African epic. He

noted that while the male-oriented concept of hero is often built into the structures and themes of epic, female characters are represented as attaining heroic status only by taking on male roles. He argued further that fitting the women into male heroic patterns is problematic because their achievements could only be recognised based on how they fit a male concept of heroism; rather than an African feminist perspective, where female heroes are not made to fit the existing hero pattern. The male pattern alienates women from their identity. A female conception of heroism that reflects relevant knowledge and perspectives about women's roles, positioning and their reality in African society, should be used to understand the heroic deeds of African women. I intend to analyse the women's story using Kunene's (1991) journey motif, based on African feminism consciousness, one that reflects African women's roles, positioning, strength, resiliency in striving for the survival of their families and communities.

Many features of the African epic have been used in the analysis of stories, but I will be using some aspects of the "journey motif" (Kunene, 1991) that I consider relevant to analyse African women's experiences of immigration. The features of the "journey" that are considered essential are the reason why a journey has to be made, the suffering and trials experienced during the journey, and the interpretation of the signs that signifies the end of trials. (Kunene, 1991) emphasised the importance of actions that occur in different locations of the journey. I will explore the actions and events that occurred in each of these stages of the women's journeys to New Zealand.

The features of the journey are made of the heroine going into a journey "exile" because of some unpleasant experiences that were preventing her from taking her place in destiny; the unpleasant situation could be seen as unresolved conflicts at home, that the heroine had taken many steps to overcome, but to no avail. This feature of journey could be used to understand the factors that motivated African women to migrate to New Zealand. Another feature of the "journey motif" that could be used to understand the women's stories is that of tension created between the points of departure and the other points of the circular movement, such as their arrival in New Zealand and the process of adjusting to a new environment. I will be keen to explore the tension between the point of departure, both of geographical and psychological and the impact of such tensions on the well-being of the women. It is important to know the challenges that the women had to face having left their comfort zone and the impact of that on their psychological well-being.

Kunene (1991) concluded that the question “who am I?” becomes a powerful stimulus for a personal journey for which the physical journey is often only a metaphorical disguise. He identified some point which he referred to as thresholds where the actions of the stories took place. It is important for the women to use their voices to present themselves as they would like to be known and to understand the actions that they engaged with in the process of adjusting to New Zealand society.

Point A: Conflicts at home

This point represents the reason that led to the hero's exile (conflict at home). The heroine leaves home because certain unbearable circumstances have risen and the purpose of her temporary “exile” is to prepare her for the task of correcting those circumstances.

Point A-B “Psychologically away from home”

Represents the point where the heroine is more in the psychological than in the physical sense “away from home” and begins to come face to face with unfamiliar and sometimes threatening situations, beyond the protected zone of her village boundary.

Point B: Journey as a rites of passage

This is a point where the journey as a whole is considered as a rite-of-passage. At this stage the heroine meets with various challenges that placed her life in extreme danger. Through this process the character of the heroine develops fully. It is crucial for her to overcome the challenges because that would be the measure of the importance of her mission and goals that she has set to accomplish during the journey. It is crucial that she overcomes the challenges because this would lead her to the place of foreign sojourn which is the symbol of victory.

Point C: Place of Foreign Sojourn

This is the point where the sign (of victory) manifests itself. The heroine needs to recognise the sign which signifies the end of the “sufferings” or trials that she had experienced; the place of foreign sojourn indicates a place of victory. This is the point that she is able to utilise the skills that she acquired during the rites-of passage.

Kunene (1991) had posited that it is relevant to understand the journey features from four levels, namely the spatial (traversing space), the temporal (travelling through time), the intellectual (receiving new knowledge-experience), and the psychological (emotion reaction

to new knowledge or experience gained). This framework will be useful for my study because I can apply it to the experience of African women as it relates to their travel through space, time, intellect and how they react to the new knowledge and experiences of a foreign environment/culture of New Zealand.

Another frame work that I intend to use to understand the women's stories is that of Oriki performance.

Oral Epic/Oriki Performance

Oriki is a genre of Yoruba poetry; the Yoruba people are from South-western Nigeria. Oriki is translated praise poem. This genre is not limited to Yoruba culture – it cuts across many African cultures. Among Akan of Ghana it is called Nnwonkor (Nketia, 1974), Lithoko among Basotho people, Izibongo among Xhosa, and Madetembedzo among Shona of Zimbabwe (Peek & Yankah, 2004). Oriki could be described as attribution or appellation addressed to a subject or a group of people (Barber, 1993).

The word Oriki could be translated to mean definition. “It affirms the distinctiveness and qualities of their subjects; they are also agents of transcendence and elicit inner potency” (Barber, 1991, p. 13). In most African cultures mothers recite Oriki to their babies to soothe them and it is used by the oldest woman in the family to greet the household every morning (Barber, 1991).

Although the primary function of Oriki is to affirm, its purpose is not only to flatter but to criticise and scorn as well (Barber, 1991; Dalsyva, 2007; Peek & Yankah, 2004). Oriki as a panegyric and characterisation poetry is better recognised by its eulogy of heroic and non-heroic deeds and attributes (Dalsyva, 2007).

Oriki commemorate personalities, events and actions that people considered important. They provide a way of thinking about social relationship between and within families. Oriki could be used to relay events and actions that happened in the past; they are not as ‘history’ that could be used to make sense of the past, but a way of experiencing the past by bringing it back to life. They represent the past in the present. Through this medium the past of the performer can be reopened and reactivated by their agency (Peel, 1984). Praise form is also relevant to analyse the women's stories because they intrinsically combine political and aesthetic appeal and present valuable property in any ideological struggle (Kaschula, 1999).

Praise poems and politics are intertwined and as a result of this, the women's stories could be analysed regarding how they have employed "a conscious but subtle subversion of existing structures and oppose all forms of domination on issues such as race, gender, class or language" (Daslyva, 2007, p. 179). Analysis of the women's stories will also consider how African women have used Oriki to inscribe, re-inscribe themselves and challenge assumptions held about them. Such analysis will also explore the women's ability to negotiate a space to subtly subvert existing cultural boundaries, arising from self – knowledge, self-consciousness and a redefinition of self and role (Daslyva, 2007; Mbele, 2006). This theory could better be understood through African feminist theorists' lenses.

African Feminism

I intend to use African feminist perspectives to understand the women's narratives as they narrate their heroic deeds and attribute and sing their glory that is a reflection on their identity, roles within their societies. African feminist, Terborg-Penn (1996), posited an ideology founded upon the principles of traditional African values that views gender roles as complimentary, parallel, asymmetrical and autonomously linked in the continuity of human life. It is important to understand the language that the women used to present themselves from this perspective.

African feminist, Acholonu (1995), proposed the term 'motherism' to define the essence of African womanhood. She argued that African feminism is distinctly pro-natal. Achebe (1956) also noted that mother is supreme.

I intend to analyse the women's narratives taking into consideration their complementary role to African masculinity, while also exploring their roles as active and essential to the social, political, economic, cultural and evolutionary aspects of human order (Gabani cited in Peek & Yankah, 2004). This analysis will help with understanding the heroic deeds, strength and resilience of these women as mothers who ensure the continuity, preservation and survival of their families both in their countries of origin and in New Zealand.

Another way to understand the women's performance is asking how she positions herself to the audience and vice versa, how she positions characters in relation to one another and in relation to herself, and how she positions herself to herself, that is make identity claim (Bamberg, 1997; Dasylva, 2007). This is considered a useful point of entry because "fluid

positioning, not fixed roles are used by people to cope with the situations they find themselves in” (Van Langenhov & Harre, 1999)

Functions of Storytelling

The function of storytelling has been identified as mediating and transmitting of knowledge and information across generations, conveying information to the younger generations about the culture, worldviews, morals and expectations, norms and values. Narrative is used to instruct, criticise, praise and scorn (Alidou, 2002; Kouyate, 1989). Through storytelling, the grandmother becomes a practical mentor who teaches the young about survival and cognitive skills, at the same time upholding the connection between the cultural or historical past and the present (Alidou, 2002; Canon, 1988). Through storytelling commonly held values and legacies are passed by word of mouth and memory (Stallings, 1988).

I will analyse the women’s stories by reflecting on the narratives and how they relate to mentor, keeper and custodians of cultures, mediator, educator, transmitter of knowledge, critiques of authority, and how they have acted as social political and historical commentators. It is essential to analyse the women’s stories based on these functions of storytelling from their cultural perspectives. I will also analyse some aspects of their stories taking into consideration some epic linguistic and stylistic formulae.

Epic Linguistic and Stylistic Formula

Proverbs

Pithy and terse saying are very much appreciated in most African cultures. African proverbs emanate from a repertoire preserved by community speakers and the elders (Peek & Yankah, 2004). Proverbs are used to express general truths that are the fruits of experience of the society. From African perspectives these universal ‘truths’ can be practical, ethical, social, or philosophical in nature. In most African communities one could recognise or establish the genre of proverbs by a formulaic introduction such as “the elders says”, “our ancestors say”, “in the past it was said that” (Peek & Yankah, 2004, p. 374). Proverbs are used to express norms, points of view and the philosophy of the group truth. Proverbs can be defined as short, poetic axioms of truth, or wisdom often characterised by their sharp wit, sarcasm, humour, or rhetoric. Proverbs are used to embellish all types of speech from oratory to everyday

conversation (Peek & Yankah, 2004).

I will use African proverbs in the analysis of the stories based upon two main principles of the African oral tradition—authority and association (Obiechina, 1992). African griots/writers such as Achebe (1959), Coker (1988) and Adeeko (1998), had used proverbs to tell their stories to reflect the good and lean times through which their societies have passed. Proverbs, according to Achebe (1959), embody African beliefs, views of society, spirituality and, in some instances it concerns matter of power and politics. I will use proverbs in the analysis as an avenue through which an idea is given validity by being placed side by side with another idea that bears the stamp of communal approval, and by its being linked to the storehouse of collective wisdom (Obiechina, 1992).

Metaphors

It is important to know how the women had used rich metaphors embedded in Oriki performances to interpret their human agency that cannot be comprehended totally, such as our feelings, aesthetic experience, moral practices and spiritual awareness. It is justifiable to analyse how the women have used metaphors to structure their experience of adjustment in New Zealand

Catalogue

I also will use the list of a “catalogue” which is often quite elaborate in its enumeration of the class or classes of objects or actions being listed (Balogun, 1995).

Rhyme/Repetition

I will consider how the women have used repetition to produce rhythm and lay emphasis on their narratives.

Types of Stories

I will consider types of stories in the women’s narratives. The types of stories that I am looking forward to in the analysis will be built around the two principal narrative types, including the comedy and the tragedy to examine the women’s stories around the challenges that they had faced on the road to achieving their goals and eventual victory. Comedy is the restoration of order and the hero having the required skill to overcome her trials. Tragedy stories reflect the hero being defeated by the forces of evil and ostracized from society. These

are in line with Kunene's (1991) journey motif, because the heroine could be overcome by the challenges of her journey or on the other hand overcome the challenges of the journey; and by this she is qualified to become a heroine. The two narrative types are also consistent with the outcome of most African folklore that is the foundation of African epic.

I will also look for stories around how narrators have positioned and presented themselves as agents that assumed control over events and actions, or as victims who did their best to avoid the impact of negative experiences rather than seek positive possibilities (Polkinghorne, 1996). The Oriki performance theory will be used to look into the structure of the story reflecting the language the women have used to position themselves either as victims of their circumstances or as heroines who assumed control over the events and challenges of their lives as African women and new immigrants in New Zealand.

Critical Theory

Critical theory assumes all research is political; it aims at emancipatory actions that strive to liberate individuals from social, political, cultural and economic restraints in society (Freire, 1985; Gibson 1986). Aspects of critical theory that I consider relevant to this research are critical race theory and critical race feminism. Critical race theory is set to study and transform the relationship among race, racism, and power (Martin- Baro, 1995; Reo, 1999). It sets out not only to ascertain how society organizes itself along racial hierarchies but how society radicalises different minority groups at different time, in response to shifting needs such as the labour market (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000). Critical race theory incorporating Praise Poem, could be used to understand the multiple layers of oppression and the interplay of class, culture, and immigration status on African immigrant women in New Zealand.

Critical race feminists expose how various factors, such as race, gender, and class, interact within a system of white male patriarchy and racist oppression to make the life experiences of women of colour distinct from those of both men of colour and white women (Onwuachi-Willig, 2009; Okome 2001). The experience of African immigrant women could be better understood by African feminist Okome's (2001) argument that although some African women are recruited into the global economy, they are often not on an equal level with women in the countries that they have migrated to. They are often treated as unequal, less privileged and as a result, many African women usually begin at the bottom of the ladder of their career in

finding their way up to regular and decent employment. Although many of the women in this study were professionals and working in their professions recruited in to New Zealand economy, the women's skin colour appears to have been used to determine their capacity, knowledge and skills; thus, they have been intentionally restricted in social places by a lack of acceptance of their skills and qualifications. This could be regarded as perhaps a strategy to make the women poor so as to maintain them in an economically low social status. The narratives of African migrant women in New Zealand emphasises the influence of power, status and privilege as a result of their skin colour.

Praise poem, one of the African frameworks is used as a political and aesthetic appeal tool by African women in presenting valuable property in any ideological struggle (Kaschula, 1999). Praise poems and politics are intertwined and as a result of this, the women's stories had been analysed regarding how they have employed a conscious but subtle subversion of existing structures and oppose all forms of domination on issues such as race, gender, class or language in New Zealand. In this research, African women are given the opportunity to recount and make sense of their stories. These means have been used to avoid loss of contextual elements in telling stories and as a primary method of 'making sense' of experiences (Mishler, 1986).

Conclusion

It is essential to listen to the narratives of the women using the African frameworks that I have identified. The importance of using these frameworks is to understand the significant changes that occurred in the women's lives and how their actions can be interpreted using symbols that make meaning in their cultures. Using these frameworks will also create a space for the women's stories to be understood by the historical and geographical data that the women will provide. I also hope that these frameworks will encourage other narrative researchers who are interested in indigenous or oral narrative to develop theories that will suit the population that they are studying. In the next chapter, I will write on the methods that I have employed to carry out the research.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODS

The researcher's role in narrative research is a comprehensive one: as collaborator; a 'listener' providing an audience for the construction of the story during an interview, an interpreter during analysis, and as author in presenting participants' voices through written stories to a wider audience of readers (Marshall, 2005, p. 53)

In the previous chapters, I have discussed the suitability of narrative methods for studying the stories that African migrant women have shared with me, and have also explored various African philosophical approaches suited to the methodology. In this chapter, I will describe the methods and procedures by which I have carried out the research. The chapter will be organised in sections: the background to the study, participant recruitment, data collection, and the analytical process that I have employed. I will also discuss how rigour has been established.

Background

Naturally, storytelling from an African perspective is usually a "night affair," when family members or the members of a village come together under the moon to listen to elders' wisdom. Stories are told to entertain, to educate and to empower the community by sharing about the lives of the ancestors. Stories are told to guide so that people become aware of the available options that they could make use of when confronted with life challenges. I would have loved to have the women come together, to share their stories under the moon as this would have been culturally appropriate, but due to constraints and the design of the research I could not have the participants share their stories in the place of pleasure during the night. I collected the data during summer and I had to travel to different locations agreed by myself and participants. Despite this limitation, I am confident that the women have shared their stories, as a reflection of and a representation of elders' wisdom and knowledge from the different parts of Africa from which they had come, as it related to their adjusting to life in New Zealand.

The purpose of sharing elders' wisdom through storytelling is to engage in dialogue with the listeners, such as myself, the researcher, and the New Zealand community as a whole. It is also important for the women to share their wisdom so that the values, norms, beliefs and culture that they have brought to New Zealand would be preserved for the next generations. I hope through the method of listening to their stories, analysing and interpreting them, that this purpose will be fulfilled.

Method of Recruitment

Purposive Sampling

I used a purposive sampling method in this study. Berg (1995) stated that purposive sampling implies that participants having certain attributes are selected based on the researcher's knowledge and with the specific purpose of the study in mind. In this study, the purpose of initial sampling was to recruit 15 women who had migrated to New Zealand from Africa in the past five years. These women would be Black indigenous women, and able to communicate in English over the course of a one hour interview. I elaborate on how I conducted the study in the following sections.

Participants

I interviewed 15 women for this study. To be eligible for inclusion African women were required to meet the following criteria:

- Be Black indigenous African women, not of European or Asian Origin.
- Have immigrated to New Zealand within the last five years and have been living in the country for a minimum of one year prior to the start of the study.
- Be able to communicate in English during a one to two hour interview.
- Be aged 16years or over.
- Be not a refugee.

I stated that I would like the participants to be Black indigenous African women, not of European or Asian Origin as there are many White South Africans, Zimbabweans and Asian Africans. I believed the experiences of these women would be different to that of Black African women because of their multi-cultural experiences and background.

In setting the second criterion, African women who had not been in the country for a year were excluded because I was not confident that women who were recent arrivals would possess the experience relevant to this study.

I decided to limit the age range to 16 years because I considered that at this stage the women would have had meaningful experiences relevant to the research topic and they would have deeper experiences to answer the research questions. I had also capped the age limit at 65 because the African peoples are relatively new in New Zealand, there are not many women

who are above 65 and who could be classified as migrants. Some of the elderly women in New Zealand had been invited by their children as visitors and so they did not meet the criteria. The youngest woman that I interviewed was aged 28 and the oldest was 55.

The third criteria eliminated African women who were not fluent in speaking English and would have required an interpreter. If I had decided to interview the women in their native dialects it would have been difficult. Africans do not speak a common language, even within the same tribe. African peoples speak different dialects, and I would have needed interpreters and translators that could speak the different languages when collecting the data. It is possible that these interviews could have yielded a more robust data but considering the time frame that I had for the study and the resources available to me, it would have been a laborious, time consuming, challenging and expensive exercise.

I chose females because the subjective experience of African migrant women has not been explored in the New Zealand environment also because literature or research on African women in New Zealand is non-existent. It would be good to give these women a voice to tell the stories about their adjustment. I believe stories gathered from men would be quite different.

The last criterion excluded African refugee women. I could imagine that the factors that had motivated refugee women to come to New Zealand would be completely different to that of migrant women. For example, refugee women usually maintain that they did not choose to come to New Zealand, but that migrant women chose to come to New Zealand. Inherent in refugee women stories would likely be narratives around war, trauma, huge losses and inability to return to their countries, which would be different from African women migration experiences.

In total 21 women responded to the invitation to participate in the research; however two women were unable to participate because they had only been in the country for 10 months. One woman could not participate because she was not fluent in English. Two women after receiving the initial package and reading the information sheet withdrew for personal reasons. Another woman was excluded because of not being proficient in the English language. Interviews were completed with the remaining 15 women.

Participant Characteristics

Although the women are in many ways from heterogeneous backgrounds, it is to be noted that the participants in this study have more in common than their gender, cultural and immigration experiences. All of the women, except two, held higher degrees before migrating to New Zealand; six of the women identified as Christians. Six of the women had migrated with their families, 10 were married, one was a single mother while four of them were single (not married). All of them have settled in Auckland.

Ethical Consideration

In conducting this research, I took into account ethical considerations to ensure the safety of the participants. Elliot (2005) outlined five principles of ethical research:

1. Do no harm
2. Informed consent
3. Confidentiality
4. Avoid deceit
5. Voluntary participation

I considered each of these principles as it related to narrative methodology, to my research topic, and to my participants.

Do No Harm

Although the criterion of doing no harm is a basic ethical principle in research, it was anticipated that the topics discussed by the respondent may frequently involve some risk of psychological distress and at times this may focus on unpleasant, disturbing or sensitive issues. In the participant information sheet (Appendix A). I stated this and alerted the participant to the need to prepare for ways of coping. I had also utilised my skills as a counsellor to manage the interaction in order to minimise any long-term negative effects on the interviewees.

In the participant information sheet I wrote about the impact of talking about personal experiences in their lives that might cause strong emotions. I told participants that they had the right to delete these parts of their story or choose to withdraw their interviews up until I began my analysis. I highlighted the importance of supportive friends and family or the

possibility of making use of a free counselling session from AUT health and counselling so they could talk to someone about issues which had come out of the interview. During the interviews, when the participants were sharing about their lives at home and the losses that they had experienced since their arrival in New Zealand, there were sometimes emotional outbursts, and some of them had shed tears at those times or when they were sharing their experiences of discrimination, racism, financial difficult or underemployment and the loss of their family support. Especially for one participant who broke down into tears, I used my skills to comfort her and offered the free counselling from AUT but she did not accept the offer. I called her after the interview to ensure that the interview had not negatively impacted her. She assured me that she had overcome the negative emotion that she had felt and expressed during the interview.

I was also aware of my personal connection with some of the participants, perhaps even my nurturing role because of my position in the church and the community, and my standing as an academic and professional. These roles meant that the women would look up to me and respect me because of my knowledge and they were not likely to challenge me. I had to educate them that I did not have the power; they did, because it was their experience and gift to me. They could choose not to give the story and were free to decide not to participate or challenge any aspect of the research that they were not comfortable with. I had ethical approval to contact participants this way, and had discussed with my supervisors before contacting the participants.

Informed Consent

Prior to conducting the interview, I had given the interviewees the consent form (Appendix B) to sign and I had explained the importance of reading and signing the form. The consent form had information such as the opportunity for the interviewee to ask questions and have them answered by me, the need for me to take notes during the interview, and to audiotape and transcribe the interview. I am aware that narratives do not merely describe a world already made but are inseparable from the self. If research participants are considered as a source of data, or a repository of information that can be tapped by the researcher (Smythe & Murray, 2000) then it is essential to obtain consent from interviewee to release information about their lives. Not only had I obtained consent forms prior to the interview, I also treated them with respect in the process. Before commencing the interview, I asked each woman if

she fully understood the participant information sheet; it was then that I realised that some of them had not taken the time to read and digest the information. Some of them felt it did not matter since they knew me and that I could not 'sell them out'. I had to exercise caution with proceeding with the interview, I had to give them time to go through the participant information sheet and once I was satisfied that they were not taking things for granted, I proceeded with the interview. Following up with reading and understanding the participant information sheet, I gave them the consent forms prior to starting the interview. I explained the purpose of the form and why they needed to sign the form before we commenced interviews.

Confidentiality

It is to be noted that before research is written up it is important to discuss the dissemination of the research with the participants involved and any respondent who is not happy can ask for their entire stories to be withdrawn (Lieblich, 1996). I am also aware of the small size of the community of African women in New Zealand, particularly that the women were all from urban areas of New Zealand, and that people may recognise the stories of the women with whom they were familiar. I informed the participants of this possibility before they offered their stories.

I informed the interviewees that I would not be using their real names. I explained that they had to choose a fictitious name so that they would not be easily recognised especially given the African community is relatively small in New Zealand. Furthermore, because this is about sharing stories, there are some stories about people in the community that everyone is aware of and choosing a fictitious name would at least partially protect them from such exposure. Although I gave the women the option to pick a fictitious name, 10 of the women wanted me to choose these names for them. What I did was to actually look for some ethnic names from different tribes that the women did not come from. I also used some Christian names as well. Not only did I give fictitious names to some of the women, I had to change some details of some of their narratives. For example an interviewee had given me the details of where she was working before migrating to New Zealand, the number of children that she had and the type of work that she was doing. I discussed this with my supervisor and she guided me regarding how best to go about this. I had to change the details because anyone reading the story from our community could easily recognise that story and the teller.

After completing the interviews I discovered that I needed to use a transcriber. I had not included this in the ethics application that was approved. After a meaningful discussion with my supervisor on the need to use a transcriber and the implications, I had to make a minor amendment to my ethics application to allow me to appoint a transcriptionist for the interviews. I had printed a Transcriber Confidentiality Form (Appendix C) and the transcriptionist signed this. The amendment that allowed me to appoint a transcriptionist was approved on 9th February 2009. This was to ensure the safety and confidentiality of the interviewee.

Avoid Deceit

To avoid deceit, I informed the women of their right to know what would happen with the data from the interviews. I informed them that I would provide them with a copy of the interview transcript and a summary of the data analysis. To avoid deceit, I provided information on the study throughout the process and the participants were given the opportunity to seek clarification. For example, when the transcriptionist had finished transcribing, I sent the transcribed copies to the women to make amendments or to add or delete any aspect of the document. One woman suggested making changes to the details that she had given me. Another woman was embarrassed at the construction of her English and she had wanted me to adjust that, which I did carefully without distorting her narrative; eight of the women had something to add to their narrative. After the consultation with the women, I proceeded to write the core stories (Appendix D). These stories were then sent to the women so they could evaluate if the core stories were true representations of what the story was about. All of the women were happy with the core stories and they did not make any changes.

The participant information sheet stated the title of the project and I invited the women to be part of the research. I also informed them about the potential benefits of the research and that my contact with them during the research would be continuous just for the purpose of the research. The purpose of this would be to update them about the analysis process. I had stated the purpose of the study and the criteria that I had used in recruiting the women. I also informed them about what would happen in this research. I gave them the option of inviting a support person to the interview, I told them that they would not be coerced or forced into answering any questions.

Although many of the women were keen to be part of the study, it was clearly written in the consent form that the decision to be part of the study was entirely theirs and they could withdraw from the study up until the period that I would start analysis.

Treaty of Waitangi

Most of the participants were aware of the Treaty but they did not have adequate information on what it was about, except for those working in the government sector. Many of them knew about the three principles of the Treaty, partnership, protection and participation, but most of them did not understand how it related to them as migrants or its purpose for the research. I had to educate the women about this and I worked with them from the perspective of protecting their values and cultures and working in partnership through initiating, interviewing, analysing and interpretation. I acknowledge the Treaty of Waitangi with its principles of protection, participation and partnership in relation to this research (Orange, 1987). In regards to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, these were addressed in the following ways:

Protection

It is important to maintain participant confidentiality in this research and to ensure that the confidential information given by participants is used for the purpose of the research. Protection requires the researcher to honour both the stories of the participants and their cultural values and experiences. To ensure this, participants were provided with a copy of interview transcripts to comment on and respond if they wished. Participants were given two weeks in which to initially respond. After two weeks I followed up any participants who had not responded and allowed another two weeks for any further participant response. An important aspect of oral tradition is transmitting cultural data to the next generations; this study would be an avenue for such values, ethics and protocol to be shared. I expected that the story to be shared by the women would generate cultural data which would reflect their values, ethics and protocols. It is significant for such values and ethics to be protected.

Partnership

It is required that the researcher work with participants and acknowledge that without the contribution of the participants, the research would not occur. It is also important to have consultation with the participants in accordance to their culture. At any point throughout the research process I was available to answer questions participants had about the study.

Participants are entitled to know what happens with the data from their interviews and as stated above a copy of the interview transcripts and summary of analysis were made available. The thesis supervisor also agreed to be available to independently talk to participants about any aspects of the study and/or concerns they may have.

Participation

It was my intention that participation would be voluntary as the women would be self-selecting. Participants were informed that it was their choice to be part of the research, they were not compelled to take part and they owned the information given during the interview and had the right to withdraw either selected information (taken from the transcripts) or themselves from the study without being disadvantaged in any way up until data analysis commenced. I had involved the participants in the process of the research. I had been in consultation with the community group leaders engaging them with regards to this research and there was a consensus that ‘we’ should do something about these challenges that had been identified in the study. I had involved them during all the stages. I had asked for their consent, sought clarification and collaboration from them with regards to method of this research.

Individual women had signed the consent form. I had also informed them that to ensure confidentiality they had to choose a fictitious name. One of the reasons for this is the nature of narrative methods, that they could be easily recognised through their stories and also because the African community is relatively small in New Zealand.

Method of Recruitment

I commenced my journey of recruiting participants for this study by applying for Ethics approval to the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) on 8th September 2008 (Appendix E). The application was approved, subject to fulfilling conditions of provision of a researcher safety protocol and the AUT logo on the advertisement that I was going to use to recruit participants. I fulfilled these conditions on 20th October and I received the approval to commence with the research.

Purposive Sampling

There are various African migrant groups in Auckland such as the Nigerian, Ghanaian, Zambian and Zimbabwean communities. For the purpose of gaining access to these women I

had to meet with the community leaders of the communities to inform them of the topic of my research. The community leaders/matriarchs were welcoming of the idea. I gave the fliers (see Appendix F) that I planned to use to the community leaders.

Another strategy that I used to recruit participants for the study was distributing fliers that had headings such as, “Are you an indigenous Black African Immigrant woman?” (Appendix A). Through the flier I informed women who would like to tell their story may help others. I posted the fliers at African community centres, churches and food shops. I invited African women who would be keen to be part of the research to contact me. I received responses from 21 women. Following the responses from these 21 women, I sent out the participant information sheet (Appendix A) to the women.

Data Collection

The data collection process for this study was very interesting and involved lots of travelling around. I informed the women about the options of possible interview locations. The physical locations that I had suggested were AUT premises, MIT premises, their homes or in some of the African community meeting places. Banks-Wallace (2002) emphasised the importance and the impact of physical location on the data collected. She had noted that the educational status of the women could influence their choices of interview locations. For example, in her research, the women who had college degrees chose to be interviewed on the University campus and the ones that did not have higher education preferred to be interviewed at the community centre. Although I had informed the women of the options available with regards to preferred location, 10 women chose to be interviewed at their homes and five chose to be interviewed at the community meeting places. None opted to be interviewed in any of the higher institution locations that I had offered. Their choices did not reflect their level of education.

Individual Interviews

Participants are in relation to us as researchers, and we as researchers are in relation to participants. Narrative enquiry is an experience of the experience. “It is people in relation studying with people in relation” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 189). I agree that relationship is key to what narrative inquirers do. Participants are not mere interviewees but collaborators in narrative and the type of relationship between the researcher and participant impacts on the success of the interview.

Interviews were designed to invite the women to share stories about the factors that motivated them to migrate to New Zealand, the stressors that they had experienced and the coping strategies they have used to adjust to New Zealand. I was clear and open in the participant information sheet about the types of stories that I was expecting the women to share. I conducted the interviews bearing in mind that an interview “is a social accomplishment” (Elliot, 2005, p. 19). I was expecting the interviews to yield data that could be analysed about what the women had said, and how they had said it.

I have discussed the importance of the audience and dialogues in oral tradition from an African perspective. As an audience I am expected to make verbal contributions, spontaneous exclamations, and ask questions and show emotional reactions during the interview. I was torn between this choice and giving minimum verbal contribution. I chose to give minimum verbal contribution during the interview and listened more to their stories because I wanted the stories to be theirs and give them the opportunity to own the story and the space since so many of them had indicated that this would be the first time they had the opportunity to share their stories. Moreover, Elliot (2005) posited that it is risky to interrupt interviewee’s stories when the researcher wants narrative responses. She advocated for the researcher not to stop a story because they think it is irrelevant. This got me thinking and I realised how important it was to use my listening skill as a counsellor to receive the gifts of stories that the women were giving me.

Another crucial ingredient needed for the overall success of the interview is the interviewer’s ability to establish rapport. Initially I could sense that some of the women were a bit apprehensive, while some were relaxed because they indicated that this was an opportunity that they had been waiting for to speak their ‘mind’. I chose not to impose myself or my experiences on them; neither did I relate with them as an expert. When the women were sharing their stories, I stepped aside. Although telling story from an African perspective has to do with interjections to affirm the women’s stories, I did not contribute much verbally but I did give nonverbal affirmations, either by nodding my head, smiling or through emotional responses depending on the story that they were sharing, to ensure that there was a level of dialogue or interaction.

Recording the Interview

I used a digital voice recorder to record the interview. I knew that the electronic device would

help project the voices of the women and it would minimise the impact of noise. I had to practice using it on myself and my family as suggested by my supervisor before I actually started using it to interview the participants.

When the interview commenced I actually felt nervous that the recorder might fail and that it might not have recorded the interview at all. After the first interview had been completed and I had listened to the tape and discovered that the interview was recorded and the voice of the interviewee was audible, I became more confident in using the electronic device; likewise, the participants were comfortable with having the recorder present.

Rituals of Storytelling and Story Taking

The rituals of story taking from an African perspective involve call and response. This is the process of entering into the communal space of storytelling by the story teller and the audience. It is like being welcomed from a journey. The process involves sharing, to enter into this communal “space of play and pleasure”. I had gone with gifts; initially I intended to give \$10 to each participant, but I knew many of the women would have felt insulted if I had given them \$10 as they would have thought that I was paying them for the interview. This would not be appropriate in African culture because a story is a gift and could not be paid for. Instead of giving them \$10 I took fruits and groceries to them. Before commencing each interview, I was offered food and drinks. In the African tradition this is appropriate and I could not reject the offer of food.

Duration of the Interview

The interviews lasted between 45 minutes and two hours. I was concerned about the interview that ran for 45 minutes, because I felt it would not yield much data. I was really pleased with the ones that had stretched for more than one hour. I documented my concerns about the short interview and discussed it with my supervisor; she had assured me that it is not the length of time spent on stories that matters but the relevance of it to the study.

Framework and Methods for Promoting Rigour

The term rigour describes procedures that enhance the integrity and trustworthiness of the research findings (De Poy & Gitlin, 1998). Lincoln and Guba (1985) have proposed four criteria for judging the soundness of qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability.

Credibility

To ensure credibility of any research, participants' stories should be accurately presented. To achieve this I employed a narrative methodology and guidelines most suited to the women and their culture. I took the women's stories with respect and accepted their stories as gifts. I used African frameworks such as the Journey motif of African Epic, African feminism, Oriki performance and Ubuntu paradigm, in the analysis of the data. I emphasised elements of oral tradition rooted in African culture in the analysis of the stories that they shared with me.

Credibility of the research was also ensured by returning continually to participants with the research findings to seek feedback on the accuracy of developing conclusions (Trochim, 2002). I also met regularly with my supervisors to review sections of the interview and analysis to ensure appropriate interpretation. I was also in contact with other African scholars to seek guidance and knowledge with understanding the application of some of the theories that had informed the analysis and deliberate on the alternative frameworks and their suitability to the stories the women had shared, although I could not share the data with them. I asked for advice and guidance also from the elders in the community to ensure that the stories were well represented and interpreted in ways that are suited to the women's cultures.

To enhance the credibility of this study, I maintained prolonged engagement in the field with participants. I was able to achieve this by spending time with the participants as a result of the relationship that I have built with the women, and through these relationships and sharing I acquired more knowledge. I could see clearly what the women had experienced in the process of adjusting to life in New Zealand. Other forms of maintaining credibility is member checking.

Member Checking

Member checking is an aspect of credibility. The purpose of member checking is to solicit feedback about the data, interpretation, and conclusion from individuals being studied (Maxwell, 2005). This process is considered the best way to rule out any misinterpretation of data or the distortion of the meaning that one can make of it. It is also a way of checking my biases and misunderstanding of what I had observed (Hoffart, 1991). In the participant information sheet I stated the importance of staying in touch with the participants to carry them along the stages and processes of the study. I stated that I was going to send the transcripts to the women and I did so. This was to give them the opportunity to assess the

accuracy of the information and to give feedback or make amendments and changes to the transcript or to withdraw any part of the stories that they had shared with me prior to the analysis in which I would write the core story and pass it on. It was apparent that the women were eager to have their voices out there and because of the trust that they had in me, they were certain that I would not misrepresent their 'voices'. The mode of communication allowed the women to incorporate their thoughts about my interpretations of their experiences and provided them with the opportunity to revise this interpretive work.

Dependability

To maintain dependability, I documented the research methods and recorded choices that I made during the analysis. This would allow the reader to follow my thinking and reasoning (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To achieve this I used an audit trail to document the choices I made throughout the study to reduce the bias of the researcher being the only one analysing the data.

Audit Trails

This was used to document steps taken in data collection and analysis, writing in a journal or memo and noting decisions made during data collection, coding, and analysis (Padgett, 1998). I maintained a journal to document the decisions made during the process of developing the research questions, data collection, forming initial impressions of the individual interview transcripts, drafting analysis and conducting a member check with participants to ensure their participation.

Transferability

This refers to the degree to which results of qualitative research can be generalised or transferred to other contexts (Trochim, 2002). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) transferability is created through thick description of the participants and context. I attempted to achieve this by describing the research context, participants' characteristics, and assumptions central to the research. I interviewed only 15 women, which I believe is a limited number of the population that I am working with. Although, caution will be taken in applying the findings of the study to the general population of African women in New Zealand or elsewhere, some of the ideas may be transferable even to other immigrants, or to African women from refugee background.

Data Analysis

A critical element of analysis proposed by Banks-Wallace (2002) was the importance of defining a story in a manner consistent with the population under investigation. For the purpose of carrying out the analysis of this study, I have defined story as a process that Africans use to mediate and transmit knowledge and information across generations. It is also a means of conveying information to the younger generations about their culture, world views, morals, norms and values. Oral tradition is also used to instruct, criticise, praise and scorn (Alidou, 2002; Kouyate, 1989).

In the analysis of the data I used this definition of story in deciding an African framework suited to the analysis of the gathered data. The main goal of the analysis is to present the data in a way that readers would have access to and be able to comprehend the stories the women had shared.

In the process of searching for an African way of analysis and explanation, I found a number of authors, both from African and Western perspectives, providing guidance for my journey (Achebe, 1959; Barber, 1991; Brunner, 1996; Dalsyva, 2007; Kunnene, 1991; Marshall, 2005; Obiechina, 1992; Peek & Yankah, 2004; Riessman, 2003; Sarbin, 1986).

Analysis Process

The process of analysis usually starts with listening to the interview tapes. Analysis of the data started after I had completed the interviews. Although I knew that I was going to employ a transcriber for the study, I took my time to listen to the tapes several times, firstly, to acquaint myself with the women's stories and secondly, because the transcriber was a European woman and I knew that it might be difficult for her to understand the women's accents, although she had worked as an ESOL teacher to African refugee families. To get acquainted with the interviews, I listen to the tapes on my way to and from work several times. I was satisfied that I had taken my time to listen to the tapes over and over and that I could notice if any part of the story went missing during transcription. I gave the tapes to the transcriptionist and gave her a copy of the confidentiality form to sign before commencing transcription.

On collection of the transcripts I did notice that some aspects of the transcript were not transcribed accurately and I had to make amendments. In making amendments to the

transcripts I noted as closely as possible the actual conversation that had occurred during the interview as well as the repetitions and pauses that had been used to emphasis statements and preserve the communication style of the storyteller (Patai, 1988). I took precautions to preserve the narrators' talk and inflections, repetitions such as laughter and pauses when there was an indication that reflected an emotion state, because this would be useful in analysing the form of the stories.

Data Management and Organization

Organising data is a system that informs the analysis and writing process (Cole & Knowles, 2001). Initially, I had planned to use a qualitative data analysis software program NVIVO to aid in data management. I had heard many positive and encouraging stories about how useful the software is. I attended training on the software and had the software installed on my computer at work. After experimenting with this, I discovered that it was cumbersome to learn and I could not use it because I was afraid that through the process, I could lose data or present it in a distorted way. It seemed inappropriate, especially because I was using African frameworks. I was not convinced that using NVIVO would not lead to fragmentation of the data which might lead to losing vital aspects of the women's stories.

After much consideration I informed my supervisor that I would not be using NVIVO and that I would like to opt for using manual data management of data segment sorting (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995) to support the African methods of analysing stories that I have intended to use. I chose to employ this method because I was comfortable with the system because it allowed me to be immersed in the data "becoming, deeply involved in words, impression and the flow of events" (Rossman & Ralllis, 1998, p. 176). The physical reading and rereading of data on paper and the physical manipulation helped me to become intimate with the interviews because the relationship did not stop after collecting the data I could see their faces and hear the women's voices through the data.

Modes of Reading Narrative

The purpose of qualitative research is to look into stories that are unique to individuals; however focusing on individual construction of reality should not be a hindrance to identifying common themes emerging from individual stories (Bruner, 1996). I was interested in identifying common and particular themes across the women's stories.

There are many ways of analysing narrative but I found the analytical model of Lieblich, Tuval-Maschiach and Zilber (1998) relevant to this study. They presented a matrix of four cells to illustrate their four modes of reading narratives as holistic-content, holistic-form, categorical content and categorical form. The holistic-content model uses the complete life story of an individual and focuses on the content while the holistic-form looks in to the plots or structure of the complete life story.

Categorical-content is what is said about the studied topic. The categorical-form focuses on discrete stylistic or linguistic characteristics of defined unit of stories. Lieblich et al. (1998) were careful to note that these four modes do not have rigid boundaries; in fact, each cell represents an end or a continuum. They suggested that researchers using this model are likely to find themselves at one end of the continuum or the other. In the analysis, I had to cross the boundaries because I had to analyse participants' stories using the four modes. I analysed the content of the women's stories but also considered the forms of stories.

Studying Narrative Content

Lieblich et al. (1998) identified that analysis of narrative content is derived when the analyst is interested in who said what about the topic that is being researched. They posited that themes and categories could be ordered by using a theoretical framework. I identified themes that emerged to categories using the perspectives of the African epic journey. I identified the stages of the journey and drew out universal and unique themes from the women's stories relating to the factors that motivate African women to migrate, the stressors and coping strategies.

To identify primary themes from the narratives I read the individual transcripts over and over. On the first reading, I went through each transcript and noted key things mentioned by the narrator as it related to the topic of the thesis. I examined each woman's list and identified recurrent themes under categories such as conflicts at home, the place of trials and the signs. I brought these categories into the analysis. I then took the events and episodes and organised identified themes into categories matching the journey motif theory (Lieblich et al., 1998). After identifying the primary themes for each woman, I compiled an individual summary on each woman's story. I then collated individual summaries into a group summary, identifying which participant had offered narratives on which themes. Three key categories emerged with sub-themes, and the results of studying content analysis, as has been already indicated, are

presented in chapter's five to eight.

The stages of journey that I have identified according to Kunene's (1991) journey motif represents each of the finding chapters on the contents of the research. These are, one, the reasons for the journey represented by conflict that could not be resolved at home. Two, the place of trial signifying the stressors that the women had experience in the process of adjusting to New Zealand. Three, identifying and interpreting the sign that represent 'victory'. The signs that the women can identify have been useful in enabling them to live in the place of foreign sojourn. These aspects arose because I used the journey motif to seek to understand the women's stories.

I have used these frameworks to meet "all requirements of story: setting, characters, action directed toward goals" (Lauritzen & Jaeger, 1997, p. 35). Although I have analysed the story looking into the contents of the women's stories, I discovered that it is difficult to separate what the participants said to how they have said, analysing the forms of stories were considered, exploring how aspects of stories such as styles and narrative tone can reveal characteristics of narrators' experiences and identity. And how the women have used structure of language to inscribe and re-inscribe themselves and present how they would like to be known.

Studying Narrative Form

Analysis of story form focuses on the story structure in terms of the story plot, context, style, complexity and coherence (Lieblich et al., 1998). I used Kunene's (1991) journey motif to understand the contents of the participants' stories. I found that the same strategies could be used to analyse the women's emotions as they talked about their experiences that reflected their heroic deeds. I also intended to use Oriki performance to understand the language they used to reveal their identity; as Kunene noted the core aspect of the journey is to 'discover who they are'. To analyse the form of stories shared by the participants, and understand how the women shared their stories and why they have shared it in the manner that they did, I have used a 'five basic questions model' proposed by Marshall (2005).

Core Narrative: What is the Point of this Story?

A typical narrative framework focuses on the 'core narrative' or skeleton plot through four categories: one, orientation, describes the setting and character. Two, abstract summarises the

events of the story. Three, complicating action evaluates the events, conflicts and themes. Four, resolution describes the outcomes of the story or conflict. The essence of this analysis is to explore the point of this story (Mishler, 1986). To answer these questions, I looked into individual participants' stories and constructed the core narrative from the interview transcripts which I sent to the participants to review and to give feedback on how the core narratives explained the point of their stories. The purpose of core narratives was to reveal the way participants chose to present themselves as characters in their own stories (Marshall, 2005).

Narrative Direction and Style

This aspect explores the direction of the story line and its narrative style. In this analytical approach narrations can be categorised through the use of cultural traditions of archetypes and myths (Bruner, 1996; Obiechina, 1992). Narrators can tell the story as a tragedy and describe self as a tragic hero or heroine, or as a myth, with self described as a mythic survivor or victim (Marshall, 2005). This is relevant to Kunene (1991) because the experience of African women in New Zealand could be that of tragic heroine or mythic survivor.

Narrative Voice: Who is Telling the Story?

Voice is one of the central aspects of storytelling. Exploring who is telling the story considers the self-identity disclosed by the narrator (Gbadegesin, 1984; Marshall, 2005). Narrative voice is useful to adopt a persona in stories and it is a way to invest in the character's viewpoint. Narrators choose the words, phrases and metaphors to represent who they are, their thoughts and feelings. As the central character in her story, the narrator presents more than one view of self; she may choose to perform a preferred self, selected from her multiple selves (Riessman, 1993, 2003).

Voices of Others: What Does She Say About Others?

Bamberg (1997) identified the importance of how other characters are positioned in relation to one-another and in relation to the narrator in claiming identity. While a narrator's identity is presented as the protagonist, an interdependent positioning of self and others is crucial in the construction of self (Wortham, 2001). Analysis from this perspective explores the narrator's position of self in relation to others in her social world, either as hero or as victim, as passive or agentic. The narrator voices other characters by providing them with a dialogue. These dialogues can reflect people who are supportive or villain. It is important to understand

the influence and impact of what the narrator says about other characters when the narrator is making identity claim.

Core Message: What Can We Learn from this Story?

The main function of African stories is to educate. African story analysis reflects aetiological and moral aspects of stories (Obiechina, 1992). The essence of this question is to explain the “why” of the story, or the point of the story. It is essential to explore the experiences of the narrator to reflect the essential “truth” of the story.

Conclusion

I have discussed the process of the methods that I have employed in this study. This process was challenging because of the African frameworks that I have used. Through the stages, I have been aware of my position as a researcher and the influence of that on the study. I was careful to note the hierarchical nature of African culture and how the participants hold me in a special place in the heart. I was open, sincere with and respected the women. Although, this is an academic pursuit that I will benefit from, I was aware that the women still own their stories. I was able to portray that I treasure the gifts of stories given to me and for me to show appreciation for these gifts is to present it in a way that both adults and children would be able to read and benefit from the story. The women have been partners in the process and I have used various methods to preserve and protect their cultures and values embedded in their narratives. In the next chapter I will present finding on factors that motivate African women to migrate to New Zealand.

CHAPTER FIVE: DECIDING TO IMMIGRATE/ONSET OF JOURNEY

Until the lions have their historians the tales of hunting will always glorify the hunter.

(African proverb)

Introduction

In this chapter, I will explore the factors that motivated the African women in this study to migrate to New Zealand. Most often, African ‘rural women’ are portrayed in scholarship and in mass media outlets as ‘likely’ to be ignorant, oppressed and poor. As a result of this misrepresentation, African women tend to be described and analysed by those who may not understand them or the dynamics of their existence (Maloba, 2007). Likewise, in New Zealand, there are many assumptions and stereotypes about Africans and in particular African women. One such stereotype is that they are refugees, uneducated, oppressed by men in their culture and are considered “lucky” to be in New Zealand. It is important to analyse the women’s stories through the interpretive lens of their position in their cultures and the dynamics of their lives. Like the proverb above, until African women are given the opportunity to tell the stories of the factors that motivated them to migrate to New Zealand, through which they would be known and understood, the stories of the ‘hunter’ (New Zealanders and the media) are likely to portray these women as powerless and victims of their culture, who have little or no say about issues affecting them. Through the stories that the women have told about who they are, and why they came to New Zealand, various assumptions and stereotypes will be challenged.

Each participant narrated the reasons that motivated her to migrate to New Zealand. From the women’s stories there emerged a variety of motivations. Kunene’s (1991) journey motif perspectives offers a relevant tool of analysis. Ordinarily the hero within the African epic does not need to embark on a journey, but as put by Kunene, there are:

forces challenging his [her] positioning within his [her] community which the hero [heroine] must have put in the necessary measure to overcome. In all cases the measures taken do not help him [her] overcome the situation. Hence there is a need for him [her] to go on an exile, embarking on this journey that would enable him [her] to acquire the needed skill to overcome the challenges.

The five themes that emerged as factors that motivated the participants to come to New Zealand are: political, social-economic, education, other social cultural, and the need for professional development.

Political Instability

The political situations of some African countries have been the major motivating factor for some of the women to migrate. In this study, however, only one woman spoke extensively about the political situation of her country as a motivating factor. Modupe identified the political situation of her country (Zimbabwe) as the reason for her migration to New Zealand. The story line of Modupe starts from a point where she had a good life in Zimbabwe prior to the political situation and economic decline that ruptured her stable life. She narrated her story using an optimistic voice, she presented herself as a confident young woman and she talked specifically about the life style that she had with her family prior to migrating. She pitched herself as an 'ambitious girl' who came from a "wealthy family that owned family businesses". She identified herself as a director of a company and she had properties in her children's name until she started experiencing a downward mobility of her life.

Although she and her family had a stable and content live and there was no indication in her story that she had an urge or need to leave her comfort zone, the turning point was the political instability in her country. Modupe's narrative reflected the difficulty that she experienced as a result of the political situation and the impact it had on her family.

She narrated:

I just found the situation; the political socio-economic and political situation in my country was deteriorating at that time. I have also just given birth... and I just needed to see that there's a hope in the future for my children so with the political situation in my country, I found it really hard from the outlook.

The upbeat and optimistic tone that Modupe used to portray herself prior to the political instability changed when she started sharing her experiences of the political chaos in her country. She presented herself and her children as victims of the political social economic deterioration. She noted that as a result of the political instability, there was no hope in the future for her children and concluded that she found this hard to understand.

Modupe described the level of oppression that her people experienced as a result of the political chaos and how she felt about it. She shared this experience:

As an ordinary Zimbabwean, I know that my people have had a history of being disenfranchised, their land was taken away from them by historical factors and they were brought on to the periphery land which was semi-productive semi-arid land and

the White farmers were given that good, the good land I understand the premise of their of the land situation the land issue in my country but at the same time I do not agree with the rush and grab attitude that the government had taken on yes the white people had too much land some of the land wasn't even being used and our people couldn't continue to live in the peripheries.

Modupe shared the story to reflect the harsh experience of her people and their bad times. She reflected the losses experienced by her people. Although she was not pleased with how her people invaded the white farms, and at the same time she scorned and criticised the domination of her people's land by white farmers. Not only had they pushed 'her people' to the semi productive and semi-Arid land, the White people had more land than they used. In her story, the White farmers are presented as villains, who came as traders, but who subtly took over the 'good lands' of people and disadvantaged them.

The experiences of Modupe's people can be seen in the light of the story of a greedy, cunning tortoise in African animal fables. All of the birds were invited to a feast in the sky and the tortoise persuaded the birds to lend him feathers to make wings so that he could attend the feast as well. As they travelled to the feast, the tortoise also encouraged them to take new names for the feast according to custom. He chose a name and told the birds that his name would be "All of You." When they arrived at the feast, tortoise asked his hosts for whom the feast was prepared. They replied, "For all of you." Tortoise proceeded to eat and drink the best parts of the food and wine. The birds were displeased at receiving only scraps; they decided to take back the feathers that they had given to tortoise so that he was unable to fly home. Africans are very generous and very friendly people. They welcome visitors into their homes; they take great pains to care for their visitors. The resources that the colonialist found on African soils motivated them to stay on the land and they used subtle means to put all the resources under their control which impoverished Modupe's people.

She continued her story around the steps taken by her people to recover their lands from the white farmers.

And this is obviously something we are talking about 20 years after independence and people going to war in my country because of the issue of land they wanted their land back so... um we had what we call the war veterans who were really the people who were into guerrilla warfare prior to independence who were fighting and dying and moving naked in the bushes finding guns and trying to orchestrate a guerrilla style warfare against the white people so it was a war between the blacks and the whites and the whites were represented by the official army so there was an official army

and there was an unofficial army the black consul so in many families they got split between one brother being conscripted and then the other brother running off with the boys when they had recruitment drives within their village so there was a lot of historical issues.

Modupe's story is consistent with Sarbin's (1986b) argument of calling up images of storytelling and story teller, heroes, villains in stories. The sequence of events reflects images about Black people, White farmers, war veterans, moving naked in the bushes, fighting for independence and guerrilla warfare. These images about the war and the representation of the sequence of events demonstrate Modupe's extensive knowledge of her environment as she portrays in words the heroic deeds and attributes of her people (Dasylva, 2007). Although she presented her people as agents who had control over the events of war, the last line of the excerpt reflects the narrative of a wounded hero, in the sense that there was a split in family because of the recruitment that led to one "brother being conscripted" and then the other brother running off with the boys when they had recruitment drives within their village. The ending of the narrative reflects emotions about division within families which would have caused lots of heartache for Modupe's people as they were pitched against one another through this strategy of recruitment during the war time.

Modupe did not share this experience without good reason. As noted by Achebe (1959) myths are created and stories told for a human purpose of conveying a message. The purpose of this story was to reflect the times of war in Modupe's country, to make a statement and bear witness to the harsh and brutal experiences of her people. I am in agreement with Achebe (1959) that it is important to tell this type of story to instigate a humane social order and help the reader/audience to gain a better understanding of the corruptions of power embedded in her country.

The strategy that Modupe used echoes Holdstock's (2000) suggestion that an "Africentric self can only be discovered in the context of Africa's cultural, and historical past (p. 81). Modupe was able to locate herself within her culture and the past history of her people to explain the reason that motivated her to migrate to New Zealand.

The land issues identified by Modupe lingered on in Zimbabwe even after the country's independence. Prior to the colonial era, senior men controlled the distribution of crucial resources such as land. Land was assigned to a young married man by his father with the consent of the village head. The right to land was maintained as long as such lands were

cultivated. Women also had access to small supplementary plots of land assigned to them by their husbands (Schmidt, 1992) Zimbabwe gained its independence in 1980. Mugabe inherited a racist, exploitative society where White settlers had created a leisure and pleasure seeking society. It was a life style that placed Whites on the top rung of the social ladder. Maloba (2007) described this as “Whites delighted in their environment, servants and wealth” (p. 144). During the colonial era the local indigenous people were denied access to their lands. From the beginning of the 1970s when indigenous Zimbabweans could not cope with the challenges of losing their lands to the white minority, the people had to go to war to reclaim their lands. However, from 2000 through to 2003, the Zimbabwean government initiated a land reform policy that involved forcibly taking over white-owned commercial farms, in order to redistribute this property to landless blacks. The aim of this policy was to redress the unequal distribution of lands (Richardson, 2005). The consequences of the land reform led to “White farmers” eviction from their farms, which led to various sanctions on Zimbabwe, the political intolerance of opposition to Mugabe’s rule, the economic situation, unemployment and strikes from teachers/students as a protest against the hardship and invasion of white farmers’ land. The consequent life insecurity led Modupe to conclude that her personal security and property security were at stake.

I just felt my own personal security was at stake I guess for me the straw that broke the camel’s back was when I had been in a car with a friend and I had sort of been attacked by boys in the street they wanted something in the car and they went over my pregnancy and tried to grab something between where my friend was sitting and myself. I really got a shock and I realised then that I don’t have my own personal security also the situation in my country at the time was that the White farmers were having their land taken away so I felt that there wasn’t even any property security back in my country and I could see the future wasn’t very good for a person who was a sole parent and had recently become a mother of five children.

Modupe’s voice continued to be that of a victim that had no power over the events that occurred in her life; “the straw that broke the camel’s back” was when she was attacked by ‘some boys’ who were interested in grabbing her bag. Her experience was likened to that of white farmers whose farms were grabbed by people who had no mission on the farms. Her experience led her to contend that her personal safety and that of her children was at stake. The voices of the boys that attacked Modupe are those that made her feel threatened that her personal life and properties were at stake, and the statement “the straw that broke the camel” and “I could see the future wasn’t very good for a person who was a sole parent and had recently become a mother of children” signified a voice resigned to the fate of a single

mother who had no support or protection of a husband and who had to care for her children in an unsafe space. Modupe's reflection on the risk in her country and how she felt confirms Achebe's (1996) statement that to survive, one needs to grasp the meaning of tragedy by reminding oneself constantly of the things that had happened and how one felt when they happened. I am of the opinion that this interview has provided a space for Modupe not only to share the experience of her and her people, but also an opportunity for her to grasp the meaning of the tragedies experienced by her and her people and for her survival.

The consequences of White farmer's eviction from their farms led to various sanctions on Zimbabwe. These sanctions and the political intolerance of Mugabe's rule took a toll on the social-economic situation of the country. What I find interesting though is the fact that it was only Modupe that spoke extensively about the political situation of her country as a motivating factor. I wonder why the other women were silent on this matter. It could be that the situation in Modupe's country is relatively recent compared to the situation in the other women's countries. The political conflict in most African countries has resulted in economic crisis. Two of the participants talked about their experiences with the economic crisis in their countries. The women linked this experience to the political instability of their countries.

Economic Reason

The political situation in most African countries has impacted other facets of life, such as the social-economic aspects of the countries. Two of the participants, Veronica and Modupe, included this theme as a significant part of their story-line. It is interesting to note that the two women who indicated the economic factor as a motivating factor came from the same African country.

The economic aspect has suffered tremendous setback and this had led to conflict that the women could not resolve. This had led to inflation and with effect unemployment and untold hardship. To resolve the economic situation most African countries have put measures in place. Some of the measures that were put in place in countries such as Nigeria, Zambia and Zimbabwe like the *Structural Adjustment Programme* (SAP) did not resolve the problem. The lack of success of the programmes in most African countries resulted in loss of jobs and lack of life chances for most families. Some of the women who had been employed in formal sectors, such as statutory and non-statutory settings were pushed on to informal sectors, such as trading both locally and across borders (Maloba, 2007). The women had to come to terms

with these challenges. They employed means to cope with the challenges, and when they could not resolve the economic problems they chose to migrate.

Veronica narrated the situation that led to her migration.

What motivated me to come to New Zealand was the declining economy in my country, Zimbabwe. I struggled, I had teenage children and ... little children, and I was seeing no future for my children in terms of education. In terms of future employment prospects the competition was very high. It was difficult to get my children into good schools. There was a lot of corruption and so you know I didn't see a space for me and my children and so for the sake of my children I decided to come to New Zealand to give them a better future.

Prior to sharing this experience around the economic decline, Veronica had used some attributes to define herself and identified her deeds prior to migration. She narrated a catalogue (Balogun, 1995). She pitched herself as an established person 'back home'. She was in a good job working for an international non-governmental organisation. Her husband was a general manager, they were settled, they had a company running, and they were set, with fully furnished houses and fleets of cars. Her catalogue represents a story of someone who had a good life and who did not have a reason to leave her stable life behind. Shortly after sharing her success story, her storyline shifted from her catalogue that represents a settled life, to a story of victim, that of "coming to New Zealand with a suitcase" and leaving behind everything that she and her husband had built for 17 years.

The economic deterioration impacted on the children's education and possible future employment prospects. Veronica talked about the competition and corruption that loomed large in the country encroaching on her children's space. Despite the good life that Veronica had, she had to make the needs and future of her children a priority and migrate leaving nearly everything behind. Veronica's narrative is typical of most African women representing the essence of African womanhood in sacrificing for the survival of their children (Schmidt, 1992). Despite her catalogue of achievements she decided to put that on hold to migrate to ensure a better future for her children. That she could make the decision to resolve this conflict also reflects the complementary role of African women to African masculinity in making decisions paramount to the continuity and survival of African families (Terborg-penn, 1996).

Modupe also talked about the introduction of the SAP and the impact on the social economic

situation in Zimbabwe. She narrated:

Programme ESAP, we call it ESAP, had been started in 1990 and 10 years later in 2000 it had got just worse and worse with the government introduced this, they said to us that it was going to be a temporary measure, we were going to fasten our belts but would soon be undoing them when things got better but instead the situation got worse and worse and worse.

Modupe talked of the hope that she and her people had when 'ESAP' was introduced. She presented a dialogue between the actors and her people; the actors being the 'government and us' representing the government of Mugabe and the Zimbabwean people; and at the same time voicing the characters of Zimbabwe's government. The programme was introduced with a promise that it would be a 'temporary measure'; the Zimbabweans needed to fasten their belts which they would be undoing soon when things got better. However, instead of the promise of 'hope' that things would improve after a few years of the programme, the evaluation of the impact by Modupe was that "it got just worse and worse". This statement was made both at the beginning and the end of Modupe's narrative to emphasise the severity of the negative impact of ESAP on Modupe and her people and to reflect the integrity of the government of her country.

Kanji (1995) noted that Zimbabwe adopted the SAP early 1992 until 1995 significantly to reduce poverty and sustain higher medium and long-term economic growth. The implementation of the programmes in Zimbabwe was similar to that in another 40 African countries. SAP's operation in Africa was to combine a stabilisation loan from the International Monetary Fund coupled with conditions monitored by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. However, Steady (1982) argued that instead of yielding positive outcomes, the result was the reverse. Resources flowed through debt servicing of at least US\$14 billion a year from Africa to the affluent nations in the North. She concluded that the debt that is being paid is greater than the amount received in real international aid.

Kanji (1995) noted that ESAP has not been successful in Zimbabwe because of the policies of extensive import liberalisation and consequent currency devaluation that has been responsible for the suppressed economic growth in Zimbabwe. As a consequence of the decline in the economy, in 1993 the numbers of people that have lost their jobs are estimated at 60,000 in both the public and private sectors. Although Modupe had a good and stable job, she stated that her employer was not spared the impact of the socio-economic situation; she

pronounced with sadness in her voice an expression of loss. Maloba (2007) identified the impact of ESAP on women in Africa, and concluded that ESAP did not address what it was designed to achieve; rather, it increased barriers to women's entry into higher paying and economically rewarding enterprise. They experienced reduce mobility because they were forced to "use their working capital to cover the rising cost of basic family needs such as food, health expenses and school fees" (Maloba, 2007, p. 219). She concluded that poverty and the need to provide for their families drove many women into the informal sector, such as trading.

Although, Modupe and Veronica were not pushed into the informal sectors, they had to make life changing decisions regarding fulfilling their traditional roles. They used their narratives to inscribe their identities (Daslyva, 2007) as mothers who needed to see a future for their children and ensure the survival of their family members. The stories that they shared also contradict the European or 'Victorian ideology of "domesticity"', which implied that African men were bread-winners and their women saddled with domestic chores, a discourse that had no place in pre-colonial Africa (Schmidt, 1992). The idea of women staying at home, cooking, keeping houses, and raising children, while men earned wages, was an imported culture; it was not an indigenous African way of doing things. African feminists noted that African women had been working from birth and they still hold their reproductive role in high esteem (Schmidt, 1992). The women's narratives confirmed Maloba's (2007) finding among informal trader and cross border trader women in Zimbabwe who were involved in visiting neighbouring countries like Botswana and South Africa to assume greater financial responsibility. Maloba (2007) concluded that as a consequence of ESAP, most Zimbabwean women had to assume the role of main providers, extending household's income sources and taking responsibility for the need of the household and the children, because their husband's salary became a somewhat unreliable source of funds for the family up keep.

An important key to liberation emphasised by Western feminism is work, which did not acknowledge that Black women have also been part of the labour force from childhood. African women held an important position in the economic growth of their society; they owned land, were involved with trading and participated in contributing to their homes because of the role expected of them. For White women work meant higher paying careers, but for many Black women there has been an expectation of work from childhood (Amos & Parma, 1984). The decline of economy and its impact on the women's means of livelihood

hence became a motivating factor for African women to migrate.

The aftermath of conflicts at home, such as political and social economic deterioration in some African countries, has been an impact on the education sectors. There is no guarantee of young ones gaining admission to higher learning institutions because of stiff competition and limited resources. Even when they did acquire a higher education, there were limited employment opportunities after they graduated and most times qualifications gained from some African countries were not internationally recognised. The goal of achieving a quality education with an internationally recognised qualification for themselves, their spouses and children was a motivation for some of the women to migrate.

Educational Purposes

Nunya adidoe asimetune o (knowledge is like a baobab tree, you cannot embrace it with your arms alone. (African proverb)

Two of the women, Veronica and Modupe migrated because of deteriorating education in their countries. Hassanatu migrated to join her husband who was a PhD student. She stated that the intention to give the children a better education was another reason for migrating. Titu migrated to study as an international student, while Makuka came into the country to care for her sick sister and after her sister's recovery she decided to study. The women wove the theme of education in the narratives that they shared with me.

Modupe told of the importance of education for her children and the future benefit of that as the reason that motivated her to migrate:

I knew that even if my children walk naked they've got their education they've got the tools they need. I'll use the analogy of in a village where there've been drought the rain doesn't come that person with the tools the person with the hoe and the plough and the day it rains he runs to the fields and starts to work on the on the land but that person without the tools you're going to start thinking ok maybe I'll go now into town and go and buy that hoe to go and buy to sow them and he never had them in the first place. That is what I put as the education; the personal education once it rains once the jobs are available they go out to get their jobs. So I always want my children to have education even though even if the jobs not available but they should have them the education to secure them.

Modupe seemed to have been thinking about the unemployment situation of young graduates in her country in painting this picture. The unemployment rate in most African countries led

to discouragement on the part of parents and young people from attaining education; so many youths dropped out of school because of limited employment opportunities. Modupe was pro-education; she said that even if the jobs were not available, her children should have the tools that would guarantee employment. The drought is a symbol of unemployment, the hoes and ploughs represent the tools of education and the rain is the employment opportunity that might show up after the drought. The ones that have the tools of education would have the opportunity to be employed because they had acquired the tools needed and the ones that did not have the tools, would not have the opportunity to gain employment for lack of tools. For Modupe there was no option for her children but to be educated, even if they were ‘naked’, because education would provide the tools for them to gain employment.

Tinuade migrated as an international student. She came to New Zealand to study and change her career, she could not study and combine work as a banker; this led to her decision to migrate in order to study.

In the year 2005, I applied to the New Zealand immigration service, London, to come to New Zealand to study accounting. It was hard for me because I was working in the bank before as a secretary so it was a bit hard for me to study because I was thinking of changing my career from secretarial to accounting so it was hard to leave the job, the situation over there to go back to school was a hard thing for me to do so I now came to New Zealand to study. So I came purposely to study in New Zealand.

Tinuade talked about how the situation at home made it difficult for her to study, how it was important for her to change her career, and how it was hard to leave her job. The situation had also been hard to go back to school. Tinuade was confident of achieving success in her education and she noted that that is why she came “purposely” to study in New Zealand.

Hassanatu’s reason for migrating was to join her husband who was a PhD student. She categorised that decision as an ‘educational development’ for the family.

I came, we came, I came to New Zealand about 4 years ago to join my husband. My husband came for his PhD degree so we had to move and join him over and coming to New Zealand is one of the educational development, we wanted to achieve as a family. We wanted a career development so we decided to move to New Zealand and we came to give the children a better education so they can grow up in a western world where they can have a different background in education compared to what we’ve got at home. Those are the major things major factors that brought us to New Zealand.

Hassanatu’s narrative was a reflection on the educational institutions of Hassanatu’s country.

She maintained that she would want the children to have a different background in education. She spoke in the first person but at the same time presented her migration as a decision that was made jointly by the family, towards the educational growth of her husband and her children.

Adunni also migrated to study in New Zealand. It was a decision that was made on her behalf by her family members. It was the decision of Adunni's family to educate her and her brother in Sussex U.K. without minding the cost. The family's decision was meditated on by her uncle who was in New Zealand. Adunni's uncle must have sponsored her to migrate to New Zealand where the education cost would not be as expensive as Bellaby's College in the U.K.

The main purpose for coming to New Zealand is for me to come and study. After my study I planned to go back and it was meant to be me and my brother that we came together, we planned to come, we wanted to go to the U.K. but my uncle was here at a time. He changed the whole plan that we would come to New Zealand to study here for my dad paid 12,000 pound for us to go to Bellaby's college in Sussex U.K.

In a traditional African setting, education is paramount. Education was informal; there was no structure such as primary and secondary schools. It is embracing the whole community. For example, from a Ghanaian perspective, children participate in cultural festival celebrations such as Oyinah and Afahye and they received instructions of learning through participating in such festivals (Mensah, 2007). Likewise in traditional Yoruba culture, professional training in tie and dye, hunting and pottery are taught by the elders of the family. It was a culture of inculcating younger members of the family into family trades. At the advent of colonialism, Western education was introduced, mostly by Missionaries as early as 1900.

Africans hold education in high esteem. Looking at the narratives of the women, education is considered as a tool to better one's future, and the women sacrificed immensely for their families, including both children and husbands, in order to gain qualifications that would be useful in the future. Their narratives contradict many assumptions and stereotypes presented by the media about the lack of knowledge of African women or their literacy level. They have used their narratives to inscribe themselves as knowledgeable and articulate about their goals as evidenced by the statements and the actions that they took to ensure quality education for themselves, their spouses and children. Although some of the women have been motivated to migrate to New Zealand for the purpose of education, some of them have had to migrate as a result of influence of their friends and family members.

Other Social Cultural Factors

The importance of friends and family as motivating factors for migrating cannot be over emphasised. Modupe had previous knowledge of New Zealand because of her friend, who is a New Zealander. Hassanatu migrated to join her husband who is a PhD student. Judith and Dorcas migrated to join their husbands. Dzoba came in on the invitation of her brother and Makuka came in to care for her sister who was sick; while Anika migrated to meet her parents who had migrated a few years before her.

Modupe talked about her contact with her friend who had encouraged her to migrate to New Zealand:

While I was working at Zimbabwe I met a very nice lady who um was a student here and she kept telling me come over come and study try and get a scholarship or just come over and she's the one who put the seed about me coming otherwise I at that stage the pinch hadn't really come very strong for me to leave the country.

According to Modupe's narrative it was her friend that 'put the seed' of migrating in her; if it had not been for her friend she was not keen on migrating.

Hassanatu had migrated about 4 years ago to join her husband, "my husband came for his PhD degree so we had to move and join him". Portia's story of coming to New Zealand was to visit: "I came to New Zealand in 2007 I came to visit my young sister".

Judith and Dorcas migrated to join their husbands. Judith did not mince words in explaining why she came to New Zealand; she simply said that she came in to join her husband to fulfil her traditional role. She was laughing when she said this. She spoke with lots of laughter:

Oooh actually I would say just one single factor, my husband has been here and so as a wife I have to join my husband and that brought me to New Zealand hahaha.

Dorcas talked about her experience:

Ok, in the first place my husband came here first and we got married and I was living in Ghana so probably it was going to be a bit harder if I were to live in Ghana and he was to live in New Zealand so we thought that it would be very, very important for the two of us to live together. So he applied and then I decided to come and join him over here and to begin life. So that was the main reason for coming to New Zealand.

Dorcas' story was around the need to live together with her husband. She repeated the statement and said it really mattered to stress the importance of the two living together.

Anika was the youngest of the women that I interviewed and she came to New Zealand to join her parents who had been in New Zealand for 10 years:

I came here because my parents were here they've been here for my dad has been here for 10 years and mum she's been here for nearly 8 years or more I'm not very sure about.

This narrative can reflect a kind of conflict which arises from having both parents overseas.

Tandi had migrated to practice as a nurse. She claimed that she received all the information and probably the financial support from her uncle who lives in the U.S.

Actually I knew about New Zealand. I did not know about New Zealand before I started coming to New Zealand. I got the information about New Zealand and the opportunity to work here as a nurse from my uncle who lives in the USA.

The women's narratives reflected optimism and confidence in discussing the social factors that motivated them to migrate to New Zealand. Another reason that motivated the African women in this study is professional development purposes.

Professional Development

Three of the participants, Tandi, Portia and Titu migrated to practise as nurses. I found that out of the 15 women that I interviewed, it was only these three women that were able to find employment in their field of practice. Titu had been practising as a nurse in Europe before securing a job with a nursing agent, Tandi had received information on nursing practice from her brother and Portia had migrated, claiming that she had sorted out her paper work with the New Zealand Nursing council before migrating.

Tandi positioned herself as someone that came to practice nursing and to have "fun". "The first reason was to come here to practise nursing and for adventure purpose".

Titu on the other hand positioned herself as the nurse that is needed.

Thank you so much, my profession is nursing and you know we are needed everywhere in the world so before I came to New Zealand I got a job offer and then it was through agency so I came here with the job and then the bonus on my own part which was difficult for a lot of people to get permanent job. This position wasn't a

problem for me at all. It took me 2 months after I got here and I worked for the agencies for that for that period.

Titu presented her identity as a nurse “who is needed everywhere in the world”. She was supported by the nursing agency that helped her to secure a job before she arrived in New Zealand. This supported her narrative of being needed in New Zealand because this is a counter narrative to other African women in this study. Unlike the other women, she did not migrate directly to New Zealand from Africa but she had come from Malta (Europe). This is a different image of migrant women in New Zealand while most of them had to arrive before looking for a job; Titu arrived supported by the agency that had employed her. She also had a bonus of securing a permanent position which was difficult for other people but was not a problem for her.

Portia, on the other hand, presented herself as a nurse that knew the procedure involved in practising in New Zealand and was positive about the process because it was straight forward:

I’m a nurse by profession I came here as a qualified nurse. I did all my paper work with the nursing council while I was home and the procedure was straight forward and I managed to raise money to come here.

Portia liked to be known as a ‘qualified nurse’, who managed to raise the money required to migrate to New Zealand.

Although the women presented a romantic story of immigrants that of having the required skills to overcome migration challenges. They used words like ‘needed everywhere in the world’, qualified nurse, coming for adventure and getting the information from a brother and having the fund to process and migrate.

There was no further information from these women beyond the romantic and hopeful front presented. On the other hand, in recent years, nurses’ migration is seen as a large scale plan carried out by international recruitment practices of high-income countries (Bach, 2004; Kingma, 2001). Such recruitment has been examined to have negative consequences for sending and receiving countries and for the meeting of global health needs (Aiken, Buchan, Sochalski, Nichols, & Powell, 2004). Kortenbout (1998) and Fongwa (2002) contended that active nurse recruitment by developed nations is facilitating a rapid outward migration of nurses from many nations at a time when the developing countries health needs have

escalated.

Factors for nurses migrating to developed countries include higher wages, better living and working conditions and opportunities for advancing their education and expertise. Although the three women had not presented reasons for migrating beyond the story shared, taking into consideration the need to fulfil their traditional role, the above motivating factors cannot be ruled out as gains that African women nurses had sought after immigrating to New Zealand.

The global movement of women is having an impact on women's relationships and communities at home and abroad (George, 2005). George (2005) argued that women from third world countries are increasingly becoming export products that meet the cultural expectations of competing market buyers.

The women I interviewed told stories of the reasons that motivated them to migrate to New Zealand. Unlike the period when migration from Africa had been dominated by men, the women shared stories of the importance of migrating so that they could meet the needs of caring for their children and their professional development. The women presented themselves as active in the decision making regarding their migration. They were not passive in making such decisions.

Their narratives reflect their roles as active and essential to the social, political, economic, cultural, survival of their community (Acholonu, 1995). It is interesting to note that five of the women were single when they migrated, six migrated leaving their husbands and children behind in Africa, while only four migrated either with their husbands or to join their husbands. The narratives of the women also challenged the notion that African women are powerless and are dominated by the men in their culture. Their narratives reflected an overlap rather than a dichotomy between the public and the private arena. Sudarkasa (1996) supported this point noting that in pre-capitalist African societies this dichotomy did not correspond to masculine and feminine domains as most Western feminist theories would have every one believe. Female and male in African societies were often portrayed as separate with men being ascribed a better position and higher status to women, while women have been portrayed as saddled with home and domestic work. However, these participants reveal that this is not their reality. The narratives that the women shared indicate that they were outside the home as well as in it.

Conclusion

The women's narratives reflected optimism and confidence in discussing the factors that motivated them to migrate to New Zealand. Most participants were faced with challenges that they could not overcome, despite the measures that they have taken to overcome such challenges. As a result of these challenges, the women and their family members had their identity and livelihood challenged. To overcome these, the women had to migrate to New Zealand, in order to acquire those skills needed for their survival and that of their families. Their stories reflect the importance of the support system of family and friends in African women's migration to New Zealand.

CHAPTER SIX: HOME SWEET HOME: LIVING WITH LOSS

I had someone to sweep the house.
I had someone to do the garden and
suddenly here in New Zealand that job,
all those jobs just looked at me and
they needed me to do them (Modupe)

In this chapter, I will discuss the trials that the African women immigrants have gone through since they arrived in New Zealand. I present the analysis using Kunene's (1991) rite of passage to represent the stressors that the women experienced. The themes discussed in this chapter include 'home sweet home', with sub-themes such as 'loss of family support', 'familiar environment', 'ethnic food', 'festivals', 'values around visiting families'. Other themes are difficulties around maintaining cultural identity, supporting teenage children and racism. These themes fit with the stage of African epic journey motif-rites of passage (Kunene, 1991). The stories shared by the women in this chapter represent the trials that they experienced in the process of acquiring the needed skills to resolve the conflict that led to their migration to New Zealand. The women spoke about the difficulties they had to come to terms with as a result of leaving behind their familiar environments, homes, social networks and collection of family and friends.

Home Sweet Home

The women spoke passionately about their homes, cultures and other aspects they were missing. They used phrases such as, 'I miss home', 'I miss my family', 'home sweet home', and 'You never forget where you have grown up from', to talk about how much they missed 'home'. Some of the losses they identified included the level of support they had from their families prior to migration which was no longer available to them in New Zealand. They spoke passionately about aspects of their culture they were missing and how they had to accept 'grudgingly' some 'kiwi' values which were totally different from theirs. Many of the women shared my experience of missing home, functions and culture.

Judith spoke affectionately about her home and other aspects she was missing:

Ay, I really miss home, as they say home sweet home, home sweet home, you know, you never forget where you have, you know grown up from, you know everything, yeah especially when it comes to weekend you know Ghana in Ghana we always have functions/celebration. Ghana, it's not... a formal celebration but then on weekends on weekends it is when most social activities happens, eh someone is there whatever, you

know everything, naming ceremonies, birthday, funeral, so you have somewhere to go on the weekend.

The exclamation 'Ay' used in the beginning of Judith's storytelling is used among Ghanaians often to demonstrate pains or how deep one feels about any particular situation. Judith used the opportunity of sharing her experience to remember her home and the sweet things about it. She took her time to educate me on the importance of not "forgetting where you came from". This echoes an African saying "Ajo ko ledun koni le marele", meaning regardless of how prosperous one is on a journey, one day you will have to return home. She spoke about an important aspect of her culture she was missing, which were the functions that happen at home every weekend. While she talked about this experience, it was undeniable that she longed for her home as she looked past the window in her sitting room as if there was an aeroplane or a means of transport waiting outside to take her home.

She appeared excited while she talked about the various functions that occur during weekends because it is an opportunity to "have some where to go to". In other words, Judith was missing out on such opportunities, because being new in New Zealand and not having her family and friends here meant the opportunity of attending functions as she used to in Africa was missing. From Judith, and the other women's stories, I was able to compare the two cultures, that of New Zealand and African nations. New Zealand cultures and values about attending functions are totally different to that of Africa. The major difference would be in the support received from families and friends - the number of people involved - in making sure the function is successful in Africa. For example, the way weddings are celebrated in New Zealand is different, a person needs to be invited and perhaps also need to RSVP before attending. Most times people celebrating have the final say with regards to who they invite and could be strict on the number of invited guests. At times guests are asked to bring a plate or pay for their own food/drinks and they may not have the privilege of inviting other people.

On the other hand, when Africans are celebrating, people do not necessarily need to be a member of family of the person celebrating before they are invited to a function. Guests could be invited through word of mouth, by a relative or friend of the person celebrating. They are also free to bring along their own friends or families and they are not allowed to bring a 'plate'. Such functions occur almost every weekend and most of the time, they are family-centred. With the arrival of African women in New Zealand, not having their families

and friends who could invite them to ‘functions’, made it stressful for them as they ended up keeping to themselves. Another consequence of this is that they missed out on the togetherness with friends, family and their community during such functions. This could lead to isolation on the part of the women.

Tandi, for example, related her experience of missing home to loss of friendship, togetherness of her people and various functions that provide the opportunity for families and friends to get together.

I miss my parents a lot I really miss them, I really miss my friends, our culture, the... how can I put it? The real culture... We have different functions to attend like marriages, birthday, naming ceremonies.

Tandi lamented how much she missed home; she reinforced Judith’s experience concerning the absence of various functions in New Zealand. As she spoke about her culture, she was short of words, she referred to attending functions as the ‘real culture’, and she likened attending these functions to “getting life”. In other words, lack of opportunity to attend functions that would make them come together with friends and families every weekend in New Zealand, meant they were “missing out on life”.

Adunni spoke about how much she missed her siblings and her parents. She also mentioned missing out on celebrations such as Christmas. Christmas especially is celebrated differently in most African cultures. In the New Zealand context, much emphasis seem to be laid on exchanging gifts among friends and family, but in Africa, it is usually a time for the extended family to come together. During this celebration, there are drummers and praise singers, singing the praise of both young and old. Most times, family members wear tailor-made clothes—uniforms, called ‘Aso-ebi’; gifts of food, clothes and money are often exchanged among family members and friends as well.

The aspects of having to visit and attend functions without been invited is an aspect of the African culture the women appear to be mostly missing. Judith, Portia and Igbagbo spoke about these values and how important they are to them. They also talked about the nature of friendship in their societies.

Getting Up and Going

Judith, Porita and Igbagbo spoke with sadness about this aspect of their culture which they

considered normal but appears abnormal and unacceptable in New Zealand. Although they spoke with voices of resignation that they were accepting the “New Zealand way”, they were honest that they were not pleased with such acceptance.

Judith spoke of one thing she really missed from her culture and that “thing ... is you know, you just get up and go”. She spoke about not needing to ask if you are allowed before could visit in Africa. She continued, “You know you just get up and go, you don’t you need to communicate, “oh I’m coming”. Although from her tone, this is a value she would have loved to uphold, she had realised that she had to make adjustments in New Zealand since the culture here is to warn people that you would like to visit them or perhaps wait for them to invite you. Judith concluded with a tone of resignation that she finds it difficult to uphold this value and consequently she has come to an understanding that things work differently in New Zealand.

Igbagbo also talked about how she felt limited when it comes to visiting. She lamented that although it is an important aspect of culture to welcome visitors and entertain them with food, her aim of visiting people is not for this purpose only but also to fellowship with her African people. She spoke with pain and anger because even her fellow Africans have caller identifications to warn them about who was calling. She expressed extreme disappointment that she could not “see someone without calling them”. She spoke as if her right to visit has been taken away from her because of these new values. Igbagbo evaluated living in New Zealand as “living in a superficial environment” because of the new values she considered strange.

Portia also talked about how people would think she is crazy if she visited here without being invited. In Africa, visiting also requires entertaining the guests with food. Portia talked about the importance of “having a meal, you never did know that person was coming you just ask them to join you know”. She spoke about how different it is in New Zealand because “here you just find it people don’t do that”.

In most African cultures, women must have food ready in the pot or ready to be cooked for guests at all times. Welcoming visitors into one’s home by serving them food and water without expecting anything in return is an acceptable culture among Africans. Taking care of visitors or even strangers is an acceptable value by Africans because it invites blessings.

The experiences of the three women regarding their memory of home and what they considered normal at home and in New Zealand confirms Kunene's (1991) statement that, "the intellectual and psychological levels of journey are more personal, and that the memory of recent events, both at home and during the journey, modify current and future behaviour" (p. 210). It is interesting to know that these values that are considered "normal" at 'home' are being considered abnormal and 'crazy' in New Zealand. For the women who once enjoyed the comfort of being with their people when they wished and wanted, they now find themselves in New Zealand with new sets of rules. This means they have to modify their behaviour in order to conform and be accepted as 'normal'. These rules pose a lot of stress for the women.

Not only did the women miss their family members and their various functions, some of them identified that they miss the support they enjoyed from their family.

Those Jobs just Looked at Me and They Needed Me to do Them

Three of the women Tinuade, Modupe, and Judith identified the loss of support from families and how it has been stressful for them. Modupe spoke extensively about her sense of 'up-rootedness: she identified what she had to cope with as "the new situation, the new cultures and new ways of doing things and what she found new was 'really feeling quite uprooted from having so many family members'" who were supporting her and who were there for her. Modupe presented herself as someone who could "buy her freedom" by having helpers at home. She also presented herself as someone who had lots of people doing things for her. In her own words, areas she had people helping her included:

I had someone to sweep the house. I had someone to do the garden and suddenly here in New Zealand that job, all those jobs just looked at me and they needed me to do them.

Modupe presented herself as a 'big woman' who had the resources that enabled her to 'buy her freedom' by having helpers in the home. In most African cultures, it is a communal value to support one another and in most cases, people who are comfortable do have other less privileged family members reside with them. On such occasions, it is mutual support where the 'comfortable ones take responsibility for accommodation, feeding or education of the less privileged family members; in return such family members take responsibility for the house chores, as identified by Modupe. In Kenya, this is called harambee and among the Yoruba in

Nigeria, it is known as aaro. It is a win-win situation among family members and community. Modupe's story followed the progressive sequence (Lieblich et al., 1998) of someone who was able to buy her freedom in her country and enjoyed tremendous support from her people. She experienced a major turning point when she came to New Zealand, where she had lost her freedom and where all the jobs that she had people doing at home are looking at her needing her to do them.

Tinuade also expressed a sense of loss of family support. Although Tinuade did not position herself as someone who bought her freedom by having helpers in her home like Modupe; nevertheless, she spoke about losing family support here in New Zealand with regards to home care and child care. She concluded that since arriving in New Zealand "the reverse is the case here". This reversal in Tinuade's circumstances "forced" her to do all the chores by herself which she might not have needed to do if she were in Africa (Bruner, 2002). She used the phrase "brain draining and stressful" to convey the impact of this experience and stress that she went through..

I have spoken about the importance of a child being raised in a village; meaning, the care and nurturing administered by every family member. There are no isolated parents or families in Africa. For the women however, because of migration, they had to juggle so many things, (like their career) in order to ensure the survival of their family. This is very stressful for most African women in New Zealand especially if they are first generation migrants.

Bystydzienski and Resnik (1994) noted that immigrant women have been depicted as putting up a show of good adaptation while remaining torn inside. From the narratives of the women, instead of putting up a show of good adaptation, they have spoken with honesty and sincerity regarding where they were prior to migration and where they are now and how they have felt about these changes.

African immigrant women in New Zealand have been open about the sudden reversal of their circumstances, they do not seem to be putting up a show of good adaptation, they have been factual about their losses, around freedom, uprootedness and how shocked they were to realise the things they had taken for granted in Africa. They lamented the support they could not receive from their family members and the impact of this on them.

The women identified losing some elements of their culture, like familiar environment, food,

dressing and family. According to the 'continuing bonds model of mourning', immigrants dealing with the loss of their native culture may incorporate some elements of such cultures into their lives (Henry, 2006). By incorporating such elements immigrants may experience solace and these elements may help them solve problems or cope with the challenges facing them in their new environment (Henry, 2006). To adjust to New Zealand, African women migrants attempted to incorporate elements of their culture in to their life, but they also faced some challenges in this regard.

Maintaining Cultural Identity

The women spoke about the need to keep their cultural identity. They shared stories on the importance of accessing their ethnic food, and the stress they have experienced because of lack of access to these ethnic foods. They also talked about the importance of their children knowing and upholding these identities.

You are Wonderfully and Fearfully Made my Child.

Modupe spoke about her fear that her children might lose their identity; she highlighted the steps that she would take to ensure the children won't forget their roots. Some of the steps would be "investing in trips to Africa" for her children to "know where they come from". To ensure the continuity of her identity, it is important for her children to...

Sit in an environment where people speak in their mother's language. Where they see that if you want to have chicken. You run after the chicken and catch it. And that's your dinner... that if you want to have eggs you go to the chicken run and get these fresh eggs... if you go to the village where my grandmother stayed you carry a whole heavy bucket on your head and you try and balance it and get to your village and use that water sparingly appreciating each single cup, learning even some of our sayings... being taught folk stories.

Modupe called up images of a typical environment where an African child is brought up, the image of the village, where food is produced, and what goes into food production like catching the hen, fetching water and balancing it on the head, resources management, the place of the grandmother, learning their mother's tongues as well as some African sayings and folk stories; these are important attributes of an African child's identity.

Modupe spoke about the attributes (Barber, 1991) that distinguish an African child from other

children from other cultures with pride and confidence that these are the values that she would want her children to remember and live by. She is confident that if the children can adhere to this, they would be grounded in whom they are and be proud that they're black African children and in the future they will not wish they were Maori or Pakeha. She summarised her talk on what it takes to be an African child; as being:

Very happy they are who they are they are dark skinned even if people laugh at them like one child says that everyone laughs at her that she's too dark and I say to her you are wonderfully and fearfully made my child you are so beautiful.

To Modupe, holding onto these values ensures that the children “do have a place that they belong”. Although the fear that Modupe is having regarding this issue is stressful to her, another source of stress is paying the fares for her children to go ‘home’ to see, know and learn her cultures.

Modupe's notion of educating her children about their identity is in agreement with Mbigi and Maree (1995) that it is important for Africans to discover their own collective self-identity if they are going to undertake the challenge of developments. Modupe is educating her children to learn and adopt these concepts so that they will not be estranged from her community's thinking, perception, feelings and behaviours (Rotherham & Phinney, 1987).

The women spoke about the need to keep their cultural identity; they spoke extensively of the importance of accessing their ethnic foods which they spoke about as a very important aspect of identity.

Iyan lonje Oka logun (Pounded yam is food, Yam flour is medicine)

Tandi, Judith and Bunmi spoke about how important it was for them to have access to their ethnic food and the difficulties with sourcing and buying products in New Zealand. The women spoke about how much they missed their food items and the barriers to access African foodstuffs in New Zealand.

Bunmi gave an analysis of the types of ethnic food stuff she buys and how much it cost. She indicated that she misses ‘basically everything’ but what she misses most is her ‘food’:

Umm yes of course... when we find them they are very, very, very expensive like... there's one made of, yam powder, it's called Amala, just about one kilogram or about 2 kilograms costs \$20, and that that costs a fortune you get to eat about two kilograms in 1 and ½ weeks and you can imagine buying that every time and that, that, that is

that just about eating it twice in a week or just if you eat it once a week there's one that is called epo pupa the other one that is called egusi may be about 150 grams of egusi costing about... costing about \$5 or something you know.

Bunmi identified the food items from her tribe, the epo pupa is red palm oil, egusi is pumpkin seed used for making vegetables, and she did a comprehensive analysis of how much it cost and how long it lasts. I am conversant with most of the food items identified by Bunmi, when comparing the cost of these food items in New Zealand they are 10 times what they would cost in Africa. The stress for Bunmi is the cost of the food and the fact that she is not able to buy what would last her for a long time. Because of the cost most Africans cannot afford these food items. What used to be an everyday meal for them when they were in Africa has turned to be a delicacy in New Zealand. Because of this they have to eat what they can afford.

For Hazzanatu, missing home was linked to difficulty around finding traditional meals. She put it simply by saying, "is one of the things I miss about home, we find it difficult to get a traditional meal".

Tandi said that because she could not find African food items when she arrived in New Zealand, she had to force herself to eat Semolina because that was the only staple food similar to African staple food; she continued to show her discontentment with the non-availability or expense of African food items. But in order to have continuity with this identity she had to buy some of these food items to have a "taste of Africa". The stress experienced by these women because they were forced to eat what they were not used to or in eating only what they can afford which may not necessarily be an African food item. The discontent expressed by the women confirms that strange-tasting food causes psychic depletion among immigrants (Akhtar, 1999).

Another aspect that the women found difficult is the fact that some African food items are not allowed in New Zealand because they do not meet the nutritional standard of New Zealand. Tandi thought an affordable way to access African food items would be by importation, she expressed her frustration because of the barriers that stopped her from doing this:

They are very expensive but I cannot bring them here it could have been cheaper if we could bring it, it is difficult because when it arrives at the Airport, the (MAF) would not release it. They have many questions, for you they have to examine, to know the contents of the foodstuff, when they came back to you they have found something in the food that does not meet New Zealand nutrition values and they would want you to pay to have it treated, after treating it the food are not the same they do not taste the

same they are not good to consume.

Judith also expressed the same challenges that she had faced with gaining access to African foodstuff: “The food-It is quite difficult though we get some but it’s not as easy as”. Although she had been able to make do with what was available by improvising, she had been open about her feelings towards MAF and the standard that they had set for the food that they considered good to be eaten by Africans.

What I’m not happy about is you do ask for some food from home and then someone might you know do his or her best to bring it from her country here, but then the MAFS (at the Airport) will just take it as not good to eat, ...we used to have the South African mili meal, corn meal but then ya they don’t want to bring it here.

Tandi and Judith narrated how they had been denied access to the food they had requested to be sent to them from Africa, because of New Zealand protocols. Most of the participants talked about their experiences of how different standards had been used concerning food items such as spices, foodstuffs and fishes. Some women alleged that their food items had been confiscated by some officers at the airport because it did not meet New Zealand standards. Speaking from personal experience, in the last few months I have had a spice (Iru) sent to me from home. In some instances it has been allowed without query and a few other times, the spice had been seized and I have been requested to pay some money for it to be treated. I found this experience painful because, firstly, I had paid for postage and secondly I had to pay for it to be treated and most times, when the food items are treated the taste is not the same as claimed by Tandhi. Most African women are confused about why there are restrictions on their food items when other ethnic people like Indians and Chinese import their food items without such restrictions. African women do wonder if this is another form of racism or a process of dislocating the core of African individual or communal identity.

The women expressed their loss and grief around African food items as well as the loss of freedom for Africans to choose what is beneficial to them. Is surprising that the food items that an average African had been brought up with is now being condemned as not ‘good enough’ for them by the New Zealand government. The pains expressed by the women were also expressed by Frantz Fanon, an African psychiatrist many years ago, that it is painful for him to admit that black man has one destiny and, the destiny is white (Fanon, 1967).

I said I am Going to Work, They said You are Going to a Party

The women expressed the challenges around keeping their identity when it came to keeping their hair and wearing African clothing. Some of the women shared how they had been made to feel uncomfortable when they wore African dresses because this is considered 'flash'. They narrated their experiences.

Igbagbo spoke about her hair and how she cannot make it the 'African way'.

Like my hair, I cannot make it the other way; this is the only way (braids), what I like here is that it is much easier to keep it, at home I won't allow it to grow the ways it has grown.

The hair is considered the beauty of women in African culture; the head is the destiny of woman and man. It is said that anyone who wants to have a good life must look after her head/hair and there is a myth that when a woman takes care of her hair she is caring for her destiny. In most cases women are expected to have their hair done on a weekly basis in Africa, but on arriving in New Zealand most African women discover that that is a dream which cannot be realised because of the cost involved. A typical cornrow that costs equivalent of \$10 in Africa costs \$60 in New Zealand and in Africa there are opportunities of finding a friend to fix their hair free of charge. Because of the cost involved African women have chosen to keep hair dos for as long as it lasts to save some money. Sometimes they wear a particular style or keep their hair for months, which is a taboo in Africa; it also means such women are tampering with their destinies.

Igbagbo spoke about the concepts of New Zealanders on African dressing:

When I wear my African costumes they said where are you going? Is there a party? I said I am going to work, they said you are going to a party.

Igbagbo's experience is similar to so many African women as their way of dressing is considered flash or too colourful, even when they wear everyday normal clothes some New Zealanders felt they were too dressed up or must be dressed to attend an interview. Some of the women had been told at their workplaces to 'come down to the level' because they are thought of as being dressed up all the time. The embarrassment faced in the process of explaining and defending themselves leads to stress, and as a result of this some of the women are not confident to wear their fabrics to work or wear them on daily basis as they would have done in Africa. This is also having an impact on the second generation of young

women as they are choosing to be 'casual' in their dressing to fit in with New Zealand standards.

Although some of the women have identified the stress involved in maintaining their cultural identity, they have also spoken about the stress they have experienced because of the need to support their teenage children. Robinson (1995) identified one of the strengths of black families as strong achievement orientation and that black parents placed a premium on educational achievements. To attain this they pool the resources of the extended family together to provide educational mobility for their children (McAdoo, 1992). As the narratives of the women indicated earlier, some of the women migrated to New Zealand to ensure a "better life" and good future for their children. The experience of the women had been the need to support and guide their teenage children to achieve these set goals; they spoke of the difficulty they experienced as a result of this.

I had to be Emotionally Available for Them and Psychologically Available for Them

Four of the women that migrated with their teenage children expressed their anxiety with regard to their children adjusting to New Zealand; they spoke about the frustration they experienced with the different education system, different cultural values and the identity confusion that the children had to cope with. Modupe migrated with two adolescents; she spoke about her daughter's feeling of up-rootedness, she noted that her teenage girl found it difficult to cope in New Zealand because she felt that they were better off in their country:

I had to be emotionally available for them and psychologically available for them and also I also brought in an aunt just to be supportive of her as well so I had to be the mother, the father the whole just me I had to be the strength and also get my own strength and it was increasingly difficult.

Modupe presented herself as having to fulfil the role of the two parents to her teenagers. Ordinarily coping with teenagers is a stressful business. It becomes 'increasingly difficult' for Modupe because of being in a new environment. Female family headship is a familiar concept in Africa, but in such settings, the mother is not expected to be 'all in all' for their children. There is usually tremendous support from extended family, and from the community as a whole to fulfil such roles, even in situations where the children's father is dead his relatives are still expected to fulfil their responsibilities to the children. I believe it became stressful for Modupe because the family support was not there; also it is likely for the teenagers to be torn between two worlds, that of their 'new friends and culture' and that of

their parents.

Hazzanutu, also expressed the challenges that she had experienced with her children, she noted that although the children were settled in their schools they had “no friends” and they had an “accent”.

Judith’s experience with her teenagers was talked about with lots of emotion, she had experienced frustration with the system regarding support for her teenage children she talked about her experiences of not receiving adequate information and support from the system when her teenage child got into” trouble”

One of my children you know bought a car when he came here newly. And he was over 18 years old, he decided to buy a car but here is a boy who has just come here for only two months and you know he got just eager to buy a car because he already knew how to drive from home. And so he just went to a car yard and he was given a car on finance and when I realised I wasn’t happy at all because he had just come to New Zealand. I did not know where he was going to find the money in New Zealand, where is going to find the money at least, anyway it was hard to buy his ticket to come to New Zealand, so I was expecting him to at least stay home you know support or something or like work for a while because we were taking him to work and he could join on a bus and go to work when he bought the car it was a huge debt. Since then he hasn’t been, you know happy the way he should be to me personally because of that, so I went to the MP’s office, I couldn’t find him personally and then met someone in the office he said well sorry I think we can’t help you because you know he’s 18 years and in New Zealand he’s allowed to buy his own car. That’s when I went to the Citizen’s Advice Bureau and somebody said to me, so that is what he wanted to do let him face it and I had a real pain in my heart. I needed help you know help. Because I was thinking I could find somebody who would say well you know even though people are free to do what they want and he has the right to make the decision to buy his own car but here is a woman who thinks the son has gone too far because he has only been here for 2 months, so I thought we can do something about it, give them the car back and get this child off the big debt. It was difficult, I think somebody could have, you know twisted the law to fit because you know it wasn’t what I really wanted and was happy about.

Judith found this experience stressful because she had spent a lot of money to bring the boy from Africa, she had an expectation for the child to be grateful and comply with her guidance, but contrary to this, she noted that immediately the boy arrived he started doing things on his own. The agony experienced by Judith is common among immigrants with teenage children. Most of them spoke about the ‘freedom’ that youth have in New Zealand, From the western perspective youth need to be independent and are expected to make their own decisions, on the other hand, there is not an ‘independent’ individual youth within an

African setting. Regardless of how old you are, you are expected to be guided by people that are older. It was this loss of value that Judith could not understand or find in the New Zealand system when she looked for help when there was tension between her and her boy.

Suares -Orozco and Suares -Orozco (2001) argued that immigrant families migrated to better the lives of their families, but at the same time as they are happy for the children to adjust to the host country they are concerned that their children may lose their parents' cultural heritage and values and they are often worried about the influence of the host culture on the younger generation. It is common knowledge that when most immigrant youth arrive in New Zealand they are educated about their 'rights'. They hardly listen to their parents and the result of this is that lots of them get into trouble, which makes life stressful for their parents who want to keep them on the 'right path'.

Veronica also identified her anxiety in watching her children "going rank" because of their exposure to the system, she said:

Our children, and we were seeing them relaxing through the education system it wasn't good it created a bit of tension between us and the children then learning the kiwi way of life and education and us still you know, knowing what we knew back home and holding to those principles created a bit of tension.

Veronica spoke about 'a bit tension' in her family. She repeated this twice in her statement to emphasise the difficult situation in feeling that the children were 'going bad' because they were not upholding her cultural principles which she referred to as 'from back home'. She talked with fear that because the children were 'relaxing through the school system' they might not be able to achieve the goals their parents had set for them. Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (2001) noted that the current era of globalisation demands that students succeed academically for them to gain access to increased opportunity in adulthood. Veronica said that if the concentration of New Zealand education is on the social life then the children might not succeed academically in order to access increased opportunity that the parents hoped they would be able to access.

From a culture perspective most mothers are living to ensure their children turn out well. For mothers who looked after their children are praised and the ones that have undisciplined children are scorned or criticized. A Yoruba adage says *Omo tio da ti baba e ni, eyi ti o baje ti iya eni*, meaning the good children are claimed and loved by their fathers and the bad ones

belong to their mothers. Barber (1991) noted that Oriki are used to extol the hard work of women and to praise them for raising their children well, it is then paramount that if African mothers are not to be scorned or considered as a failure they have to ensure that their children are successful. It is usually painful for African mothers who have high expectation of their children to find out that coming to New Zealand means not achieving these expectations and most of them find that they are losing their children in the system because of the cultures, values and the “rights” of the children.

Finding themselves in new settings also indicates that African people are treated differently because of their complexion; this leads to their experiencing prejudice and discrimination in the society.

Racism

Almost all the women that I interviewed had identified racism as one of the stressors that they had experienced since they migrated to New Zealand; they spoke extensively on experiencing inter-personal and institutional racism.

Interpersonal Racism

I think of where I originally came from

Racism experienced was in the form of verbal abuse, discrimination and marginalization at different settings. Bunmi expressed how she did not feel accepted at work because of her colour:

Then will I be able to say that is home, if some people still look at my colour and treat me in a way they would not treat some other people, I will not definitely consider that as home. I wish to consider New Zealand as home and I’m really willing to consider New Zealand as home so to speak, but when I see these things I cannot help but think of home and begin to wonder about Africa... I think of where I originally came from because of the way of the acceptance that I see here in New Zealand.

Bunmi found the “way of acceptance” in New Zealand as a barrier to considering New Zealand as home, she felt that she had not been treated as ‘some’ other people because of her colour and because of this experience, she was strong in declaring that ‘I will not definitely call such a place home’. Rack’s (1982) argument is that most immigrants have lost their roots, the familiar landmarks and personal association with their people who reassure them that they are the person whom they think they are. Despite this loss, they still desire to

integrate into the new society that they find themselves in, a place they could call home. If new migrants are making efforts to integrate into New Zealand, I could imagine how huge the psychological impact this would have on them. It is not surprising that Bunmi concluded that she cannot consider New Zealand as home because of discrimination she experienced. Bystydzienski and Resnik (1994) noted that in one ancient language that the noun for home is the same word as the verb 'I am', so for Bunmi to have continuity in her identity she needs a home where she would be accepted and where she will not be a 'cultural homeless' immigrant. Women need a situation where they will not feel torn between two cultures or between two homes.

Bunmi continued her narrative of feeling unaccepted and not welcomed during training at work where her colleagues were talking and saying things that were not true about blacks and about where she came from and how 'people' would turn and look at her because she was the only person from Africa in the room.

She continued her story of how her child was discriminated against in his school. She noted that she had not been treated with respect by her children's teachers and that several times, her child had come back home unhappy, crying because of the way he had been treated at school. Igbagbo's experience of racism is regarding her daughter's classmate:

We wouldn't have known, she was the only one not invited to that party, but you know children are innocent, and the girl that had the birthday celebration came up to my daughter and informed my daughter that my daughter wasn't invited to the party because her mom said she was black. So it was too much for her to have a black girl in her house or at her daughter's birthday party.

Igbagbo expressed that her daughter had not been invited to a party because inviting a black girl to the party was "too much for them" meaning the classmate's family. The discrimination that the child experienced reflects lack of respect from her classmate and her family. Having self-respect and the respect of others is important in keeping positive self-image, on the other hand, living with a contemptuous view of oneself, and experiencing disrespect from other people constitutes a serious psychological problem (Tajfel, 1978). Igbagbo concluded that although the children did not know anything and could not feel anything about the experience she, the mother being an adult, was the one that had felt the impact of this attitude. She concluded that "It is difficult and sad for someone to use colour as an excuse not to invite someone to a party".

Veronica's children also experienced racism in their neighbourhood and in their schools. This made them curious about their colour. They had to live with this as they moved from one school to another and it had led to awareness on their part that they were different to other children. She noted:

Every place that they were, new people were very curious in the Northland. I should mention my children were the only brown children there and in the city they would talk about brown children, are you the mother to the brown children, are you the mother, and so that curiosity you know they moved with it from one school to the next and they would have to answer the same questions they get asked the same questions and they come back home and they say but mummy why am I a different colour? Why is my hair different? And I could see that, that was coming from the question that they would get at school, they would ah feel that they really are different from the other children.

Veronica's children's awareness of how different they are to the other children reinforces the issue of racial awareness, identity and attitude among children of an ethnic group. Veronica felt tense when she talked about the experience. I could imagine that the fact that the children were the only black children in that setting could raise curiosity; I guess the stress would come from Veronica making efforts to assure her children that although they are different from other people that nothing was wrong with them or their colour or hair texture.

The difference in hair mentioned by Veronica's children is an echo - of African people's hair being often perceived not as a source of pride, but as nappy, coarse, the enemy, a problem to be solved, a territory they must conquer, or a part of their body that needs to be controlled or fixed and often it reflects shame and insecurity (Hooks, 1988; Imarogbe, 2003).

Imarogbe (2003) contended that a deeper exploration of the negative attitude about Africans reveals that these words used to qualify African hair types reflect the hostile position historically taken towards Africa. According to Golden (2004), the equation is simple and complex, light skin, white features plus straight hair equals beauty which is the "norm", and dark skin plus coarse hair equals ugly which reflects a sense of racial and colour superiority.

Although Bunmi, Igbagbo and Veronica narrated the different negative experiences that their children had, and they expressed the negative emotions they felt about this, their positive attitude in protecting and assuring their children was a factor in what behaviour the children would incorporate as a result of the stereotypes.

Aduni shared her story of how she had experienced racism from her lecturer; she narrated how the teacher had discriminated against foreign students and how she had been warned by her class mates about this. She noted that the lecturer had not been respectful of her, nor her privacy. She narrated:

I thought she did not respect me by talking to me that way in front of the other students, I felt she did not respect my privacy, other students were there, why would she want to do this to me in front of them?

She had to leave the class. Despite being supported by the head of school, the lecturer continued to discriminate against her, she said:

During the third year she was taking another paper, I went to the class when she saw me she asked me why I was in the class she said I should get out of the class.

Aduni got upset at this attitude and could not help it until she said to the lecturer “you are damned racist”. She screamed and shouted at the lecturer at the same time, telling her mind. Another place where the women experienced racism was at work; some of them spoke about how their bosses did not trust their judgement and how their colleagues did not treat them with respect. These African women have shared stories about this type of racism but some of them have experienced racism within some institutions in New Zealand.

If we were living with lions and wild animals I won't be here by now

In the beginning of history the concept of blackness was very, very different. In Egypt they called themselves the Black people, and Kemit, the original name of Egypt means “The land of Black people”. In the ancient Congo they took so much pride in being Black, the Blacker the child was the better. They put babies in the sun to become darker. But today there is nearly universal condemnation of Blackness (Runoko Rashidi cited in Golden, 2004, p. 166).

Adunni and Veronica felt discriminated against and judged because they had been treated as if they were not civilized and they must have been living in the jungle. Although Adunni was able to adjust to the New Zealand system she was disappointed at the image that some New Zealanders were holding to be true about Africans. Adunni and Veronica resorted to educating people about where they had come from.

Adunni felt that lots of Africans were being judged based on their appearances and people

were biased thinking that everyone coming from Africa was living with wild animals. She felt insulted to have experienced this. The issue of appearance, its impact on Black people and how they are expected to conform with being Black, indicates a symbol of inferiority to their white counterparts which could be learnt from Michael Jackson's life as Golden (2004) noted:

You have to remember that Michael Jackson essentially invented the music video as we know it'...It was his 1984 video as a new and highly profitable vehicle for promoting music. ...I think that after the unprecedented success of 'Thriller' he decided to change his appearance to appeal to the widest possible audience- the whole planet. What followed were three nose jobs, four chin jobs, the widening of his eyes, and the alteration of his skin so that now he resembles nothing as much as a grotesque parody of Whiteness. (p. 101)

It is interesting to know that despite Jackson's greatness and achievement, he was still plagued by his colour and many Black people had concluded that he had sacrificed his life to conform to the 'colour norm' or to have become a grotesque parody of Whiteness (Golden, 2004). On the other hand, unlike Jackson, most of the African women that I interviewed were aware of the colour complex, but they still identified as being Black and spoke highly of their continent.

Adunni talked of her experience with the way black people are perceived. She narrated:

For people to be thinking that way I felt it was an insult for me, for people to judge you without being to where you are from, your country you do not have to judge people based on their appearances or what they are saying. I had to fight through that people are asking me about lions and I said that if we were living with lions and wild animals I won't be here by now we would be dead by now.

Adunni told this story with an angry tone; she demonstrated that she was disappointed about how New Zealand perceived her. She used her story to scorn and criticise the wrong assumptions held about Africans. Dasylva, (2007) explored the importance of using Oriki performance to re-inscribe oneself in any self-limiting situation. Adunni used this story to re-inscribe herself and her people as against the stereotype held about them. The core message in this story is to educate some New Zealanders that you do not need to judge people before you know them and that Africans live in decent houses, not with lions and wild animals; and that is why people like her and many other women are still alive and could come to New Zealand.

Veronica narrated her experience with prejudice and discrimination which is similar to Aduuni's. Veronica noted:

It is really out of ignorance and I cannot blame them for some of the questions they ask me because really they think Africa is a jungle it's a forest all you see is elephants and lions and monkeys.

Veronica continued her narrative:

Yes and there is no civilisation whatsoever. If they give you rice they think they are giving you rice for the first time in your life. If you eat an English breakfast for example. I had a comment somebody saying to me in New Zealand, Oh you're only here one month and you're already making an English breakfast.

Her reaction to this experience was also to educate New Zealanders that Zimbabwe was once a British colony and eating an English breakfast is common in the villages. People are making an English breakfast because that's what Veronica's people learnt from the colonisers. She also took her time to explain that on the first day that she resumed school "I got into class I had to greet my teacher in English".

The assumption of Africans not being civilised and living with lions and wild animal is widespread and believed in New Zealand. I was amazed when young and old people had met with me and they had wanted more information on wild animals. I responded by telling them that we also keep those wild animals in the zoo, we do not sleep with them.

There are assumptions that racism and oppression have damaged the black person's psychological makeup (Golden, 2004) and this is reflected in their concept of self. On the contrary, according to Veronica's narrative, and other women that I had interviewed, although they are affected by the stereotypes and assumptions this had not damaged their psychological makeup.

Another misconception held about Africans is that every African is poor and as depicted by Adunni "a one dollar a day person". Veronica spoke to persuade the New Zealand audience that this is not true.

Once people see you they think you are poor that you are coming for a better life, they do not know that there are lots of international students here and their family members are paying their school fees. Do you think everyone coming here is one dollar a day?

Sometimes they think people coming from Africa do not know what television is, it is sad very sad.

An African adage says only a knife knows what the inside of a coco-yam looks like; that is those who investigate and research something understand the subject. Adunni was sad about the prejudice held about Africans, prejudice such as Africans not knowing what a television is, despite the global village that everyone is in. The racist attitude towards African women confirms that to be prejudiced is to be unwilling to be influenced by facts that do not fit into one's preconception. Rack (1982) argued that prejudice has more to do with rigidity of outlook, and rigidity as it relates to the need of the individual to hold onto a worldview which is coherent and internally consistent, and the discomfort he feels when it is challenged.

It is my opinion most people who are racist would be comfortable to continue holding on to their concepts about Africans, even when it is glaringly obvious that what they are holding on to as the absolute truth is not necessarily so.

Adunni's statement about African international students paying close to \$15,000 yearly is her 'proof' that not every African is 'a one dollar a day person' as people are made to believe by the New Zealand media. Veronica's proof of her people eating English breakfast as far back as the colonial days is further evidence that Africans are not uncivilized.

Institutional Racism

"Whites constructed the colour complex and imposed a system of rewards and punishment to uphold it, ...and its insidious results shape nearly every aspect of life working hand in gloves with racism" (Golden, 2004, p. 127).

Somebody told me "you have a very strong accent"

The women told stories of how they experienced racism in the form of discrimination at interview panels at work and at school. They expressed how their colleagues and bosses had no confidence in them because they were the first or only Black person working in their different offices.

Bunmi spoke about the discrimination that Black people experience with regard to employment; she contended that Black people are being denied employment because they are

considered to be overqualified for most of the jobs that they had applied for. Bunmi alleged that the same jobs would be given to White skin colour applicants. She also expressed the discrimination that she had experienced during a job interview, when someone had told her that she had a very strong accent.

I have experienced some of these things, there was a time I had an interview and somebody told me you have a very strong accent at an interview, you see, what do you say about that? It's racism just discrimination because I have a strong accent so you see.

Bunmi argued that African accents or tone had been used to discriminate against migrants and had been used to prevent them from being given the opportunity to participate in the society.

If they just listened to us on the phone they know where you are coming from you know these are not kiwis and then that makes discrimination even though we are more qualified more experienced with better qualifications and with a lot of intelligence and reasoning we have this to offer but we are not allowed we are not given the chance just because of the colour and um maybe because of the accent so those are the ways I think I've experienced discrimination recently in New Zealand.

Veronica had also experienced being discriminated against during a job interview. She narrated that during the interview the work manager had asked "why do you want to recruit this African woman? You think there's a herd of elephants here for her to look after?"

It is interesting that this conversation took place during an interview, when the process of interviewing an applicant would mean that the resume must have been forwarded prior. If the manager had seen the resume and he still spoke to Veronica in that way I would say the voice of the manager is that of a bully who was not supportive of Veronica's integration into New Zealand. It is to be noted that Veronica who was allowed in the country as a professional was not considered to be intelligent enough to work in that setting, but she was considered 'good enough' to work with animals. This also confirms assumptions by some New Zealanders that Africans live in jungles with animals.

Anika also expressed her experience of her first job; she noted that some of her colleagues were not nice to her because, possibly they were seeing a black person for the first time:

I was ok but the staff ooh the first time they've seen an African person to work in that organisation so some of them were like good but some were very they were not nice you know they were kind of racist.

Portia was another woman who experienced discrimination at her workplace. She regarded the job as stressful, not because she did not know what to do, but because she was the first person to have worked there as a black person, and they did not know what to expect from her. She spoke about how it took time for people to know that she was competent at what she was doing. She spoke about how they doubted her and had no confidence in her and how she “really” had to work hard to prove herself. Other ways that she had experienced discrimination was being told off when she made “a little mistake”.

Portia’s talk about how she had to work hard to prove herself, to demonstrate that she deserved to be employed could be related to the experience of several African women in New Zealand who also shared stories about having to work harder than an average Kiwi so as to prove themselves worthy of the positions they occupied. This experience is similar to that of African women in the US who had to work 50 times harder than an average American to prove they were worthy of such positions (Lewis, 2000).

Golden (2004), a black American married to a Nigerian, a professor and writer of many books noted that despite her achievement she still felt that she had to work harder to be seen, heard, valued, accepted, than if she were lighter skinned.

Veronica talked about how she was discriminated against by customers because they assumed that she could not possibly be the supervisor at her work. She noted that she started experiencing racism after she had secured a job in the industry, which was different to when she was working on the farm. What she considered sad and stressful was that her skin had been used to determine her “capability”:

When I moved out of the farm situation into the industry where issues of race would come in, issues of prejudices would come in, issues of determining your capabilities because of your skin colour.

Veronica lamented how her capabilities were judged based on her colour and not on her skill and qualifications. It was interesting that when Veronica was working as a farm worker, she did not experience the prejudices that she spoke about, but her experience of discrimination happened because she was occupying a position which is ‘not meant for her’ based on her colour. African feminists (Maloba, 2007; Okome, 2005) argued that colonialism and globalisation are the new strategies of recruiting women from the third world into a new kind of slavery, where they are expected to ‘serve’ their ‘White master’ in a different way. This

idea is supported in Veronica's story, which confirms what Maloba and Okome posited that as a Black woman she was expected to serve at the lower rung of her career, not because she is not qualified but because she is Black.

Igbagbo narrated how clients in her workplace would not want to confide in her because of her complexion and how clients were colluding with other nurses against her. She narrated:

At my work someone would come to see you and once they know that you are the one available they wouldn't want to talk to you they would request to see a doctor... "I don't want the chocolate lady to know what I have discussed with you". Why won't I know I'm the one they are referring to, I'm the only Black nurse here.

Igbagbo stated another example of such discrimination from one of her clients in her narrative:

For example one of the clients I was going to take her blood for some test, she said she cannot allow me to collect the blood I said, "Why is that" she said, "you are not from here you are a foreigner".

The suggestion/theory that colour complex is about power, status and privilege and society measures the progress of Black people by the colour of their skin (Golden, 2004) is support for Igbagbo's experience. It was apparent that Igbagbo was considered as 'powerless and less privileged' compared with her white counterpart nurses and that this was based solely on her complexion.

In the narratives of the women the power play could be seen among nurses against Igbagbo; the better status of the client the more the lack of privilege for Igbagbo to care for them. The same experience occurred between Veronica and the customers that she was supposed to be serving, between the people on interview panels and Bunmi and Veronica. The women lacked the opportunity to relate with the system in a dignified manner and all these experiences were not because they were unintelligent but because they were Black.

The women had been able to weave the theme of racism, discrimination and marginalisation into their narratives. They reflected how they were considered not good enough at the different places where they worked, they emphasised the lack of respect from clients, consumers and colleagues because they were Black. Although African women were able to find supervisory and managerial positions, most of the time people find it hard to accept that they are good enough to hold such positions. For Africans to have experienced

institutionalised racism is as a result of the stereotype or generalisation of beliefs that Blacks are fit only for menial work and are happy that way (Schultz, 2003). It would appear that the stories shared by the women are tragic, and they had been victims of racist discrimination. They spoke about the challenges they faced and how there was little or no intervention for them.

With the narratives of the women, it is clear that most of the women were not doing menial jobs before they migrated to New Zealand. Although they had to start their career from the bottom of the ladder, they made it clear that they were not happy with such menial jobs. The majority of the participants had moved up and by the time of the interviews they were practising as nurses, some of them in management and supervisory roles in New Zealand, while three of them were completing their nursing degree. The experience of the women with racism extends to assumptions, stereotypes and biases around African women, this also impacted on how they were related to in New Zealand.

Conclusion

Although African women were used to doing things in a particular way in their home countries, since they arrived in New Zealand they realised that some things are done differently in New Zealand and this has caused stress for them. These stressors have created a tension in their journey that made them 'look back' to the life they lived in Africa. The tensions experienced made them ask themselves if they had made the right decision to leave the 'luxury of their home' and its comfort. They continued to ruminate on what side of the world is best for them; Africa or New Zealand. They have compared the two cultures and have chosen to continue to do things their own way to ensure a sense of continuity in their identity despite the challenges and the changes that they had to cope with. Continuity and change are linked in many ways defining elements of our identity. Immigrants have to change because of diverse circumstances such as psycho-social and cultural conditions they come across, maintaining one's identity in the face of these changes is important to immigrant women.

CHAPTER SEVEN: RITES OF PASSAGE

“The process of initiation begins and he undergoes the necessary rites of passage as he moves ...psychologically into the depths of his own psyche, to rediscover his true self” (Kunene, 1991, p. 205).

This is another chapter considering the women’s stories about stressors that they have experienced in New Zealand.

The women I interviewed had a ‘romantic’ idea of what life might be like in New Zealand. They had dreams and set goals on what they wanted to achieve in New Zealand. They were convinced that embarking on this journey would enable them to acquire the needed skill to overcome the ‘forces’ challenging them. There were several ideas held by these women related to New Zealand, being a “land flowing with milk and honey”. This is the image portrayed among Africans, that when you travel overseas you are set to ‘make it’. The African women in this study, little realised that for them to fulfil their dreams of ‘making it’ and acquire the needed skills to overcome the conflicts at home, they had to face trials and perhaps undergo suffering that might ‘threaten their lives,’ before they could settle in their land of foreign sojourn (Kunene, 1991).

I will discuss in two chapters the trials and suffering which the women talked about experiencing since their arrival in their ‘land of dreams’ – New Zealand. In this first chapter, the themes discussed are under-employment/unemployment with the sub-themes demand for New Zealand work experience and non-acceptance of overseas qualifications; financial difficulty and language/accent, based on Kunene (1991) African epic journey motif.

I Was Doing Things Which I’d be Laughing with Myself

Six of the participants shared their experiences in relation to under-employment or unemployment. It is important to note here that almost all of the women were professionals before migrating to New Zealand. All of the participants migrated in order to have a ‘better life’. The best way to achieve their dream of a ‘better life’ was to be gainfully employed so that they could fulfil their traditional roles within their families. Through the narratives, shared by the women, it emerged that they were disappointed that they could not find suitable employment, especially in the fields for which they had trained. Some of the women talked about occupying managerial positions in their countries but when they arrived in New

Zealand they had experienced “sudden reversal of circumstances” (Bruner, 2002, p. 5) as some of them had to pick up low paying and low status employment. These are major “turning points” in their lives (Brunner, 2002, p. 83). The women talked about their experience and the impact on their settling in New Zealand.

Modupe narrated her experience of work as a care-giver and the psychological impact on her. She said:

When I came, I got a job as a care-giver and it wasn't easy, I was doing things which I'd be laughing with myself and ho ho ho look at me doing this to this person giving these people this shower.

Modupe's was an ironic-humour story. She found it funny that she had to survive on such a 'demeaning' and not easy job. She was laughing while sharing her story; however, it was not genuine laughter as she indicated in her statement, 'I was doing things which I'd be laughing at myself', meaning she was practically mocking herself for doing such a job.

Modupe identified her role as a manager in Zimbabwe and contrasted that with the care-giving job she secured in New Zealand:

For lack of a better word context, you come from a very managerial position and you come here and you even brushing people's teeth,... I had never shaven my own husband's beard but there I was in a rest home shaving this poor man's beard it's this transition which you psychologically trying to trust in God because it has to be done.

Modupe's was a narrative of decline of status as she moved from being a 'manager' to becoming a 'care-giver'. Other things that Modupe found 'funny' were brushing people's teeth and shaving men's beards which she had never even done to her husband. She noted that this was a transition for which she had to 'trust in God'; and she concluded by evaluating this experience as “life turning upside-down”. Achebe (1996) agreed that this type of regressive transition is like beginning a new life without the vigour and enthusiasm of a youth, and like learning to become left-handed in one's old age. Modupe's experience about her new status could be likened to learning to become left-handed in her old age.

Tinuade was a secretary in the banking sector before migrating to New Zealand to study as an international student. She shared her experience with regards to under-employment.

Somebody told me that after spending 2 years, you will be able to get a better job or a good job, that you have to start in factories, da-da-da-da for you to gain an

experience to learn how they do their things here, ... I think I'm very close to being right, it was going to it, was perhaps after 2 years I got this job, it has only been with factory and all these odd jobs before, but yeah I think it's becoming a pattern it's really hard for migrants that are just coming.

According to Tinuade's narratives, she appeared to have resigned to this common narrative of immigration, of the well-known pathway migrants should follow before they can find suitable employment in New Zealand. She had been informed that for new migrants to secure 'a good job', they have to have been in the country for at least 2 years, and perhaps 'starting in factories' to gain an experience of how things are done at work places in New Zealand. She noted that she had to go through this process before she could secure a 'better job'. Tinuade believed that this has become a pattern for migrants wanting to secure a good job.

Veronica shared her story of how it was challenging to find employment in her field of practice and how she had to start with a job which did not fully utilise her skills. She narrated:

So I had to go and work on a farm
But working on a farm in New Zealand
Is different from being a supervisor in Zimbabwe
Back home where you are the big boss
Here I had to do the milking of cows myself
I had to drive the tractor myself
I had to do the fencing myself
I had to do feeding of the cows
You know picking up the cows at lambing at calving period
So it was all the work that you can think of at a farm, I was doing it.
My title was Assistant Head Manager
But what I was managing there was the farm and the herd.
And no people to do the work it was the farm owner, myself and another employee
So it was me doing the job it was hard to start with ...but I learnt quickly

In this episode that Veronica shared with me she identified her strength and resilience in the transition from being a big boss at home to being a farm manager in New Zealand. Kandall and Murray (2004) noted that "at difficult times, people may launch in to narrative poems" (p. 66). In this story, Veronica spoke about the hardship she endured in her role as a farm supervisor in New Zealand. She positioned herself as a supervisor in New Zealand against herself as a supervisor in Zimbabwe. Although the titles of the jobs are similar, the skills needed to do them are different. Veronica noted that being a farm supervisor in Zimbabwe is being in charge and being 'the big boss'. Veronica did not offer further information on what she had to do as the supervisor in Zimbabwe other than 'being the big boss'. On the other

hand, she indicated a catalogue of what it takes to be an assistant head manager in New Zealand. This involves carrying out responsibilities such as “milking of cows”, “driving the tractor”, “doing the fencing”, “feeding of the cows“, “picking up the cows at lambing and calving period”.

Although Veronica found employment in her field, she could not use any of her skills she had acquired as a supervisor in Zimbabwe; she had to learn new skills to carry out her new role. The stressor she experienced in this role was becoming involved in an unskilled job with her skills either not valued or undervalued and having to be physically involved in all the menial jobs on the farm that she thought a farm supervisor should not be involved with. Although one can conclude that Veronica was ‘fortunate’ to find employment in her field of practice, Veronica’s evaluation of her experience was, “the difference you know in the work on the farm is that I came from being a manager in to becoming like a farm worker”.

Hassanatu was a qualified engineer prior to migration, she narrated her experience:

Yeah, since I came to New Zealand I found it very difficult to get a job in my field, so I decided to go back to school to get a higher qualification maybe it will help in getting a better job in my area of specialisation.

Hassanatu had thought that furthering her education might be a way to secure her dream job, but even while she talked about her plans for further studies, she used the words ‘may be’ to evaluate the expected outcome. She was not optimistic that this plan would help her in getting a better job in her field; she was rather ambivalent about the end result of her going for further studies. Although going for further studies to enhance her opportunity of finding a ‘better’ job should be a progressive story, the ambivalence she felt turns it to a steady narrative because she might end up not progressing in her career after her post graduate study.

Judith, on the other hand was a community health nurse prior to migration, she told her story:

I was a community health nurse back home, and when I came over here it was nothing in New Zealand, so I did work for about 5 years as a caregiver, and then, well in my first one and a half years, working as a caregiver I just know, I just realised, well could it be what I have to do all my life, it’s a noble job you know looking after people’s parents when they’re unable to look after themselves, when they’re going through life situations, their life situations, they need somebody to care for them and then I realised there should be something more that I can do, so I decided to do nursing.

Judith could not find employment as a community nurse when she migrated to New Zealand because her credentials and work experience in Africa “was nothing”, but she was able to find a job as a care-giver. Judith categorised care-giving as a “noble job” but noted, after one and a half years of working as a care-giver, that there must be something “better”. What she ‘realised’ was ‘better’ than the ‘noble job’ of care giving is nursing.

Judith had felt comfortable being identified as a community nurse, but the process of adjusting to migration led to a decline in her status. Nursing and care-giving is about care of people in the health care discipline, but the status accrued to them are different as well as the skills needed. Judith’s narrative confirms Rack’s (1982) argument that, deploying one’s personal skills is ego-boosting and through this, personal identity is affirmed and the self is distinguished from others. Although Judith considered care-giving a noble job, and that nothing was wrong with such a profession, she realised – in her own words – that “there should be something more that I can do, so I decided to do nursing”. In other words, she identified nursing as ego boosting and a tool to re-inscribe herself and reaffirm her personal identity, which was a state more like it had been before she immigrated.

Dorcas, another participant identified various barriers in her experience of unemployment.

It was a bit hard, because I had to go through so many processes before I had been granted a visa, and I went to look for a job, it was a bit hard, so from the beginning it was very hard, on our side it was a hard decision to make, every time I went to look for a job it was difficult, I had to move from one shop to the other to find a job, and I must say it was very hard. I never can work, for any place that I go they asked first, work experience, work experience.

Dorcas identified the barriers to her finding employment. One such barrier included her immigration status. She had to apply for a work permit before she could be eligible to gain employment. Another barrier was that New Zealand work experience was required and her overseas qualification was not accepted.

Dorcas used a phrase like ‘a bit hard’, which she repeated twice in her storyline. The statement moved on to ‘very hard’ in the statement that followed where she indicated that looking for a job ‘is difficult’. She concluded her statement by using the phrase ‘very hard’ to convey the intensity of her job hunting experience and the stress involved.

Dorcas narrated how she had secured a work permit and how she had hope of securing

employment. She reflected on how securing a work permit did not guarantee employment:

Even when I got a work permit, I never can work, for any place that I go they asked first, work experience, work experience, and I think I was a bit restricted, because if you don't give the person a chance to work, how will the person show improvement in work experience? You see and they don't regard any qualifications or whatever you've got all they need is your work experience and these were the major questions which I was confronted with in any job that I went for.

Dorcas noted that the major questions she was 'confronted' with by would-be employers had to do with work experience. She felt that the request for New Zealand work experience was a way of restricting her because everywhere she applied; the "first" thing they asked was her work experience. She repeated this twice to demonstrate how it was important to New Zealanders but how it was a means to debar her from contributing to her social development and that of the country. Dorcas raised a question about how 'people would improve on employment', if they were not given the opportunity to work, she argued that the only way to secure New Zealand work experience was by being offered a job in New Zealand. In other words, migrants would not have the opportunity of a new work experience without having a job offer. According to Dorcas' narrative, she felt there was none or little consideration for her qualifications while much emphasis was on work experience over qualification. This experience could help explain why migrant women are locked into low status employment because they are desperate to have New Zealand experience which would enable them move on to 'better jobs'.

Dorcas' disappointment is similar to the experience of many immigrant women, who had applied for jobs and had received many 'regret' letters based on the fact that they did not have New Zealand work experience. It is an irony that the women had been asked to produce New Zealand work experience while they were yet to secure any job offer in New Zealand. Dorcas' assertion as a response to this demand was "...and of course I had not worked in New Zealand, so there was no way I could provide any experience". In this story, the 'would be employers' were not supportive; rather they used lack of New Zealand work experience as a barrier to employ Dorcas.

None of the Qualifications have been Acceptable or Regarded

For Dorcas, the request for New Zealand work experience was not the only barrier to gaining employment. While she was a qualified teacher, she expressed the fact that her credentials

were not accepted in New Zealand.

Yes from other people which I had met in New Zealand I have heard that before you're able to teach over here, I think none of the qualifications have been acceptable or regarded unless you go back to school, so that was the reason why I couldn't find any teaching job with my certificate and qualification. Yes I couldn't go straight away and find a job and I was disappointed that I couldn't get a teaching job. I had to go back to school over here and I thought maybe for a year maybe and some months and then I would be able to go back to teaching in New Zealand.

Dorcas' experience of lack of acceptance of her qualification is true for most migrants in New Zealand, especially in the field of education. This is also an issue I know about as a result of my extensive work with African immigrant women in New Zealand. For instance, some Africans who trained as teachers overseas, like Dorcas, are having difficulty finding employment. Their qualifications are not considered equivalent to New Zealand teaching qualifications. While some have been successful in going through the rigour of registration, a few of them have not been able to find suitable employment as teachers. In situations where they have been able to find employment, factors such as the culture of New Zealand and the attitudes of students have frustrated some of them out of their jobs. African immigrant women must have had high hopes of continuing in their profession or in a discipline close to what they were involved with, before migrating. Their experience was contrary to this expectation. They became disappointed at not finding opportunities that would help them realise their dreams. It is to be noted that while some of the women were able to find employment in the fields that they were trained in, most of the time the roles they were assigned in such employment were completely different from what they were used to. They had to contend with these experiences because they had to keep life going to fulfil their basic family roles as a wife, mother and sister, as well as meet some immigration requirements.

African feminist, Okome (2001) argued that although some African women are recruited into the global economy, they are often not on an equal level with women in the countries that they have migrated to. They are often treated as unequal, less privileged and as a result, many African women usually begin at the bottom of the ladder of their career in finding their way up to regular and decent employment. Although many of the women in this study were professionals and working in their professions prior to migrating to New Zealand, their stories meant that they have been dislocated from their social status and as a result they did not have the means to meet up with their cultural roles which was stressful for the women.

It has been demonstrated that unemployment/under-employment increases may create mental health risk and could heighten the likelihood of poor adjustment because of its association with financial stress, loss of self-esteem, and status, as well as restriction of social contact (Ho, Au, Bedford, & Cooper, 2002).

However, despite the challenges that confronted African women regarding career change, stepping down in the professional ladder and non-recognition of previous qualifications, skills and work experiences, they kept working hard to maintain their employment, hoping that they would transit from the non-well-paying jobs to their desired jobs. Although they used words like ‘it is not easy’, ‘it is hard’, ‘it is like life turning upside down’, beyond these words, nothing in their stories reflected any experience of mental illness as a result of under-employment and unemployment.

Although the experiences of the women regarding finding a low paying job had no impact on their mental health, it did have financial consequences. Their experience with financial difficulty is in agreement with McLaren (cited in Henderson, 2004) that modern life revolves around employment, and work is the fundamental organising concept in society. McLaren argued that much of people’s lives are centred on work and place in the labour market and this impacts on how they live, whether in poverty or wealth or in between. It will be interest to know if African women in New Zealand live in poverty as a result of their experiences of under-employment and unemployment.

Many Weeks We Would Find Ourselves Running Out of Basics

Five of the women narrated their experiences of financial difficulties as a consequence of unemployment or under-employment or that of their spouses. Two of the participants who had migrated with their children experienced financial hardship to the extent of not being able to meet their basic needs. Two participants were international students and shared stories around the difficulty they had in paying their school fees. One of the participants experienced financial difficulty as a result of supporting her brother who was an international student and two women experienced financial hardship because of the nature of their husbands’ employment.

Veronica’s narrative was around difficulty in meeting basic needs because of the low wages

she earned and her husband's unemployment.

I'd get a pay check every Thursday ... and \$400 for a family of six people, to pay the rent and to buy food and all the needs for the children. It wasn't quite sufficient and many weeks we would find ourselves running out of basics before the next pay day.

Veronica's experience of hardship was portrayed using a sad tone because of the limited income of \$400 to feed a family of six was nothing short of hardship. The consequence of this was that the income was not sufficient and 'many weeks' they had to go without 'basics' and live from 'pay day to pay day'. This statement indicates stress for Veronica, because striving to meet the basic needs of her family was the cause of her stress.

Anika talked about her experience around financial difficulties as a result of her family situation which did not allow her to work full time. Anika's financial difficulty was as a result of not being able to work full time; as a result, her husband's income was the only source of income. She identified the contract nature of her husband's job as the cause of her stress.

Sometimes my husband when he's a carpenter sometimes he doesn't work for 3 months because the contract his contracts get finished most of the time he doesn't have long contracts. The longest contract would be like for 6 months and then after then he needs to wait for about 3 months so you can just imagine what I and my family are going through and we don't get much support from the government because they depend on my husband's income which is very sad, because they don't look at whether my husband is working or not um once they've seen the salary of my husband that's it, so it's been very difficult from financial terms but otherwise everything has been alright apart from our financial, and one thing I've realised is that once you have financial situation it kind of affects like your emotional life as well, so there has been a time that you know I've feel so depressed because the money isn't there.

Anika narrated this story with lots of emotion; the fact that the financial difficulty had taken a toll on her was apparent in the sad tone she used to tell her story. At one stage in the interview she was crying and I could not continue with the interview. I had to wait until I was sure that she was willing to continue. When she overcame the emotion, she smiled and told me it was okay for us to continue. The phrases that Anika used to represent the difficulty that she experienced and how she felt about them were "feeling so depressed," "sad," as she claimed that the financial stress that she experienced affected her emotional life. She also noted that she felt "so depressed" because the money was not there. I asked if she had been to a counsellor to help with her feelings of sadness and depression; Anika noted that she did not

make use of any counselling service. She represented her family as victims of the social service system of New Zealand and blamed them for their non-supportive role which had led to her feeling depressed. Although Anika was educated and aware of possible counselling services that she could access during this trial, from her story she did not have the financial means to access counselling, because this would add to the financial stress.

Paying As An International Student Is Not Easy So It Was Hard For Us To Meet Up.

Makuka, Tinuade and Tandi shared their experience of financial difficulties in relation paying international tertiary fees.

Makuka narrated her experience around financial difficulties as it related to immigration policy that did not permit students who were studying for only six months to work.

I would say it's stressful... And as an international student we have to pay our fees before we start the course which is also major thing and fees are quite high for an international student so I have to work hard, have to study hard, also have to work hard to find the money for my studies. And ah I don't want to fail because it will mean I will have to pay more money.

Makuka's story revealed that the major stress she experienced was around working hard to pay her tertiary fees and studying hard so she would not fail because this would mean paying additional fees. She spoke with a nervous tone reflecting a lot of anxiety and fear around failing to raise enough money for her tertiary fees and failing her course. She spoke about how hard it is for her to combine working hard, studying hard and paying fees on time. I am of the opinion the anxiety must have been as a result of these three major milestones she had to achieve if she must continue her stay in the country.

Makuka positioned herself against domestic students for a better understanding of the financial stress. She positioned herself as less privileged and as lacking the access to the resources to which domestic students have access. Regarding the tertiary fees, she talked about having to pay four times more than domestic students. Some of the privileges that she has no access but to which domestic students have access are: "grants from government, subsidised medical service and lower tertiary fees". The drawback for many international students is that they can only work 20 hours during the first semester and 40 hours during Christmas break. Most of them were also working in factories or at other part-time position. This is a great barrier to raising their tertiary institute fees.

Tinuade was another participant who experienced stress as a result of paying international tertiary fees. She also had her family here; thus regarded paying international fees as a big issue. Tinuade presented as someone who was very anxious about paying her fees, she spoke in a raised tone throughout her sharing of this experience. She looked tense and anxious around not being able to meet up with paying her tertiary fees which was reflected in her personal statement such as that, she might not be working and the money she earned might not be enough to care for her family. The consequence of this is that paying her tertiary fees would be ‘a big venture’ especially when she had to pay \$15,500 yearly towards her study.

Although Tandi had a good profession, she had to support her brother who came to New Zealand to study as an international student and this put pressure on her.

First I had some pressure regarding my brother because he came to New Zealand to study in University to study as an international student as you know paying as an international student is not easy so it was hard for us to meet up.

Tandi expressed that it was challenging supporting her brother in paying his tertiary fees. While describing this, she used the phrase ‘as you know’; because I am well aware of the experience she was sharing. Coming from a communal background, she is expected to take responsibility for her younger brother’s needs. If not for the support from family, friends, community and church members, many of these students could have been deported because of failure to meet up with the financial demand of tertiary fees. Other participants have shared their experiences of financial difficulties which was related to their immigration status.

You Really had to Penny-Pinch to Make Sure that Everything is Okay

Modupe’s experience of hardship involved ‘penny-pinching and making dollars stretch’ to ensure the survival of her family.

I had a great problem in terms of also just my little ones, because I needed to go to work I didn’t qualify for any benefit or anything for at least for those first 2 years as we sign in our application for permanent residency that they wouldn’t help us in the first 2 years of our getting our permanent residency, so I had my little ones and I knew that to make sure that they went into a childcare so that I could be free to go to work... So as you can imagine quite a lot of my wage went into child-care. It was, it was a nightmare I couldn’t believe that I’d actually left the luxury of my home to come and have this kind of you know struggle and as a result you know you eat not food that you ate even at home you’d find you really had to penny-pinch to make sure that everything is okay.

Modupe used statements like “nightmares, penny-pinching, stretching the dollars, and a struggle”, to represent her experience of financial difficulties. As part of this trial, she had to eat the food that she was not eating in Africa. She concluded that she could not believe that she had left the luxury life in her country for a penny-pinching situation in New Zealand. She positioned herself as a victim of the agreement that she signed with New Zealand regarding not soliciting for any assistance before the 2 years that the agreement was signed, which could also be a reason why she did not receive any child care support for her children when she intended to go to work.

It is an irony that the basic needs that she could perhaps comfortably meet while she was in her country and the care for her children which she had family members to support her with in Africa, have become a challenge since she migrated. The impact of economic difficulty on these women can be described in terms of the inability to fulfil their traditional roles as a mother to their children and to their family. However when they actually fulfil these roles, it is usually under untold hardship.

The experiences of African immigrant women is consistent with Rack's (1982) comments that all immigrants travel to improve their lives, either to study or to acquire wealth, but many cannot attain success because promised jobs do not materialise, rather what they discover was greater competition and high living costs that they could not imagine. He concluded that although immigrants are often plagued with poverty, most of them cannot think of going home without achieving the success that they had sacrificed to achieve, returning home without achieving their goals of migrating to New Zealand would be an indication of failure and they cannot be regarded as heroines. African women had migrated to make a better living in New Zealand and acquire the needed skills to overcome the ‘forces’ challenging them, their initial experiences and trials did not indicate that they would be able to achieve their purposes of migrating. Despite the untold hardship, trial and uncertainties, the women did not talk about returning to their countries of origin as a result of the hardship, trials and uncertainty.

African feminists Maloba (2007), Okome (2001) and Steady (1982) stressed the importance of work and earning as a means of African women fulfilling their cultural roles. It is to be noted then that either African women had migrated to study or to secure a better future for themselves, their experience of not having the economic means to fulfil such roles would

have detrimental effect and stress on them. It could also lead to psychological imbalance, because when they do not have the financial resources to meet their cultural responsibilities and fulfil their role, it could lead to loss of self-esteem and social status. Although four of the women had used words like, ‘nightmares’, ‘penny-pinching’, ‘stressful’ and ‘hard’ to describe their experience of financial stressor, they did not talk about these experiences resulting to any mental disorder except for one woman who described having experienced financial difficulty and its impact on her emotional life. She described this experience as ‘being so depressed’.

Not only did some of the women in this research have financial challenges, they also experienced stressors regarding communication. The ability to communicate effectively with people is essential and can guarantee success during the process of integrating in a new environment for immigrants. From the women’s stories they had indicated that despite making efforts to participate in the economic development of New Zealand to ensure their social economic well-being, language/accent has been a barrier to settling down in New Zealand.

I Cannot Defend Myself to Say I Do Not Have an Accent

Language carries culture, and culture carries... the entire body of values by which we perceive ourselves and our place in the world... Language is thus inseparable from ourselves as a community of human beings with a specific history, a specific relationship to the world. (Ngugi, 1986, pp. 15-16)

The women I interviewed talked about their experiences with English language/accent. Most of the women indicated that they did not have any problem speaking and understanding English language, because their countries of origin had been former British colonies. However, some New Zealanders still claimed that they did not understand them when they speak, perhaps because such people were not attentive enough to them because of their ‘foreign accent’. One of the participants, Tandi shared her experience about the need to pass an English language test as a step towards her certification as a nurse. Others claimed they did not feel accepted because customers and colleagues claimed they had heavy accents.

Bunmi narrated how people treated her because of her apparent lack of the ‘Kiwi’ accent. She noted:

What can I do? I cannot defend myself to say I do not have an accent no! It's very obvious I do not have the Kiwi accent. I cannot speak the way Kiwis are speaking I was not born here. If I had a New Zealand passport I've been here for 5 years or whatever, if I, if I stay here for as long as possible and some people still tell me I've got an accent, I do not speak Kiwi English just because I was not born here, I was not born here.

Bunmi had been calm prior to narrating this experience, but immediately she started talking about this experience, she raised her voice and she spoke with anger and much pain that reflected the impact of the experience on her. She engaged with me as someone whom she hoped would be able to affirm her experience. She asked questions of what she could do about her inability to speak the 'Kiwi English'. I was not sure if she was waiting for an answer to the question she had asked, because she paused for a period of time before she continued. While she was speaking with much anger about the experience, I was silent verbally, but I positioned myself as someone who understood her pains by raising my head to look in to her face and at the same time I was nodding my head to let her know that I could identify with her experience. I felt that the experiences that she spoke about increased the bonding between me, as a researcher, and Bunmi because it is an experience common to the two of us and other African women. When she continued her narrative, she then looked away from me and said "I could not defend myself". She also admitted to having an accent that is apparently not a Kiwi accent. Bunmi went further to explain that she did not have a Kiwi accent because she was not born a Kiwi. There was further disappointment in her voice as she continued to explain that with her length of stay in New Zealand she should no longer be discriminated against because of her accent. Bunmi continued to narrate her experience at work:

Yes like the one I just said about accent
And all that I I've spoken to customers that, that, that have said
They just want Kiwi's to attend to them.
You know what, what do you say about that?
I am working in a call centre and...
... I've been... I've spoken to customers
That said they just want to speak to
Somebody that can speak English
And I was wondering at first.
I felt really intimidated
I really felt bad and
I was wondering am I not speaking English
But after a while I told the customers
I am speaking English you can talk to me.
Some of them just hang up on me you know.

What do you think about that?
I can give them the same quality of service
Other people will give them it's just because
They do not want to meet somebody with a foreign accent.

Bunmi continued her story by narrating the events and actions that occurred between her and the callers. In this episode this was a dramatised/performance narrative where Bunmi, through her story, “call up images of storytellers and storytelling and at the same time she “provided the other characters with a dialogue” (Sarbin, 1986a, p. 11). Bunmi dramatised her storytelling by reporting a particular dialogue that ensued between her and a caller. After a few minutes of dialogue, the caller requested someone that could speak English language. She was left ‘wondering at first’ and while she wondered, she expressed the emotions that she was going through such as ‘feeling really bad, really intimidated’ and ‘continued to wonder’. When she came out of her emotional state, she was assertive in informing the customer, “I am speaking English” but the response she got was being hung up on. She was confident that she had the skills to give a ‘quality’ service to the customers but they had turned down her service because they did not want to meet someone who speaks with a ‘foreign accent’. One of the functions of stories/ praise poem/oriki is venting and catharsis (Banks-Wallace, 1998; Chiwome, 1992). Through speaking about her experience, Bunmi was able to vent her anger that she might have bottled up and she felt relieved that she had shared her stress with me because of my position as an African sister, and a migrant woman, who shared similar experiences with her. From Bunmi’s narrative, the African accent marked her as someone who is not capable of rendering a quality service to customers.

Falling from the Sky

Tandi’s story was also around how hard it was to adjust to the system because of the accents. She noted:

It is also hard to be an immigrant here trying to adjust to the system, especially with the accent. It is hard to communicate with people here because they claim that they do not understand you or hear you when you are talking. At times you meet them they are looking at you as if you are falling from the sky.

Tandi noted it was a hard experience as “people” claim that they do not understand her accent or hear her. Even when they met with her, it was like she was ‘falling’ from the sky; this is a statement that signifies she had been treated like a stranger through the use of language. Language is sometimes used to disallow people access to social relations since it is a

powerful tool for conveying social meaning and a source of social power (Heller, 1987). According to this statement, the social meaning of difference was conveyed to Tandi by people looking at her as if she was falling from the sky and by claiming that they did not hear or understand her when she spoke.

Igbagbo's experience was similar in some ways to that of Tandi. She expressed her frustration because even after passing the IELTS examination in which she had scored eight; people still could not understand her. She wondered how people could not understand her as she continued to narrate other experiences related to English language. She also shared her experience with her nursing colleagues who were not keen to communicate with her because of the assumption that they could not understand her.

During another time I took one of the patients to the emergency. I was trying to communicate with the nurse whom I met there she just told me, "Take the form; fill it because I cannot hear what you are saying".

The non-supportive role of Igbagbo's colleagues could be regarded as a form of social exclusion as her colleague was not keen to communicate with her. Wasik (2006) noted that the problem of accent leads to isolation. According to this statement, Igbagbo must have felt psychologically isolated because of the kind of treatment she received from her colleagues who did not want to engage with her.

Dzoba's story also reinforced how hard it is to adjust to the system when one finds it difficult to communicate; her experience had to do with not learning English prior to migration. She also noted her limitations as a result of this:

It was a hard experience, when you cannot read and write... Oooh the hardest experience is like if you can't talk. You can't it is hard because you want to say something back you can't talk that is a problem you can't talk I think it was not easy because of that.

Her challenge with regards to communication was because she did not learn how to speak or write English language prior to migration. Dzoba considered this the hardest experience because she was limited by her inability to communicate in English.

On the other hand, Portia's story of having challenges with English positions the responsibility solely with New Zealanders who did not understand her accent, and not with herself. She shared her experience:

At work it was very difficult for me because I have a chance to speak. People's accent was different because New Zealand is a multi-cultural country. People come from Asia, Europe, and Africa so people come with different accents that were my major problem.

Her challenge was not because of an inability to speak English, but because of other people's different accents - that was her major problem.

The women in this study shared stories of their challenges with speaking English. It is to be noted that, while the women were not limited in their finding employment, their English language competence still remains contested in their everyday interactions. The inability to communicate effectively with the host population has been identified as an important factor influencing the psychological well-being of new immigrants in New Zealand (Ho et al., 2003).

Hilliard (1983) argued that a person becomes vulnerable psychologically when linguistics is used as a way of political domination to stigmatise, delegitimise, distort or to deny identity. From the women's narrative, the African accent marking them as the 'other', different, and as someone who is not capable of rendering a quality service to customers, is to stigmatise, delegitimise, intimidate them and isolate them socially. The consequence of this is that the women felt angry, fearful, threatened and became psychologically vulnerable to Kiwis because they spoke English with a 'foreign accent'. Although not being fluent in using a 'Kiwi' accent has resulted in feelings of anger, inferiority and shame, there was no indication from the women's stories that their experiences regarding language and accent had led to any kind of mental dysfunction.

Although the stressors that the women had experienced in the process of adjusting to life in New Zealand has 'shaken up their "physical, social, financial and emotional being and self-definition, they have been displaced ... And had experience multiple losses and have had to adapt to these changes" (Berger, 2004 pp. 4-5).

Conclusion

African women that participated in this research identified the trials that they had to go through in the process of finding a means that would help them acquire the skills needed to

overcome the forces challenging their 'destinies'.

Through the stories that they shared they identified the tensions that occurred in their journey between the points of departure and the other points of the circular movement such as integrating to New Zealand environment. They talked about the trials they experienced in the process of adjusting to New Zealand. They expressed their thoughts and feelings around their disappointment with the reversal in their circumstances. Although the women held some beliefs that migrating to New Zealand would be a guarantee to fulfilling their dreams of a 'better job', 'better lives', in the stories that they shared they were torn in between two worlds, that of remaining in New Zealand and that of the memory of who they were in their home countries and how things were for them.

The women could not imagine the transition and transformation that occurred in their personal, career, education and family lives. Although they had migrated to New Zealand to fulfil their dreams, they realised that there were many stressors that they had to cope with. There had been tension between this phase of their journey and their departure as they continued to remember life at home in contrast with life in New Zealand and as the journey presented them an opportunity to discover their identities. In the next chapter I will write on the coping strategies employed by African immigrant women.

CHAPTER EIGHT: PLACES OF FOREIGN SOJOURN

This is the fourth findings chapter. In this chapter, I write about the strategies that African women have used to cope with stress in New Zealand. I have titled this chapter the “places of foreign sojourn” because it is a characteristic of the journey motif, in the sense that this is a place where the ‘hero/heroine’ has the opportunity to identify and interpret the signs of victories that would enable him/her to overcome challenges. It is also a place where the ‘hero’ has been given the opportunity to sharpen or acquire the skills needed to overcome the challenges of the ‘journey’. Other elements considered significant in the victory of the hero/heroine are: the village and its people, their reaction and attitude, either friendly or hostile, helpful or threatening, accepting, showing kindness, giving the hero the opportunity to sharpen ‘his’ weapons, to develop war strategies or make use of values and ethics from their cultures. These elements are considered crucial in helping the hero/heroine discover his/her identity and integrate in the place of foreign sojourn (Kunene, 1991; Seydou, 1983). Using these features of the African epic is appropriate because “the true objective of the epic lies in consciousness of its distinct identity, unity, and cohesion through interiorized communion” (Seydou, 1983, p. 16).

I will also write about how the women have used African humanness to cope with the stressors that they have experienced since their arrival in New Zealand. The African humanness is demonstrated through sense of care, sympathy, consideration, giving, charity and kindness (Prinsloo, 1998). It is considered a positive human quality, which enables human beings to live in harmony in the community (Mnyandu, 1997).

To have a further understanding of the women’s stories I have explored the supernatural characteristics of the African epic as it relates to the place the supernatural holds among African societies’ spiritual and religious practice (Deme, 2010; Kunene, 1991). Okpewho (1979) noted that “the essential mark of the heroic personality in many African folk epics is in its reliance on supernatural resources” (p. 119).

Relying on the supernatural to “cope with man’s original weakness” is a belief held in many African societies and it is a symbol of human’s consciousness of his weaknesses and limitations, and his desire to overcome these weaknesses and limitations. Deme (2010) concluded that it is the “reliance of the hero on supernatural aid that defines and determines true heroism in African oral epics” (p. 10).

From an African perspective, a spiritual orientation includes a belief in the continued presence of the deceased, praying or requesting God's help and respecting the God force in others (Jagers et al., 1997). "Myths, proverbs, invocations, prayers, incantations, rituals, songs and dreams are the religious-cultural world-view of Africans and these belong to the realm of African spirituality" (Pobee, 1979, p. 21). It is important to know that among Africans, spirituality serves as a potential buffer from insufficient affective and interpersonal relationships, and it helps to maintain positive identity and enhance self-esteem (Thompson, 2003).

These elements of coping in the place of foreign sojourn are also consistent with Afro-cultural ethos of coping or Ubuntu, which are communalism, affect and spirituality (Thompson, 2003). These elements of African philosophy are crucial in understanding how African women have defined themselves, others and their relationships with the environment, and how these had helped them in sustaining healthy and adaptive functioning in New Zealand. I will analyse and interpret the women's stories in this chapter by weaving their stories around how the village people in the places of foreign sojourn supported the women to cope with the immigration stressors.

Communalism/Ubuntu

"Communalism indicates a basic commitment to inter-dependence and emphasis on social involvement, willingness to assume social duties, and beliefs in promoting inter-dependence" (Thompson, 2003, p. 133).

The women that I interviewed for this study shared the stories of how they formed relationships with people from their tribes, community and with New Zealanders, and how they had used these relationships to gain access to the resources in the community and to gain the needed skills to resolve the forces that were challenging them. The women narrated how they had used these resources to cope when they had experienced losses, grief, unemployment and discrimination. They talked about how their relationships with members of their ethnic communities such as the Zimbabwe, Zambian, Nigeria and Kenya communities, and other immigrant community groups, had helped them cope with the stressors of adapting to New Zealand. Some of the women identified with their ethnic churches while others were members of multi-ethnic congregations. Many of them were still in contact with their family members at home and were fulfilling their social duties to ensure

their memberships of such families. Mphahlele (1962) indicated that:

Africans have always been more interested in human relations than in gadgets... Africans have always gravitated towards people, not places and things... Peoples and not places give them real pleasure. They want a social climate where they can make music and fun and not just listen to music and look at a performance. (p. 91)

The themes that came out from the analysis of the women's stories regarding using communalism as a coping strategy are connecting to home countries, connection with other migrant women, support from learning institutions, connection at work, support from New Zealand Government, support from Tangata Whenua, support from non-governmental services, support from family, using the internet technology and living in harmony. In the next few paragraphs I will write on the support that some of the participants had received as a result of connecting to their home countries.

One of the women, Modupe, spoke extensively on how she had stayed connected to her roots as a coping strategy. Some of the strategies were for her to send her eldest daughter to her home country to help the girl deal with her feeling of uprootedness, and to resolve the conflict that she was having with her:

I sent my daughter in 2000 and at the end of 2002 as a way to deal with her feeling uprooted, I'd come to an agreement with her that look you go home, here's a return ticket you don't have to use the return leg, you can start University back home because she had just been giving me grief about the way I had uprooted her, and that is how I said look I am agreeable for you to go and not use that return ticket, you make your mind while you're out there, talk to people you need to talk to. When she came back it was her admission that her friends were envious of her and that her mother had been quick thinking to have come to this country so I paid for that air ticket.

The step taken by Modupe to cope with her daughter's feeling was a bold one considering the political and social economic crisis in her country at that time; she spoke with confidence and assurance that returning home would be the way to help her daughter. When she told her daughter to "talk to people you need to talk to", the people she was referring to would be Modupe's families and friends and possibly the educational community. Modupe allowed her daughter to return home on her own because she was confident the girl would be cared for by members of her family. This is also partly because she had paid her dues to her family during their difficult times. Her desire to stay connected with her family at home is demonstration of interdependence, which is a significant principle of communalism. Modupe's decision to

send her daughter home to deal with her feeling of uprootedness is a way to stay connected to her people in Africa and a kind of contribution to the larger clan and solidarity to the larger natural ecology.

Using connecting to extended family in her country as a coping strategy also confirms the social duties that the community has to fill when it comes to raising children within an African setting. This story is in agreement with Mbiti (1969) who noted that nature brings the child into the world, but it is the responsibility of the society to create the child into a social being. He continued:

it is the community who must protect the child, feed it and bring it up, educate it and in many other ways incorporate it in to a wider community... Kinship plays a role here, so that a child cannot be exclusively 'my child' but only 'our child'. (Mbiti, 1969, p. 107)

In an African setting a child belongs to the extended family and the community at large; this is why Modupe did not have a problem sending her daughter home, because she was sure she would be looked after by her relatives. Modupe used her connecting to her home country as a coping strategy. She saw herself as part of "encompassing social relationships", and recognised that her behaviour is to a great extent determined by and contingent on "the feelings, thoughts and action" of the members of her community who are also actors in these relationships (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p. 227). Not only did Modupe use connecting to her home as a means of resolving conflict between her and her eldest daughter, she also used it as a means to connect and refuel, "Refuelling it was just going back to touch base and connect".

Modupe identified the essence of the journey as a means to reconnect and refuel with her family and to catch up with her sisters' feeling.

Modupe talked about how she hoped to reconnect to her family and refuelling would help "get her spirit up again", and enable her to come back with enough energy to "live life here". This experienced was also talked about by Judith and Tandi with the laments presented in the stressor chapter about how much they missed being with their families. Modupe associated reconnecting with her family with getting a life. Going home to refuel has been a decision made by most African women to keep the tie with their family members. It is to be noted that an average African person does not see him or herself as a discrete individual, but rather

understands his or herself as part of a community. Mbiti (1969) confirmed that the individual owes his/her existence to other people. Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual “owes his existence to other people, including those of past generations and his contemporaries. He is simply part of the whole” (Mbiti, 1969, p. 108). Her reconnecting to her family, despite the distance and the costs, shows that Modupe strived towards interdependence and emotional closeness with her people which are elements of Ubuntu (Holdstock, 2000).

Another stressor that Modupe needed to cope with is related to the loss of her parents. When Modupe’s parents died, she was in New Zealand and because of the distance, she could not fulfil her cultural obligation as the first daughter of the family and she could not participate in the communal process. These ‘failures’ have had a negative impact on her as a ‘person’ within an African context. Modupe talked about this episode with a sad and regretful tone as any African would. An important coping strategy that she used during this time was appointing family members to stand in for her to carry out her cultural obligations. Through these support persons she was constantly updated on the process of the funeral which was a relief to her and which would have helped her to manage the psychological impact of the loss. Modupe’s narrative of loss around the death of her father and the important role played by her family/community is reflected in Mbiti’s (1969) statement that within the African culture, death is something that concerns everybody. It is the communal responsibility to give a befitting burial to members of their families. The communal involvement in this process was the reason for the support that Modupe had which helped her to cope with the grief and loss. Not only did Modupe receive support from her family during this time, she also had to support them when they experienced some forms of hardship thus demonstrating that she is still part of them: “They need you know a small injection once in a while”.

Although Modupe was comfortable in New Zealand, she was still committed to the welfare of her family members who remained in Zimbabwe. She portrayed the impact of the economic and political instability on the members of her family:

Sending money back home, that’s something that the average kiwi family doesn’t have to do because if your family isn’t coping alright, they are unable to access the welfare system, here you can get a benefit for your mother or your father or whatever. So for people back home I send remittances, oh I know that I don’t sent them as

frequently because my own parents have since left us to be with the Lord but um I do have siblings who once in a while kind of economic political and social situation back in my country they need you know a small injection once in a while just for them to realise that um that they are part of my life.

Modupe talked about these experiences of the situations of her family members with great agony. She made a comparison between what happens in New Zealand and in her country regarding accessing social welfare. When she spoke about her family situation she sounded as if she would like to do more than give ‘a small injection’ to help with the social-economic situation of her country. She sounded hopeless about the economic and political situations in her country that made her decide to send remittance to her siblings. As spoken about by Modupe, there is no social welfare support in her country and that is why most people in need would have to depend on the support of their family or community. Because that is the practice, Modupe felt obliged to be responsible to her siblings by sending remittance to them. This is an important element of communalism, that of being passionate and compassionate about the well-being of her people, and she demonstrated Ubuntu by sharing and embracing social duties to her family members (Holdstock, 2000). Being a member of a community means being generous, caring and compassionate, being willing to share what you have with less privileged people. Buber (1965) argued that the complete range of human potential cannot be fully developed unless one has the opportunity to engage with others. “It is from one man to another that the heavenly bread of self-being is passed” (Buber, 1965, p. 71). Modupe showed that she is capable of the characteristics of Ubuntu by passing on the heavenly bread of self-being to her siblings. Modupe used connection with her family members as a coping strategy in New Zealand. Other women talked about how they connected with members of the African community in New Zealand to gain access to resources that they needed in integrating to New Zealand society.

Support from the African Community

Bunmi indicated the importance of maintaining her identity and how she had used the resources in the community as a coping strategy: “I got some advice about what to do where to apply to”.

I met some of the people from my from Africa, Nigeria and then we were by them when it comes to employment I got some advice about what to do where to apply to

and the things I needed to say at the interviews.

Bunmi identified the support received from her community in regards to tips on finding employment. The support being given by their communities to Africans who are arriving in New Zealand is tremendous, as many of them do not have the knowledge of the resources in the community. Even when they have the knowledge they are not eligible for some of these resources. To help their people settle in New Zealand, some African communities have organised seminars on preparing new migrants for employment, and on preparation for interviews. Others have given opportunities to their members to work on a voluntary basis within their Trusts to enable them to gain New Zealand experience. Other forms of support have come in the form of cooperatives, which may involve physically helping one another or buying things in bulk. Other ways of supporting one another is by having social gatherings where African dishes are served. Other forms of support received by some of the women from their fellow Africans were at their work places. "I felt supported when I saw that some people from Africa".

Portia indicated that she felt supported by other African people in her workplace.

When I came people they were very friendly to me and ah first time I went for interview I didn't know that there were a few Africans working there so when I started working and then I noticed that there were some Africans working from South Africa um of we have different cultures but at least I felt supported when I saw that some people from Africa.

Portia's story could be seen in the light of Kunene (1991) regarding the contact of the hero with the village. She reckoned that she felt supported because of the attitude of acceptance that she had from her people although these Africans were not from her country, but she regarded them as her village people who accepted and supported her and made her feel at home in her new environment. Although the women talked about how they have gained access to resources in the community, it is important to note that successful living in the community requires reciprocity and reaching out to people. It is to be noted that the concept of family within African context is not limited to blood relation. It includes groups of people who come together through work and residential requirements (Holdstock, 2000). From the women's stories they were able to reach out to other migrants in the process of coping with stressors of immigration.

Your Lonely Days Go Away

Four of the participants indicated that they were able to cope with immigration stressors by identifying with migrants from other cultures, and they have received support from such people which had helped them to cope with parenting in New Zealand. Tandi and Tinuade spoke about the support they received from other migrant mothers in regard to parenting:

Despite not having my parents here to support me during this time I have had the opportunity to meet with other migrants, young mothers that I have learnt a lot from, we have shared experiences and that has helped a lot that has been helpful and I have been able to cope.

Tinuade highlighted the support that she had from other migrant women in her workplace:

One of the things that actually helped me a lot you know to cope here is sharing with colleagues at work discussing with them, talking about, you know the children, bringing up children, getting ideas from them the way they are doing it. There are a lot of migrants as well at my place of work they came here before me they share their own experience.

As I stated earlier, raising children in African culture is a communal responsibility; young mothers are trained in parental skills by their mothers, their older siblings and by older women in the community. As a result of migration, African women have lost this support. Despite this loss of support from their immediate families, they reached out into the community to find other young immigrant women to share the experience of motherhood with, to get ideas from such women on how to bring up children in New Zealand.

I was amazed to hear from these young mothers about their wealth of knowledge on how to access resources in the community, such as where to buy their children's clothes at reasonable prices, how they organise for the older children of their friends to babysit their children if they need to take a rest, and also information on reasonable child care. With these levels of social networking with other young migrant women, African women have been able to cope with the stress of being a young mother in a new environment. Tandi and Tinuade asserted that building these types of relationships had been helpful to them.

Dorcas also spoke about how getting to know other immigrants had helped her to cope in New Zealand:

Because we are once again different people from different countries people come from New Zealand so once you join and share experiences and then your lonely days

go away.

Dorcas acknowledged that despite the differences between her and people that came from other countries, getting together and sharing experiences is an antidote to loneliness. It is very important to know that African women are not limiting themselves to members of their community to support them in New Zealand. This attitude may be better understood by Portia's story around her culture and norms about 'colour'. She puts her experience this way:

One of the strategies is to just ah learn more from other cultures make friends with different people because where I come from we believe in ah looking at human being we don't look at the colour and that's what we grew up with. We take human beings as people and I look beyond the colour the colour is nothing to do with me because they are all the same.

The reason why Portia did not have difficulty making friends with 'different people' was because she was brought up to see people as "human beings". This non-discriminating attitude had helped her to learn new things, such as other cultures' foods, meeting different people, finding out what they believe in, respecting other people's religion and beliefs. She concluded that the most important thing is to have respect for one another. The crucial element of communalism that Portia had identified with was accepting people and respecting them for who they are regardless of their colour. And she had demonstrated what Samkange and Samkange (1980) referred to as one of the maxims of communalism, which is establishing respectful human relations with others.

Weil (1952) indicated the need of the human soul to be rooted in several natural environments and to make contact with the universe through them; this statement could be used to understand the women's stories of connection to other immigrants as a coping strategy. Weil identified such environments as "a man's country, and places where his language is spoken, and places with his culture or a historical past and ... His neighbourhood" (p. 31). Although the women have been dislocated from their countries, from places where their languages are spoken, they have been able to re-locate themselves in their New Zealand neighbourhood. They had chosen to create communities with these other people based on the concept of intimacy and interconnection in an African context which is not restricted to family members. Although the women left their resources behind, they were making good use of other communities besides their own ethnic groups. They moved between their ethnic, multi ethnic and multipurpose spaces to access the resources that they

needed to cope with immigration stressors. One of the multipurpose spaces the women had moved in was their learning institutions and the various resources located within such space.

It's Not Like You Are Alone

Some of the participants in this study were students, some being international students and others domestic students. They identified the support that they had from their lecturers, head of school and their school learning centres. Two participants, Titu and Anika became pregnant when they were studying; they talked about the support that they had received from their institutions of learning, the lecturers and how they made use of the learning centre resources during the period.

Titu narrated that she had been sick when she became pregnant and she had difficulty attending lectures and meeting other academic demands. However, with the understanding and support from her lecturers, who became allies by making suitable arrangements with her regarding her academic demands, she was able to cope with this challenging period and was successful in her examinations.

Anika, who was pregnant while she was studying, received support from the learning centre of the school and used statements like receiving help each time she went to seek for assistance at the learning centre. She noted that the staff at the learning centre did their best to offer her all the help she needed. I regard these stories as eating one's cake and having it. It is worth noting that the encouraging attitude of these lecturers and the staff at the learning centre had been a major tools that Anika and Titu used to sharpen their academic weapons, which enabled them to acquire the professional skills needed to 'dwell' in their 'places of foreign sojourn'.

Makuka indicated the support that she had from her school with regard to using the computer and some other aspects of her learning.

... has been very helpful with ah the studies my studies because they have a lot of you know they have services which are helpful to students ah if you want to, I remember when I was doing a research because I've never done research work before so there's a service to guide you, give you advice on how to how to write a research paper or um how to do a power point using the computer.

Makuka was enthusiastic when telling this story of the need to learn new skills such as using the computer, and her experience is similar to that of many 'older' generations of African

women who had to adjust to this aspect of education and work in New Zealand. Because many of these women were not exposed to the use of computers prior to migration, they were struggling with this aspect of their learning. The coping strategy that Makuka used was to access and use helpful services in the form of guidance about acquiring the skills for her academic achievements.

Dorcas identified the support that she had received from her university in the form of resources and encouragement.

The lecturer as well, so it's a bit of give and take it's a bit of give and take so that's quite interesting and the number of libraries so many opportunities the library and the learning resources so many people put in place to support you just so I said to you it's not like you are alone you wanted to go to school so you had to find all the ways and means of surviving but with so many resources in New Zealand which has been put in place so I think as students to make life a bit easier yes I think that is the main difference.

Dorcas was also pleased with the range of resources available to students in New Zealand. She compared the education situation in most African nations to what occurs in New Zealand. She was pleased with the give and take aspect of learning in New Zealand, which offered the opportunity for students to participate and contribute to their learning. From an African perspective, most lecturers are considered 'expert' and they know what is best for their students. Dorcas demonstrated how pleased she was with her school by coming up with a catalogue of resources available to her. These are in the form of the number of libraries, learning resources, and many people put in place to support students. Dorcas concluded that with these levels of support she does not feel alone and these supports made life easier for her as a student.

Two of the participants who were not international students shared the stories of how they had received support from their course coordinators and head of school.

The Certificate was Given to Me that Same Day

Tandi is one of the women who had migrated to New Zealand to practise as a nurse. She had to pass the nursing competencies examination before she could be registered to work in New Zealand. Tandi narrated her challenges before she could register as a nurse. The main support for Tandi during this challenging time was her coordinator who helped her pass her competency examination.

The certificate was given to me that same day she (the tutor) still wanted to give me two which means I have failed again because she should give me 1 that is the pass mark. Again the coordinator insisted that she could not do that because Nursing Council would not accept the result and I would not be registered. The coordinator told her that she had to give me one, which she quickly did, that was how I got the requirement for my registration.

The story shared by Tandi could have led to defeat and a tragic end if not for the intervention of the course coordinator. The voices of the tutor could be regarded as that of a bully who wanted to frustrate Tandi from achieving her academic goals. Despite the threatening behaviour of the tutor at the “learning village” it is pleasing to know that there is justice and transparency within the New Zealand educational system and this participant had received support from her institution of learning as a result of this. Tandi’s coordinator was presented as someone who has the authority to instruct the English tutor to pass Tandi, to confirm this authority the lecturer “quickly” awarded the required mark necessary for Tandi’s registration with the Nursing Council.

Dryden-Peterson (2003) noted that integration is centred on individual achievement or changes, occupational advancement and the rise in accompanying socioeconomic status. Through the support from the community, the women had been given the opportunity and they had been able to experience occupational advancement. Tandi had become a registered nurse, Titu and Makuka had completed their Bachelor’s degrees, and Dorothy is also making progress in her studies and these achievements were related to the support that they had for not limiting themselves to having relationships with immigrants from their cultures or other immigrants.

The level of support that they received also helped them to acquire the skills needed to resolve the conflicts that led to their migration to New Zealand and these symbols represent that the women have reached their places of foreign sojourn. It is encouraging to hear the stories of receiving support from some learning institutions. Other women had talked about using resources in their places of work to cope with stress.

You Find the Milk was Free the Meat was Free

Four of the women talked about the support they received from work. Portia, Veronica and Titu talked about how their managers had supported them to cope with challenges. Dorcas praised her employer, who took away the barrier of New Zealand work experience. Portia

talked about the support from her work with costs when she arrived in New Zealand:

I was very pleased because when I was living at one of the hostels run by the hospital and we had free transport accommodations affordable and I didn't pay for electricity I didn't pay for water so it was very easy for me to adjust.

She indicated that when she arrived in New Zealand, the hospital that employed her had provided her with accommodation and transportation and because of that she was saved some costs and it made the adjustment process easy on her financially.

Veronica identified the support of her employer:

We thank God for starting on the farm because in terms of coping if we had started out in a city with four children where we would need to drop the children at school and go to work and come back it would have been difficult with the salaries that we were earning which was in the range of \$10 to \$12 an hour for the jobs that we were doing. That would not be sufficient for a family of six people paying rent and transport and all. But living on a farm you find the milk was free the meat was free all the supplies that could come from the farm were free and all that we had to buy was a few groceries and there was no fuel to go to work because our work was our home so it was a blessing in disguise.

Portia and Veronica attributed the virtues and deeds of their first employers as the resources that had helped them to cope with life in New Zealand. They praised their employers because of the support put in place to make life in New Zealand bearable; although Portia came to New Zealand as a single woman, Veronica's family had joined her. They both spoke about how the identified resources had helped towards their coping with the stress of finding themselves in a new environment. The support had been in the form of affordable accommodation, transportation and not having to pay for water. For Veronica, she and her family were living on the farm which meant they had free accommodation and they did not need to pay for transportation. Other benefits of living on the farm was "you find the milk was free the meat was free all the supplies that could come from the farm were free and all that we had to buy was a few groceries". Veronica concluded that living on a farm was a blessing in disguise because her work was at home and she could not have survived on the wages she earned if she and her family were not living on the farm.

The experience of accessing those resources by these women is unique and different from that of other African women; these types of stories are seldom heard or shared among immigrants. Many other immigrant women in New Zealand had to board with family or

friends when they arrived in New Zealand, some of them had experienced strain regarding transportation. Veronica and Makuka spoke with excitement because they did not have to cope with transportation or accommodation challenges. Transportation had been a stressor for some African women because of learning about the new environment; some of these women (including me) had to learn how to drive in New Zealand. This context is different to Africa, where some of them had personal or company drivers. For some African women who did not have problems driving when they arrived in New Zealand, they found the driving rules to be different from where they came from. That these women had free or subsidised accommodation, no need for transportation as a result of the support of their managers, was considered ‘blessings’ against stresses.

Titu explained the challenges that she had with accents and communication; she identified that although the experience was frustrating, with the help of her colleagues and senior colleagues and their patience she was able to solve the communication problems.

Dorcas talked about the support received from her present employer when she was looking for employment:

Yes but thank God along the line one of my friends helped me out and I got a job in a bakery shop... Yeah and I still remember that and I’m so pleased every now and then I mention that in that life without them life would have been hard. Because they put away the entire experienced story and everything.

Dorcas spoke about this experience with lots of emotion, she spoke with excitement and a raised voice when she spoke about the support of her friends who without their influence she would not have been able to secure her first job because of the requirement for New Zealand work experience. Dorcas positioned herself as helpless because she did not have New Zealand work experience; her fate lay in the hands of would be employers in New Zealand. Her present employer’s attitude to put away ‘the entire experience story’ had been Dorcas’ saving grace from unemployment. Dorcas concluded that if it had not been for these friends, life would have been hard.

It is obvious that the African women who participated in this research were able to identify the resources and support in the community to cope with immigration stressors that they had experienced. Some of them indicated that they had been lonely but they had been able to reach out to friends, their tutors, colleagues and other migrant women to share their

experiences of migration and the relationships that they had built with the other people had helped them in coping with life in New Zealand. The stories of the women had confirmed African proverbs such as *motho ke motho ba bangwe/umutu ngumuntu ngabantu* which means a person can only be a person through others... the individual's whole existence is relative to that of the group (Brack, Hill, Edwards, Grootboom, & Lassiter, 2003, p. 319). The women demonstrated that they are part of whole 'New Zealand' and they had not isolated themselves but had connected the sphere of their lives and had shared their culture with others with comfort, pride and mutual respect (Dryden-Peterson, 2003). Another source of coping that the women used was accessing some resources in the community through the New Zealand Government.

Support from New Zealand Government

Five of the women identified the support that they had received from the New Zealand Government in the form of training, financial assistance, guidance, and support to form immigrant support groups. Adunni indicated the support that she had received when she was having difficulty with her tutor: "I was supported by the New Zealand bureau when I had problem with the lecturer at my school".

I have discussed Adunni's experience with her tutor under the racism theme, in the rites of passage chapter. Adunni did not feel intimidated by the bullying attitude of her tutor; she was able to look beyond the problem and reach out to the community and ask for help regarding how to solve the problem. The support that she received from this sector was in the form of advice on what to do about the problem. She had also received a student allowance from the New Zealand government:

I also received student allowance for free that doesn't happen in Nigeria we had to be sincere without parents so we told our parents.

Adunni's statement is a re-echo of Modupe's stories about the lack of welfare system in her country. Likewise in Nigeria, parents have to pay their children's school fees and also support them by giving them allowances, but it is a relief for most migrants who are keen to further their studies, to know that they can access financial assistance in the form of student loan, living cost and study allowances especially for those who are permanent residents of New Zealand.

Modupe and Dzoba approached Work and Income for assistance and they received the support required. Modupe indicated the financial support that she received from Work and Income to support her children and Dzoba indicated the challenges that she had when she came to New Zealand regarding her inability to read and write, and she had been supported by Work and Income to access an English course. It is important to note that the eligibility criteria for most of this support from the New Zealand Government are having permanent residency or citizenship. This leads to Tinuade's experience with the health sector.

Tinuade narrated that she had access to free medical services when she was studying and she had become pregnant: she spoke about the goodness of New Zealand in the area of medical provisions:

Irrespective of your status they still want to stand by you because they know that it's a life Yeah that you are bringing forth. And no one can tell what the child will become in the future so they were really supportive. When I was pregnant I had access to free medical treatment and I even had the baby through caesarean section and I did not pay a dime.

From the perspective of this story, New Zealand's philosophy about life and health is emphasised. Tinuade's experience of receiving free medical treatment and not having to pay the doctor's consultation fees is important. Many migrants, especially the ones without permanent residence or two years work permit, had received subsidised medical care. Although immigrants who have no New Zealand residency or two year work permit do not have access to subsidised health care, most of them had received medical care when they needed this without the health sectors requesting them to pay before services. They did, however, end up with huge medical bills because of unsubsidised nature of care. It is comforting that eligibility to medical care is not used to put migrants' lives on the line. This experience demonstrates that Tinuade had experienced Ubuntu in New Zealand because of the common social values and responsibility of the New Zealand Government toward its community members.

The women shared how they had experienced humane treatment from the New Zealand Government and they had experienced acceptance and compassion. New Zealand has been talked about as a place where they had been welcomed and had experienced, hospitality, warmth and generosity which makes them feel at home. Although some women had access to resources from the New Zealand government, others had spoken about receiving support

from non-governmental organisations.

Support from Non-Governmental Services

African women in this study talked about various supports they received from non-governmental organisations. Bunmi shared her experience of when she had her second son and the support that she received from a charitable organisation:

When I had had my second son I got some support from some charity organisations but of course it was for a limited time maximum 6 weeks.

She had also used the service of the Citizen Advice Bureau:

Sometimes, I went to the Citizens Advice Bureau you know looking for help what was I going to do for children for migrants for blacks what I was looking for just black churches black churches and all that just looking for the black community people I thought couldn't get to more easily on with a similar you know so Citizens Advice Bureau.

The experiences of the women demonstrated the African philosophy of personhood. Within this concept, personhood is attained in direct proportion as one participates in communal life through the discharge of the various obligations defined by one's status. There is reciprocity in that the women had been able to reach out to the community and the community had been able to fulfil her obligations to them. The women are coming from a culture where human welfare is of paramount concern and they had been able to identify and access resources that ensured their welfare. Although the women had access to both governmental and non-governmental organisations it is worthy to note that Tangata Whenua had been supportive of one of the participants: "The Maori people helped me".

Dzoba spoke about the support that she had from the host culture:

Oh, oh it wasn't too bad because the Maori people helped me cause at that time I don't know my country people, one Maori lady the other one the other family the other one who helped me to settle here. Oh they helped me about stuff they bought me bed duvet bunk bed everything... they spend their money with me so I treat them like my family because they helped me a lot.

The narrative of Dzoba about the welcome and support that she had had from Tangata Whenua demonstrates another aspect of Ubuntu. Within this concept, a traveller through a country would stop at a village and he did not have to ask for food or water. Once he stops, the people give him food and entertain him. The powhiri that Dzoba experienced helped her

in adjusting to life in New Zealand. This also demonstrates the generosity of Tangata Whenua in sharing their money and other resources to ensure that Dzoba settled in New Zealand. Because of their support, Dzoba noted that settling into New Zealand was not bad, though she did not know her people at that time. Knowing the Tangata Whenua family helped Dzoba to settle in New Zealand. Likewise, some of the participants identified using internet technology as a coping strategy.

One Major Resource that I Have Used is the Internet

Some of the women identified using the internet and phone to access necessary information that they needed in coping with New Zealand society. Igbagbo indicated using the telephone to keep the communication line open.

I use the phone, internet-chip chat card to call, email to keep in touch with home. Technology it is much cheaper, the text is much cheaper.

Bunmi also indicated that she used the internet to access needed information:

Yeah at first um we sought for was just internet because we didn't know anybody so we just always on the internet looking for how we finally came here we were looking through the internet looking at forums and all that and then when we arrived as well we were always on the internet on the internet.

Tinuade also noted the usefulness of the internet and the library to access information.

Yeah I think one major resource that I have used is the internet. I was able to search for so many information through the internet by myself because most times people have other things to do so in order not to bother people with yeah so I have to go to the internet search for information and at times I do ring people up with the telephone so ask ok this is what I've just found out on the internet can you please shed more light on it how to go about it.

The women spoke about how they have used the internet to access information and how they had used calling card to get in touch with people; I would say it is a lot easier now that there are sizeable numbers of Africans in New Zealand, which had led to the availability of calling cards that are at reasonable prices. When I was newly arrived in New Zealand, the cheapest calling card then was \$5 and it used to last for 5 minutes. Now there are some cards that when you load \$10, it can give close to 100 minutes to most African countries. Because of this improvement, so many people do not have any difficulty contacting family members at home. They do not have to go through the financial strain involved in this, which means their level of loneliness or feelings of isolation are reduced. One of the participants also talked about

harmony, another crucial element of Ubuntu to continue to dwell in the place of foreign sojourn.

The Main Thing is Trying not to Have any Misconduct

Dorcas noted the importance of living in harmony within New Zealand culture as a coping strategy:

The main thing is trying not to have any misconduct so that you wouldn't have any problem with getting assistance because I could see the peaceful place and if you know how to abide by the laws of the society the laws of New Zealand you wouldn't find yourself in trouble. So I will be careful, be respectful and think of your aim of the travelling you will be able to put a certain strategy which will help you so you don't find yourself in problems because once you find yourself with the law and problems every now and then you would never have peace of mind and you wouldn't progress, we wouldn't move ahead. Also all trying to live at peace with everyone and then trying to do what I can by the grace of God.

Dorcas identified that adopting morality and lack of misconduct as essential principles was needed to continue to dwell in the place of foreign sojourn. She identified that staying out of trouble was crucial to living a peaceful life. Living in harmony and cooperation in an interdependence context are essential life skills every African child learns from a very early age (Hanks, 2008). Dorcas noted the importance of being morally upright so that she would not be in disharmony with the order of nature (Vlaenderen, 2001). Within African tribes to acquire the status of personhood is attaining and practising a moral life that contributes to the well-being of one's community. Elements of personhood have been identified as having a good character, being peaceful, kind, respectful, humble and staying out of trouble (Gyekye, 1997). Likewise, Dorcas talked about these elements as crucial to coping and progressing in New Zealand. Living in harmony in the community is important to the sustainability of the community for an average African person; however the importance of maintaining spiritual connectedness cannot be over emphasised in sustaining the well-being of people of African descent. Some of the participants shared stories about how they have received support from their spiritual-religious community.

God Stay with Me, Be with Me as I Go Through All This

Modupe and Anika spoke about the hardship that they experienced as a result of unemployment and financial difficulty, and they talked about how they had used prayers to God for support and strength to cope with these challenges. Offering prayers and meditations

have been noted for their calming soothing effect on mind and body and its capacity to give strength and comfort in times of hardship (Shults & Sandage, 2006). Although the women had used prayer, which is an important element of African spirituality, they have also used ‘positive connection to a sacred community’ to cope with stressors of immigration.

I really think I can put much of the coping towards just my church life

Three of the participants, Modupe, Dorcas and Hassanat, identified their affiliation to a religious organisation and talked about how this had helped them to cope with stressors related to isolation, loneliness and unemployment. The women talked about how their fellowship provided them with comfort; an anchor for them to survive the changes that they had experienced and as a means to expand and maintain their social support and network (Pergerman, 1997). Their affiliation and fellowship with other people within religious organisations also shows that they had respect for the God force in others (Holdstock, 2000).

The stories of the women is a demonstration of how they have used the intrinsic orientation of religion of living and guidance by their religious beliefs and the extrinsically motivation orientation for personal or social rewards, to attain comfort and fellowship (Allport & Ross, 1967) and to cope with immigration stressors.

Shults and Sandage (2006) noted that spirituality and religiosity leads to a positive connection to a sacred community and this positive connection impacts individual health and well-being. They argued that this positive connection provides a space where spiritual formation and transformation can emerge. Despite the challenges that the women have experienced, their narratives have been those of survival in hardship, comfort maintained and increased hope and peace in the faces of difficulties. In as much as the women have gained support and comfort through their affiliation to a church group, they have also received one form of counselling from their pastors.

Modupe and Veronica told of how they had received counselling from their Pastor and wife when they were faced with challenges such as grief and immigration and racism issues.

We have a ... community, a fairly large community here and though we don't have counsellor or sessions you know professional sessions like that, we do have our pastors in the community where we go and talk about these things and we get not professional ... you know we get the form of counselling which is religious.

The women portrayed the nature of counselling from their culture; counselling is usually conducted within the family settings. Within an African context, family issues are dealt with by community elders and spiritual leaders in the community, no one confides in a stranger. It is to be noted that most Africans are not comfortable with ‘washing their dirty linen outside’, they would rather have their community leaders or religious leaders give them advice on issues they are dealing with rather than confide in a stranger. Although the women used resources such as counselling from their shepherds to cope with immigration issues, some of them used resistance to resolve issues relating to racism.

Schults and Sandage (2006) posited that spiritual and religious orientation is one of the best psychological indices of a person, and this is demonstrated in how that person relates to the sacred through styles of coping with stress. It is to be noted that in times of the women’s anxiety, when their comfortable “dwelling” has been upset, they have used their dependence on the supernatural to cope with their stressors.

Schults and Sandage (2006) talked about spirituality being more likely to be most salutary when facilitating narrative meaning, because meaning and a sense of coherence about one’s life are strong predictors of well-being. Spiritual and religion traditions offer narrative horizon that inspire health promotion virtues such as hope and gratitude. However, narrative that centres on feeling abandoned spiritually could lead to anxiety and depression. Schults and Sandage (2006) concluded that spiritual narratives offer exemplars of faith and heroes of healthy development.

The stories shared by the women demonstrated the importance of the hero/heroine depending on ‘supernatural power’ during times of weakness (Deme, 2010). Deme identified the importance of how society views relations between humans and super humans as a determinant of spirituality and it is important to understand how the women positioned themselves against the supernatural power of God. They positioned themselves as weak, and as women with difficulties in their lives and they recognised that the God force is the only resource that could help them gain strength and provide for their needs. Using spirituality as a coping strategy is a hallmark of African epic; because the women have depended on the supernatural to resolve their challenges it means the women are indeed heroines.

Conclusion

For the continuity of any community, it is expected that everyone should carry their share of the responsibility for creating humane condition of life for everyone (Masolo, 2009). The women in this study demonstrated how their relationships with people in the community helped them in coping with life in New Zealand. They identified the support that they had received from their ethnic people, which helped them to maintain their identity. Their lives had been reflected as being embedded in the story of their communities from which their identity was derived. To understand African humanism is to understand that an African is a social being and as such, cannot be separated from the community in which he or she belongs (Hanks, 2008). The women demonstrated how important it is, not to cut oneself off from one's roots so as not to deform their present relationships. The women maintained connection with 'their people' because within an African context the "ideal person will be judged in terms of his relationship with others" (Teffo, 1996, p. 104). The women had been empowered and fulfilled in having their needs met because of their relationships with other African people. It is to be noted that they had also met with people in different 'village' contexts who helped them in acquiring the skills needed to survive in their places of foreign sojourn. Without these members of the community, they might have been overcome by a sense of helplessness. It is important to note that despite these challenges faced by the women, they had not seen themselves as victims of these circumstances; they used their necessary skills to take charge of their situations. Since the women arrived in New Zealand they had been part of the system to demonstrate that there is no person without a family; therefore, "neither can there be an "I" without a "We" " (Martin-Baro, 1994, p. 41). The women's stories of resilience and well-being reflects the essence of African psychology, that of a person in relation her environment.

CHAPTER NINE: DISCUSSION

There is a unique storytelling tradition that reflects the beliefs, values and rituals rooted in African societies. Although African women immigrants' arrival in New Zealand is recent, I have used their oral tradition to listen to stories regarding the depth of their experiences about their adjustment to living in New Zealand.

The purpose of the study was to listen to the women's stories regarding the factors that motivated them to migrate to New Zealand, the major stressors they encountered upon arriving New Zealand, the impact of the stress on their person and the coping strategies they employed to handle the particular demands of adjusting to a new environment. In this chapter I will discuss the study's significant findings, the limitations and strength, implications and recommendations for future areas of research.

Storytelling, as an important aspect of oral tradition has been entrenched in the African cultural community, the spoken word is considered the greatest power on earth to be able to speak harmony where there is chaos and disorder (Knowles-Aborishade, 1991; J. Robinson & Hawpe, 1986). Through this study African women have been given a 'voice' to speak harmony where they have experienced disorder and chaos as a result of traversing the physical, psychological and social spaces within New Zealand society.

The research on the adjustment of African migrant women living in New Zealand has given me the opportunity to listen to stories shared about their journey to New Zealand. During the analysis of the stories, I have used Kunene's (1991) African Epic journey motif to understand the women's experiences of journey, because it is one of the significant ways of telling and analysing stories from African perspectives.

The women are considered heroines, because they chose to embark on a journey to achieve some specific goals and have achieved these specific goals. I have listened to stories of the events and actions that the women have described to represent the different stages of their journey. Firstly, I have used the onset of journey to represent the narratives of the women regarding the factors that motivated them to migrate to New Zealand. Secondly, the women told stories around the process of rites of passage to represent their initiation and trials in the process of adjusting to New Zealand. Thirdly, the women told stories of signs that signified

the ‘end of sufferings’ for them at the place of foreign sojourn to signify coping strategies they employed to handle the demands of adjusting to living in New Zealand.

Deciding to Migrate: Onset of Journey

In the findings chapters, the women told stories around their experiences regarding the onset of journey as the political, social-economic, lack of life chances, unemployment, need for professional development, education and socio-cultural factors. They talked about these as needs and unbearable circumstances that confronted them in their own countries. Although they employed many strategies to resolve these conflicts, all their efforts proved abortive; thus their decisions to migrate to New Zealand.

Although the women talked about many unbearable circumstances that led to their migration, through the analysis of their stories, I found that the main reason for their migration to New Zealand was career development which could be realised through educational achievement.

The women used this space to talk about the history of education and the unbearable situation of education in their countries and emphasised how education is one of their cultural values. Education is an important cultural value for an average African (Lewis, 2000). As a result of the various challenges of accessing quality education, some of them could not see “hope in the future of their children” in their home countries, and their family. The women believed that gaining access to quality education would translate to future employment and their children would become citizens of the world.

An insight from the stories of the women of their value for education has to do with the level of education they have attained. There is an indication from the women’s stories that the majority of them had postgraduate educational qualifications prior to migrating to New Zealand; in fact, it was only the youngest two of the participants that just had high school qualification prior to migration and since their arrival they have enrolled in nursing degrees. The other 13 women indicated that they were professionals in various fields such as agriculture, nursing, social work, engineering, computer science and accounting prior to migrating to New Zealand. This is an indication that the women came with high academic and career skills to contribute to the New Zealand economy though they chose to migrate because of their countries unstable social-economic and political situations.

Their stories around interest in and valuing of education reflect the New Zealand immigration policy around skills shortage policy, where skilled migrants are needed in some professions. It is obvious that their educational statuses had qualified them for this immigration category, and it is an indication that the majority of the women would be principal applicants for their families; especially when members of their families had to join them in New Zealand.

It is important to know that the women's educational and professional successes provided them the opportunity to access information that helped their integration and adjustment to the New Zealand system. This equally helped them in achieving their goals of migrating to New Zealand.

The findings on women migrating for educational purposes for themselves and their family members reflect one of the roles of African women in storytelling as educators and transmitters of knowledge. I am confident that through this study, the women have been able to share their stories around their reason for migrating and are using the process to pass on the value of education to the next generations of Africans in New Zealand.

Another insight from the women's stories is the dynamic nature of migration in Africa. The women have shared their heroic stories as a way of inscribing themselves and challenge the assumptions of domesticity held about them. The narratives challenged how African women were portrayed during colonial times as belonging in the home, engaging in child rearing, involved with domestic chores, and mere subordinates to men. The findings revealed that women were part of decision making regarding their welfare and those of their family members. This is reflected in the bold step they took to migrate to 'test the waters' before inviting their spouses and children to join them in New Zealand. Even when their spouses had taken the initiative to migrate, it was reflected in their stories that it was a joint decision taken by the family. There was no indication that the women were left out of making major decisions regarding their lives and that of their family members. Their stories did not reflect that they were oppressed either by their culture or their spouses; rather, they shared stories reflecting the complementary roles of husbands and wives in deciding on the survival of their families. This is an essential mark of African feminism.

Rites of Passage

The second research question was on stressors that African women have experienced in the

process of adjusting to living in New Zealand and the impact of such stressors on their person. The women talked about their experiences of their journey as rites of passage. Kunene (1991) identified this stage as the strongest and most constant tension between the point of departure and its geographical and psychological opposite. During this process the heroine meets with various challenges that place her life in extreme danger, as a result of the events that occurred in this threshold, the women have to take actions that will ensure they are not overcome by these challenges; that would be the measure of the importance of her mission and goals that she has set herself to accomplish during the journey.

Stressors

In the second and third finding chapters, the women talked about rites of passages as it relates to under-employment, unemployment with sub-themes of demand for New Zealand work experience and non acceptance of overseas qualifications. Other stories were around financial difficulty and challenges with language and accent.

The women shared stories of how they had moved through the process of initiation, which involved both physical and psychological movement from their countries into a new country, with new values, norms, and social spaces. These movements between physical, psychological and emotional spaces involved testing waters and encountering challenges and changes that they had to adapt. The process of initiation could be likened to re-discovering themselves and their identities or answering question like ‘who am I?’ (Kunene, 1991). The women’s stories reflect uncertainty and anxiety because they were not sure what life held for them. They appeared to be in danger of either surviving or not surviving the challenges that befell them.

The most significant stressor spoken about by the women was how they were missing home and they talked extensively about the losses associated with being so far away. The women told stories around the tension they have experienced as a result of leaving the comfort of their villages. Their stories yielded a lot of cultural data and symbols representing their values, feelings, interpersonal relationships, spirituality and resilience.

The women shared stories about some of the losses around supports from their families prior to migration which appear to be no longer available to them in New Zealand. The lack of physical support impacted migrant women’s productivity. Some of the women talked about

how they could buy their freedom, by having someone babysit their children; clean the house, cook, and some even had chauffeur that could drive them around back home in Africa. Despite having good jobs now, some of them cannot afford to pay for such support in New Zealand.

Another area of loss identified is with regard to supporting teenagers. This lack of support is causing intergenerational conflicts. Some of the women identified that their teenagers are learning the New Zealand culture and embracing the awareness of freedom and human rights. Some of them feel a loss of control over their teenagers because they are no longer imbibing the African values of respecting adults' guidance and views.

The women's narratives were around nostalgic memories of their ideal homes. In as much as the women had migrated to lives better than those of their family members, they found that they could not physically participate in the physical environment of their cultures and communities in their various countries any more. The consequence of this relates to feelings of homesickness and being caught between two worlds - that of New Zealand and their home countries. It is important to know that although the women had set goals to correct the issues and challenges that led to their migration, this process is not a loss-free one.

Because of the change in values, there is a sense of loneliness, isolation or simply a feeling of not belonging. However, because they do not want to be seen as 'deviants', they have tried to adjust to some of New Zealand's norms grudgingly. While they seem to have adjusted to these new values, one of them concluded that 'it is like living in a superficial world'.

Espin's (1987) findings around immigrant and refugee women could be used to support the women's stories. She noted that for both migrants and refugees, the process of migration implies a certain degree of culture-shock that entails mourning the loss of the old country, the values, cultures and love objects. It is obvious from the women's stories that they actually mourn these losses. However, the women have found ways of coping with this sense of loss. Some of them returned home to visit their family members; some adopted new families within their culture and mixed with other migrants in New Zealand. With regards to food, they buy the African foodstuff available to have a 'taste of Africa'; some are improvising with foodstuff from other countries or ask their friends coming from home to bring some spices that are not allowed to be mailed into the country. These are the ways they have tried

to maintain their well-being with regards to missing home and the consequent losses.

It is apparent in their stories that as they stay longer in the system, they have adopted new values, new families and new ways of coping, though they find making such changes challenging. Although the women shared stories of how they have overcome some challenges, they also used the opportunity to share stories as victims of social structures in New Zealand.

The women's stories about the stressor that has had the most pervasive impact on their person was identified as racism. Issues related to perceived racism, discrimination, marginalization, prejudice and stereotypes about Africa and the African people, were spoken about by the women. The women shared their experiences around interpersonal and institutional racism and how these have impacted on their person. Many of the women have been verbally discriminated against at work and in educational institutions; their knowledge and skills appear not trusted. Employers demonstrate attitudes expressing a requirement to have New Zealand work experience or express unfavourable attitudes toward overseas qualifications which these women perceive as discrimination. Attitudes like that have impacted on the ability of the women to gain access to suitable employment; consequently, leading to loss of status leaving the women frustrated because of their inability to fulfil their socio-economic roles. This could be regarded as perhaps a strategy to make the women poor so as to maintain them in an economically low social status.

The women have faced discrimination through language and this impacted on their well-being and socio-economic growth. Some of the women have experienced lack of acceptance, verbal discrimination, and ridicule before interview panels; they have experienced 'homelessness' coupled with feeling of uprooted-ness again in a place they thought would be home for them. This is perhaps making them occupy a borderless space once more, which could be likened to their experience of dislocation from the impact of colonialism.

The women have experienced negative attitudes, beliefs that they are not knowledgeable, qualified or competent to render quality services or to hold similar positions to the ones they held back home. While some of them were members of the majority groups in their countries, all of a sudden they have become minorities in New Zealand. As a result, they have to work hard to be seen, heard and respected. Their skin colour appears to have been used to

determine their capacity, knowledge and skills; thus, they have been intentionally restricted in social places by a lack of acceptance of their skills and qualifications. They were expected to serve at the lower rung of their career, and some of the clients they were supposed to serve lacked confidence in them because of their skin colour. The narratives of the women emphasises the influence of power, status and privilege as a result of their skin colour. This is why the women think they are being discriminated against without taking into consideration their knowledge, skills, qualifications or work experiences. These African women have experienced powerlessness and lesser privileges compared to New Zealanders and the women based this solely on their complexion. These experiences could be regarded as tragic.

When immigrants perceive themselves to be targets or victims of discrimination by the host nationals, they experience major acculturative stresses associated with negative psychological symptoms such as increased anxiety, depression, feelings of marginality, alienation, lower well-being, lower self-regard and ill health (Dion et al., 1992; Okazaki, 2009; Verkuyten, 2002).

While there is a consensus that extreme and overt racism has great impact on minority mental well-being (Benabed, 2009; S. Fernando, 1993; Komolafe, 2008), an insight gained from the women's stories is the multifaceted nature of racism and its impact on their mental health in New Zealand. The emotional consequence of experiencing discrimination, prejudices and stereotypes as a result of racism include feelings of worthlessness, uprootedness, loss of identity, unhappiness, anger, frustration, uncertainty, hopelessness, shame, embarrassment, loss of control, emotional upset and irritation; and these feelings may lead to depression (Akhtar, 1999; Espin, 1999; Narayan, 1997; Thomas, 1995).

Kunene (1991) noted the importance of emotional reaction to the new knowledge acquired during the journey as significant in achieving the goals of the journey. From the women's stories, the emotional reaction to their experience of racism reflect feelings of intimidation, fear, anger, 'double uprootedness', loss of second home, frustration, loss of control, less privilege, hopelessness and loss of self-worth or esteem and feelings that they are not competent to work in a New Zealand environment; these emotions could be threatening for immigrant women in the absence of adequate buffers to counteract them. The symptoms they experienced could be explained from the perspective of needing to settle in a new country, which is reasonably expected. This is in agreement with Fanon's (1967) argument that "with

the exception of a few misfits within the closed environment, we can say that every neurosis, every abnormal manifestation, every affective erythrism... is the product of his cultural situation” (p. 152). I would then argue that the women’s psychological distress is a product of how the social structure of New Zealand had exposed them to racisms of different forms; thus impacting on their mental well-being.

It is useful to have an understanding of the socio-cultural factors influencing the emotional states of African women as it relates to adjusting to New Zealand culture. With this understanding, the solution to such problems would not be individualised, and emphasis would not be only on medication and western psychotherapy, but on making resources available by the government and community to correct the anomie within the structure and social system that new migrants are exposed to. Although the women’s stories reflected various psychological distresses with effects such as anger, losses marked with anxiety and ‘depression’, these did not stop them from experiencing optimal functioning, well-being and the capacity to adapt. They have experienced a sense of control over the challenges of migration through their actions and behaviour (Barone et al., 1997). This is because they have used resources within their community to cope with these stressors.

Places of Foreign Sojourn

The place of foreign sojourn is the point where the sign (of victory) manifests itself. The women told stories of how they identified and interpreted the sign which signifies the end of the “sufferings” or trials that they had experienced. Not only did they recognise the signs of victory, they were able to utilise the skills that they acquired during the rites-of passage at this place. This is supposed to be a place where the ‘heroine’ has the opportunity to identify and interpret the signs of victories that had enabled them to overcome various challenges such as loss of home, unemployment, racism and that assured them that they had survived the challenges.

I have explored three coping strategies the women have used from an African oral tradition/African epic perspective. The three coping strategies that I have explored include communalism, affect and spirituality. These elements are interrelated and it would be hard to understand one without the other.

The most significant coping strategy the women used would be communalism. An important

element of the African epic is the village people and their attitude to the heroine (Kunene, 1991). The women told stories that demonstrated that they are able to form both formal and informal relationships with their community in New Zealand. Through forming such relationships with the village people, they had the opportunity to sharpen or acquire professional and social skills and knowledge needed to overcome the challenges of migration. The women could be considered significantly victorious because of the support they have had from the social networks community. As a result, they have been able to achieve their goals of migrating to New Zealand.

They also told stories about the support of the village people in the various social spaces they have traversed. Not only have these villagers been accommodating to them, the reaction and attitude of the village people have been more friendly than hostile, although in some instances the women reported experiencing cruelty or hostility but there was more of a positive and balanced attitude towards them. The women's migration and adjusting to New Zealand could be likened to going to the war front, they have set their goals for coming to New Zealand and despite the challenges that they have faced, they were able to develop war strategies and have made use of values and ethics from their cultures to achieve their goals and gain victory.

The women have demonstrated the basic tenet of communalism which involves a commitment to inter-dependence and the ability to be socially involved, willingness to assume social duties, cooperativeness, mutual support, collective sharing, respect for others, and have not neglected the importance of their extended families. In as much as they are able to build and nurture relationships by making use of the resources available to them within the community, they continued to be part of the villages of their various countries. They have demonstrated that they have always been more interested in human relations than in any other thing. Perhaps, this confirms Mphahlele's (1962) assertion that Africans gravitate towards people, because people give them real pleasure.

Another important aspect of African ethics that has helped the women cope with the challenges of migration has to do with coming to terms with their collective consciousness. I have written on this during my discussion on African personhood in the introduction chapter. Coming to terms with their collective consciousness has helped them rediscover their identity and who they are because as people from Africa, they have been shaped and have imbibed

their community norms and have applied these communal norms to guide their conduct not only for their personal interests, but also for communal needs. They have demonstrated that they are truly a part and parcel of Africa. The emphasis on communal living, cooperation, and peaceful co-existence with members of the community has helped them develop good interpersonal skills, diplomacy and responsibility for other members of their community (Terborg-penn, 1996). This is another mark of African feminism. The idea of mutual relationship between an individual and the community could better be understood by the saying “I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am” (Mbiti, 1969, p. 109).

Affect

Although the African women claim making use of resources in the community such as social relations to cope with immigration stressors, another important aspect of sustaining relationships is an aspect of African humanness – which is affect. This implies that the women have been cognitively and emotionally congruent in social situations – that is, they are constantly in touch with their inner experiences. From an ‘Ubuntu’ perspective, it is important to be in touch with and express “emotions, feelings, and actions that are experienced as acceptable”, and also of “feelings such as anger, hate, frustration and other negative emotion and actions that are experienced as less acceptable or unacceptable” (Holdstock, 2000, p. 108). As a result of the ability to experience and express such emotions, the women were able to make a choice as to whether to express such feelings and how to express them in an acceptable way without straining relationships. One way of expression of feelings by Africa women was using African praise poem.

African Praise Poem/Oriki

Another insight from the analysis of the women’s stories relates to the strategies the African women deployed in coping with acculturation stress was how they used aesthetic experience such as traditional African poetry to cope with negative feelings without straining their relationships within the community. The study of psychology proves that human behaviour is scientifically observable and analysable such that it is possible to explain the impact of art on human behaviour. Likewise, theories of psychotherapy recognise that the unity of the body, feelings and intellect is fundamental to the well-being of an individual and that performing arts foster physical and mental health (Chiwome, 1992; Pasteur & Toldson, 1982).

African traditional poetry plays a role in the socialisation of individuals; to nurture and regulate their relationships and interaction between members of society (Barber, 1993; Chiwome, 1992; Dasylva, 2007). Poetry which comes in the form of chants are used to deal with feelings with the aim of addressing and resolving issues about human conflict, crises, unfulfilled and broken wishes and hopes, as well as joys (Chiwome, 1992). Examples of such poetry are hunter's chant, bridal chants, boast poetry and war songs.

The African women used one form of poetry to criticise and express the negative emotion they have suffered especially with the people in authority. They chose to use this form of expression to avoid confrontation and release their pent up feelings. Such verbalisation of anger is termed displacement or ventilation by western psychologists and usually there is a form of tranquillity experienced at the end of such expression. They have used these strategies to deal with stress and discrimination from work; the expression of negativity has resulted in self-restraint on their part. It is important to know that instead of the women breaking down in tears or engaging in a physical confrontation, feelings around the unacceptable behaviours they experienced were expressed in acceptable ways without causing further tension.

In other situations, war songs/hunter chants have been used to encourage themselves and win the challenges associated with immigration at a mental health level. They used it more as a method of acclimatizing to the new environment which is socially and psychologically at variance with the life-style they were once used to. They also used such chants to cope with homesickness. Through their narratives around home sweet home living with loss, the women expressed their feelings around homesickness by portraying an ideal image of their homes. With regards to the stress associated with living with loss, expressing the challenges the women faced becomes a way of coping with feelings of isolation, loneliness and displacement and such songs/chants are used to come to grips with the ways of the new environment and the changes they were not expecting. This indigenous and readily available resource could be incorporated in the treatment of stress-related illnesses, perhaps to complement modern psychotherapy, because such poetry has been assessed as helpful in maintaining of psychological health and equilibrium of African people (Chiwome, 1992).

Spirituality

Another significant element of African oral tradition/epic is the reliance on the supernatural (Deme, 2010; Kunene, 1991). Africans are noted to be religious and the spiritual world of the African people is densely populated with spiritual beings, spirits and the living dead. Each tribe/people have their own religious systems with a set of beliefs and practices (Mbiti, 1969). Okpewho (1979) posited that reliance on supernatural resources is not a sign of weakness but an essential mark of the heroic personality in many African folk epic.

The women told stories of spirituality and its aspect of religiosity as a central part of their identity and as a tool that helped them cope with living in their new environment. It is to be noted that their success and heroic personality also depended on their reliance on the supernatural. Some of the women talked about how their belief in God had helped to strengthen them in the face of adversities and how they had used religiosity as guidance.

To demonstrate that the three African oral tradition principles are interrelated, African spirituality has served as a potential buffer from insufficient affect for the women. And because they were able to be part of their religious communities, they have been able to build and sustain their interpersonal relationships with other live forces in the community. The benefit of this for the women is receiving comfort, strength and bonding through the emotional/spiritual village they have built. The three principles of communalism, affect and spirituality asserts for African women in New Zealand that they exist because their spirit is connected to a community that understands them (Thompson, 2003).

It is crucial to understand the adjustment of African women in New Zealand from these three elements/perspectives because “all human life processes including the spirituality, mental, biological, and genetic and behaviour constitutes African psychology” (Azibo, 1996, p. 6).

This Study in Context

The research on the adjustment of African migrant women living in New Zealand has given me the opportunity to listen to stories shared by African women immigrants about their journey to New Zealand. This has enabled me to explore the features of their immigration to New Zealand based on African worldview perspectives. Africentric scholars have written on African frameworks that could be used to study Africans both on the continent and in Diaspora (Dasylyva, 2007; Holdstock, 2000; Schielle, 2000; Terborg-Penn, 2006). This study

contributes to these international studies on Africentric philosophy.

This finding on education as a motivating factor is seemingly consistent with the literature. Bhugra (2004) identified education as motivating factor for migration. The finding is also consistent with Porter's (2006) study on factors for migrating and acculturation preference of South African migrants in New Zealand. He found that the integrationist group was mostly motivated to migrate to New Zealand because they desired to provide good education for their children. Lewis' (2000) study on African women in the US also found that the main reason for their migration to the US was to develop their professional identities and to achieve the desired career advancement. Furthering their education was the logical step for African women to this achievement. However, the difference between this study and Lewis'(2000) study is that the African women's aim of furthering education, in Lewis'(2000) study, was for their personal career development, while the women in this study were motivated to migrate to ensure the educational development of themselves and their families.

The finding of this study regarding migrating for educational development is also consistent with Maydell-Stevens et al. (2001) study on Russian immigrants in New Zealand. However, the finding is different to that of Somali refugees in New Zealand, although they are Africans, but the primary reason for their migration to New Zealand was safety from refugee crisis. The experience of refugee crisis would be a combination of droughts, famines, floods, civil wars and political instability (Chile, 2002).

The value held by the women about the importance of education confirms Schmidt's (1992) study on Zimbabwe women that African women act as the most significant bearing upon their children's upbringing acting as guardian over their children's education. They are keen to go to any length to ensure their children are educated. African women's value of education also reinstates Robinson's (1995) finding that one of the strengths of black families is a strong achievement orientation; and that black parents place a premium on educational achievements and educational mobility for their children. These studies could be used to understand why African women in New Zealand hold education as paramount and as a determinant of a 'bright future' for themselves and their family.

The women talked about the stressors they experienced in the process of adjusting to living in New Zealand. The main stressor experienced by these women was missing home. This is

consistent with Lewis' (2000) study on African women in the US who found that feelings of loneliness are the major psychological difficulty experienced. However, Lewis' (2000) study is different from this study because the sense of loss experienced by African women in the US led to feelings of isolation from the US culture. African women in this New Zealand study shared their experience around missing home and talked extensively about the losses associated with this experience, but it was not apparent that the women felt isolated from New Zealand communities or cultures. The women connected with immigrants from their culture, from other ethnic groups and with tangata whenua (Maori) who welcomed them and shared their resources with them.

This finding is also different to Wong's (2000) study on Ghanaian women in Canada who left their children and family behind in Ghana for separation ranging from five to 11 years. Their narratives revealed sadness, despair, frustration and loneliness due to separation from their children. Although most women in this study have migrated to New Zealand leaving their children behind it was apparent that the period that the women were separated from their children was not as long as the Ghanaian women in Canada.

This study is consistent with the study of Alpass et al. (2007) on skilled migrants from South Africa, India and China who live in New Zealand. They found that, especially the female participants in their study, talked about the hardship of separation from their family members who are abroad.

I noted earlier that although African women migrants in New Zealand do miss home but they do not feel isolated from New Zealand, their experience is also different to that of Russian immigrants in New Zealand in the study by Maydell-Stevens et al. (2007). The major stressor experienced by Russian immigrants was isolation. The reason for the feeling of isolation of Russian immigrants was found to be the difficulty in adjusting to a new environment and language. However, African women in this study do not talk about language being a barrier to their adjustment because they were already fluent in English prior to migrating, while Russian migrants in New Zealand were not fluent in English prior to migrating.

The experience of African women in this study is different to Schweitzer's et al. (2006) findings that post-migration stressors such as difficulty adjusting to the Australian culture were associated with increased rates of depression, anxiety, and somatisation for the

Sudanese refugees in Australia. Although African women in this study do struggle with some aspects of New Zealand culture, they have not reported any serious mental health issues or clinical depression as a result of adjusting to the New Zealand culture.

This experience is also dissimilar to that of Latina women in the US who struggled with loneliness, and feelings of shame and guilt because of migrating alone (Espin, 1987). Although most African women had migrated alone to New Zealand, they did not report feelings of shame and guilt as a result of this. African women's experience of loneliness is different to the Goan women who had come to New Zealand for marriage; they experienced loneliness because they have no family members in New Zealand except their husbands (De Souza, 2007). Likewise their motivating factor for migrating to New Zealand is different to most African women in this study.

Despite the challenges faced by the African women, they have been resilient in confronting these challenges associated with the losses around missing home, feeling lonely and isolated from their families. The findings in this study concur with other research that indicates that black immigrant women's typical robust self-esteem, identity and sense of purpose are qualities that help them to strive in the face of adversity (Lewis, 2000).

This study is an extension of Porter's (2006) study on South Africans in New Zealand, and (Udahemuka & Pernice, 2010) on voluntary migration of Africans who found that integration to New Zealand environment was preferred by those whose main motive for migration was related to their attraction to New Zealand. These studies noted that because these African migrants are voluntary migrants to New Zealand and are attracted to New Zealand these would translate to positive adjustment to New Zealand. Likewise because all the women in this study were voluntary migrants and were attracted to New Zealand either for educational purpose or for social cultural reason, these factors had served as factors facilitating their positive adjustment to New Zealand.

The women's experiences are similar to Nayar's (2005, 2009) findings on Indian women's occupation and well-being in New Zealand. She found that her participants had gone through a process where they have directly experienced the New Zealand environment through established contacts and their knowledge seeking attitude. They went through a process of physical, social, emotional, spiritual and cultural amalgamation of their home and New

Zealand's to create a setting that makes them feel homely. Through this acceptance, they no longer view New Zealand from the Indian lens; thus helping them feel at home in New Zealand. Likewise, African women immigrants have used various resources and available social support to meet their individual, material, spiritual assistance towards adjusting to life in New Zealand

The presence of extended family support and network impacts on immigrants' adjustment in a new environment, while the absence of the support and network has a negative impact on immigrants' settlement. Kumassah's (2009) study on African migrants in Canada found that in the absence of extended family support and network, all participants reported feeling lonely and socially isolated because of lack of strong social support network in Canada. It is obvious that African women who had participated in this research were able to identify the resources and support available to them in the community in order to cope with the immigration stressors they experienced, although some of them are missing their family members. The stories of the women had confirmed African proverbs such as *motho ke motho ba bangwe/umutu ngumuntu ngabantu*, which means 'a person can only be a person through others'. "The individual's whole existence is relative to that of the group" (Brack et al., 2003, p. 319); the women demonstrated that they are part of the whole New Zealand community and had not isolated themselves but connected the spheres of their lives and shared their culture with others, with comfort, pride and mutual respect (Dryden-Peterson, 2003).

Within all this, a key difference of this study is its narrative approach. It reveals that the women in this study told stories of strength; of overcoming, of attaining their quest and feeling proud of their achievements. Not only does this affirm their psychological wellness, but it reveals that these African immigrant women do not see themselves as victims. Rather, they position themselves as the heroine of their own story.

Limitations and Strengths

This study is important because it forms an initial step towards research on the integration of African people, and African women in particular, in New Zealand. As a starting point, this thesis is a celebration of African women immigrants and provides a voice for them within New Zealand.

One of the limitations of this study is that of a small sample size of 15, although the

participants in this study were of a wide range of ages and came from different parts of Africa. Because of this relatively small sample size caution must be applied in interpreting the findings and in generalising beyond a small sub-set of African immigrant women. It would be useful to include a larger number of African immigrant women in future research investigations and to conduct comparison from other immigrant groups such as Americans, Asians and Europeans in New Zealand.

The process of recruitment could pose a challenge; purposive research methodology imposes certain limitations especially with the participants having to meet some criteria that fit the study before they are selected. This could translate to some women being excluded from the study who may not have come through their experiences so well. Although it ensured a balance of group size, because multiple groups of the participants were selected, the samples are not easily defensible as being representative of population due to potential subjectivity of researcher.

Another limitation would be the fact that I interviewed the women individually. Among African peoples, storytelling is a communal activity. Some of the reasons for allowing storytelling in groups and communal spaces are to create an opportunity for the community members sharing the stories to bond with others, validate and affirm their experiences. This usually comes from responses from the audience. It is possible that the women might have missed out on these opportunities, because they were interviewed individually. It is also essential to have stories told in groups because it creates an environment that supports evaluation of experience and promotes problem-solving.

Another limitation that occurred to me was that I did not do a video recording of the process. This opportunity would have been beneficial to record the non-verbal responses especially for narrative performances as it reflects the cultural values of the women. Video recording the process would have given me the opportunity to analyse the performance aspect of praise poem analysis.

Strengths

The main strength of this study is the use of narrative methodology to gain in depth perspectives of African women on their experiences of adjustment to living in New Zealand. This study has produced and explored 15 powerful narratives where participants gave full

accounts of the different stages of their journey in New Zealand. Using a narrative method is suitable to African women because of the oral tradition they have grown up with.

A further strength of the study is the various Africentric methods that I have employed to analyse the stories. The use of the Africentric methods, places the women at the centre of analysis. This is important because this will be a foundation that other researchers who are keen to use these theories or develop them further. At this stage, there is a lack of knowledge or expertise of various African theories in New Zealand, and this study is a contribution to that effect. Another advantage of using Africentric theory is that it has opened door for the women's culture, norms and values to be known and for them to be better understood in New Zealand.

A further strength of the study is that this would be the first study of its kind to explore the adjustment of African women living in New Zealand. Moreover, this would be a foundation that other studies on African women, youths, men and different part of social issues could be built on. One aspect of the Africentric theory that I consider to be the strength of the research would be the use of praise poems to analyse the stories of the women. Praise poems were used by the women to talk about the strengths, attributes and deeds of their peoples and their environment; it is a shift from concentrating on the negative or deficit of immigration.

Presently, within social service agencies in New Zealand, there is a gap of African models of practice. With the outcome of this research, African models such as Ubuntu, storytelling, and praise poem could be explored and developed further to work with Africans in New Zealand.

The fact that I am an African immigrant woman with similar migration experience positioned me in a situation to have a better understanding of the women's experiences. It also helped with bonding with the women which enabled them to trust me with their stories.

Implications of the Study for Policy Makers and Social Services

New Zealand Government regards immigration as an important part of their policies, essential for economic development (Fletcher, 1999). Changes in the immigration policy since the late 1980s increased the number of highly skilled immigrants who decided to make New Zealand home. However, as the participants in this study discovered, despite the doors

of immigration been opened to them, they had to face some challenges in the process of adjusting to living in New Zealand. It is to be noted that immigrants who are ethnically or racially different from the host culture may have difficulty adjusting to the new system. The women talked about discrimination against their cultural heritage, as one of the major challenges they had to face. It is very good that New Zealand is achieving her aim of allowing immigrants to enter, in order to achieve the country's economic development plans, essential for the growth of the country. However, it is also essential for plans to be put in place to support migrants to achieve the purpose that they have been granted entry into the country.

This also has implication for family reunification. It is also very interesting that the cultural heritage of Africans is being used to discriminate against the women. Some of them had invited their parent to New Zealand to help them with their children, but several of such applications were declined because the immigration department had requested a bond of \$5,000 from applicants because of the assumption that the parents wouldn't return to their countries of origin. In cases where such applications were granted, they were only for a limited period of 2-6 months. Such policies place a lot of financial stress on the African people that are keen to invite their family members to New Zealand. With the knowledge that African people are communally oriented, it is essential for them to be supported when inviting their families to join them. It is important that the New Zealand immigration department makes the settlement of Africans less expensive, laborious and traumatic. It is also important to know that if African immigrants are not supported in this regard, it is likely to compromise their well-being.

Implications for Counselling

Most of the women talked about losses, grief, and mourning of their homes. Though the loss seems vague, the grieving process may involve apathy, insomnia, loss of appetite, irritability and psychosomatic distress. Although the women had not signified experiencing any of these symptoms, they have talked about going to their pastors and their wives for counselling. They talked about the absence of counselling from their family members. It is important to know that even when African women have issues for which they need counselling, they would be comfortable contacting their religious leaders or community leaders for counselling rather

than professional counsellors.

Other reason that may impact on African women seeking counselling is the social stigma that could be attached to it. There may be fear of been labelled as weak, unstable and perhaps crazy if they go for a professional counselling service. It is important to know that there are limited African counsellors who could work in understanding with these women. I am aware that some overseas trained African counsellors had difficulty registering to practice in New Zealand. Moreover, because of the challenge of registration and finding employment as counsellors, some of them have moved on to study social work. It is important to encourage and support Africans who are keen to be registered and to be trained as counsellors; this would mean that they would possess the awareness, knowledge, and skills necessary to work with the African people.

The financial commitment of counselling is another reason for African women not accessing professional counselling service because counselling is considered a financial luxury that they cannot afford. Some of them may not have access to subsidized counselling services because of their immigration status.

Counsellors who are interested in working with this population need to examine their own biases, values, and assumptions regarding people of African descent, and increase their knowledge about the history of African women, develop strategies that are designed to attract Africans to counselling, and provide culturally validating and enriching therapeutic interventions. It is also important for counsellors to acknowledge Africans world views, theories and models of practice and acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to be culturally competent to work with Africans in New Zealand.

Implications for Mental Health Services

Among Africans, many view mental illness as encompassing the most severe and possibly untreatable cases. Africans do agree that the major cause of mental illness is the inability to interact well environmentally, socially and physically. Moreover, they also believe that mental illness could also be caused by spell casting and evil machinations and spiritual forces such as witches, wizards, sorcerers, demons. Oracles, divination and spirituality play significant roles in the treatment of mental illnesses in African traditional medicine. The use

of Koran readings for Muslims and use of prayers/deliverance among Christians are essential when treating mental illnesses among Africans. This is because in Africa, life is traced back to its metaphysical past which interplays with the present and future (Dime, 1995). In African traditional medicine, the community plays significant role in the treatment of the mentally ill.

This means that Africans may not necessarily access Western mental health institutions because they do not want to be seen as crazy. It is likely however that they would access such service when they have tried other means and have not been successful. It is essential that in working with this group, there is a need for adequate cultural skills and knowledge of professionals to guarantee adequate treatment. I recommend that when they access mental health services, health professionals should spend time finding out about clients' family and community relationships, to carefully explain diagnoses and treatments, to incorporate and facilitate African views on mental health issues and traditional treatments.

Recommendations for Future Research

This is the first research of its kind exploring the adjustment of African immigrant women in New Zealand. As a result, it is a foundation for future research with African immigrants. It would be interesting to explore the adjustment of African men, second generation of Africans such as youths and children to New Zealand and African refugees in New Zealand.

I have considered using Africentric frameworks to be the strength of the research, it would be useful to conduct further studies on developing these frameworks to understand and work with African people and the issues they might be experiencing, using these African frameworks will help to understand the strengths, attributes and deeds and values of African migrants and help to change the perspective of concentrating on the negative or deficit immigration and of African immigrants in particular. It would be useful to have more research conducted on Africans using African centred theories. This would validate African people's experiences and shed more light on storytelling, and other forms of oral tradition from Africa.

The participants in this study talked about experiencing racism and discrimination against their cultural heritage, as one of the major challenges they had to face in New Zealand. It is essential to continue to explore the impact of racism on African migrants' well-being and

compare their experience with other migrants from other continents, studies could also be conducted to determine the experience of racism and its impact on New Zealand immigration' goal of economic development in granting entry to immigrants into the country.

The women spoke about the concept of counselling from their cultural perspectives, it would be helpful to carry out further research on the concept of counselling from the women's cultural perspective and determine the support or resources needed by African cultural and spiritual leaders to counsel and support their people in New Zealand.

Among Africans, many view mental illness as encompassing the most severe and possibly untreatable cases. They believe that mental illness could also be caused by spiritual forces. Further research is needed to explore African concepts of mental illness and treatment to educate and create awareness for mental health services, and to support Africans to access culturally appropriate mental health services. It would be useful to have more research conducted on storytelling from indigenous perspectives to understand indigenous people psychology; with these the experiences of indigenous people would be better understood.

How this Research Translates to Practical and Tangible Approaches

The praxis of psychology must lead to both the understanding and support of the people's culturally consistent lived experiences. There is an urgency to generate authentic data about African people living in New Zealand to inform intervention. The way to achieve this authenticity demands epistemological correction. This thesis is a platform for African women to be placed in a cultural paradigm consistent with their cultural reality. It is evident that African women have made use of their tradition and practices to achieve well-being despite immigration challenges confronting them. As a result of adhering to their world-views they have minimised negative social conditions and maximized conditions that are pro-social and life affirming. As a result, it is paramount for social service practitioners working with Africans in New Zealand to have African paradigms to work from.

By giving this group of African immigrant women voice to tell their stories about their experiences of migration to New Zealand, and understanding the meaning they make of them, the nature of the support that is needed by them is known. It is hoped that this research will encourage Government and other agencies to provide resources to facilitate African women

and their families' adjustment into a new culture. This thesis also offers opportunity for New Zealanders to increase their understanding of cultural differences, helping to promote the acceptance of a multi-cultural society in New Zealand.

Conclusion

The adjustment of African women could be defined as the presence of wellness - positive functioning. Because the women have imbibed their cultural norms and values they have been able to demonstrate autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others and purpose in life (Ryff, 1989, p. 406). African women are not dangling persons in as much as they have imbibed and make use of their values from their culture, they have not estranged themselves from their 'new community' that of New Zealand. They have been able to use values and ethics from their culture to plan and pursue their goals in New Zealand. The women demonstrated their belief in their inner strength, resilience and courage although the changes they have had to adapt to challenged their identity. Yet they were able to rediscover themselves by imbibing ethics, values and norms from their culture to cope with their new life, they were able to achieve this by fulfilling their roles as African women. The women have demonstrated that they are the bearer of the culture, a mediator and transmitter of knowledge. It is to be acknowledged that the conception of woman as nurturer and first teacher is demonstrated by the women.

The women have used their skills to mentor, instruct, criticise, praise, scorn and entertain through their narratives. Likewise they have used their stories to convey information on survival and cognitive skills to the younger generations and educate about the cultural standards, worldviews, morals, and values. African women in this study have used their experiences of the collective wisdom of their community to uphold the connection between the cultural or historical past and the present and have attained status of personhood from African perspectives and are true heroines.

In traditional African society, all knowledge is for practical purpose, for safety and prosperity, and it is believed that this cannot be achieved by any person in isolation (Vlaenderen, 2001). Through the women's stories many assumptions and stereotypes about Africans and African women have been challenged. African migrant women in this study have demonstrated that they have used their knowledge of their environment for the good and social welfare of themselves and families. They have stayed in contact with their home

countries and made new relationships within their host country. These, and their spirit of courage and tenacity, have contributed to their well-being in New Zealand. They have faced a journey of many hardships and reached their quest in a manner to be celebrated. They are indeed heroines. They have much to be proud of; they found strength, they toiled, they overcame, they moved into new professional careers, and they see their children being well educated. The journey has been worth the cost. And at the end, their psychological health is robust. I was able to understand and relate to African women's story because of the similar background and experience that of being an African woman, an immigrant and a mother. I could relate to their toil, struggles and challenges in a new environment like New Zealand. I have been able to understand their stories using many African frameworks because these are values and ethics that I have been brought up with. Exploring their stories and experiences from counselling perspective was challenging because of dominant theories (western) that tend to silence indigenous theories in New Zealand presently. However this research has made it possible for me to present some relevant African frameworks that could be used when working with African people in New Zealand. I was aware of my position of privilege, that of an educated (lecturer), minister's wife in the process of recruiting participants and in analysing their stories, however, I do not consider these as a weakness that should stop me from being women's stories gender, immigration

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Appendix A



ARE YOU AN INDIGENOUS BLACK AFRICAN IMMIGRANT WOMAN?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO TELL YOUR STORY SO PARTS OF IT MAY HELP OTHERS?

I am conducting a study for my Doctor of Health Science degree at Auckland University of Technology, Auckland. I am looking into the psychological adjustment of African women to New Zealand.

I would like to hear the stories of people who:

- Have immigrated to New Zealand within the last five years and have been living in the country for a minimum of two years prior to the start of the study.
- Black African woman, not of European origin, or Asian groups.
- Are between 20-60 years of age.
- To not be a refugee.
- Are able to communicate in English during a one hour to two hour interview.

If you are keen to be part of this study, please contact me: Adesayo Adelowo
Department of Social Work, Manukau Institute of Technology.
Tel: 098370761

Appendix B

Participant Information Sheet



Date Information Sheet Produced: 15th July 2008

Project Title

The Psychological adjustment of African migrant women living in New Zealand: A narrative study.

An Invitation

My name is Adesayo Adelowo. I am using this forum to invite you to take part in this project. I am interested in talking with African women who have immigrated to New Zealand within the last five years about their experience of adjusting to a new culture and specifically about their psychological adjustment regarding living in a new culture. You have received this information sheet because you respond to my advertisement for African women to take part in my research (as part of the Doctor of Health Science qualification). Therefore following on from your response to the advert. I am now sending you this information sheet. I would like you to know that your participation is entirely your choice. You do not have to take part in this study. If you do not wish to take part in this study, you need do nothing. You are free to withdraw from this study at any time, without having to give a reason.

What is the purpose of this research?

The aim of the study is to explore the psychological adjustment of African women immigrants to New Zealand and to elucidate factors that may be barriers to their psychological adjustment. This will be achieved by exploring the meaning they make of their immigration experiences. The objective of the study would be to clarify the women's adaptability and unique coping styles that they use to maintain their wellbeing in New Zealand.

How was I chosen for this invitation?

Describe the recruitment and selection process involved.

- I am hoping to talk to 15 African women who have immigrated to New Zealand within the last five years

- Be a Black African woman, not those of European origin, or Asian groups
- Have immigrated to New Zealand within the last five years and have been living in the country for a minimum of two years prior to the start of the study
- Be able to communicate in English during a one to two hour interview
- Be aged more than 16 years and less than 60 years
- To not be refugees
- People need to currently living in North Island

What will happen in this research?

We arrange an interview at a place and time that is convenient for you. You may have a support person or people present if you wish, but you need to answer the questions yourself. However, you do not have to answer all the questions, and you may stop the interview at any time. If you wish, you are welcome to begin and end our session with prayer. With your permission, I will audio-tape our conversation, which will last between 90-120 minutes and also take some notes during this process. I will then have the interviews typed out and I will send two copies to you. One which you are welcome to comment on and then return to me the other is for you to keep if you wish. After this, I will analyse all the interviews, looking for information, which will place your experiences in the context of your culture location and times. There will be theoretical information about the research processes and the reason why I chose to do this research this way.

What are the discomforts and risks?

You need to be aware that you will be talking about personal experiences in your life, and this may cause strong emotions. There is a risk that you may get so involved in telling your story, that you will tell me things that you wished you had not shared with me.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

You have the right to tell me to delete these parts of your story. You can choose to withdraw your interview up until I begin to analyse the text.

If you are interested to be part of this study, it will be important that you think in advance how you will cope with any strong emotions, which you may feel as a result of telling your story. For example, you may have supportive friends and family. You may also make use of a free counselling session from (AUT Health and counselling) so you can talk to someone about issues which may come out of the interview.

What are the benefits?

This study will give you the opportunity to share your experiences from your point of view. People often find this a very empowering experience. The study will provide insight into the pertinent issues regarding the psychological experience of female African migrants and highlight the difficulties experienced by these women during their transition to New Zealand. It will increase community awareness, both at local and national government level, pertaining to the issues faced by new immigrants and the need for the development of appropriate support services.

This research will be the first among few regarding the subjective experience of indigenous

black women from Africa in New Zealand. This research will highlight the women's strength, resilience, resourcefulness, and the community networks used in coping with immigration issues.

How will my privacy be protected?

All participants will be protected by confidentiality. I will be the only person who will know your identity. You will choose fictitious name and only be known by that name. Your privacy can also be protected by choosing a time and place for the interview which suits you. For the purpose of qualitative research analysis, I may discuss with colleagues a portion of what you have told me. I will not reveal your identity to my colleagues, who are also bound by confidentiality.

All the information that you have given me during this process will be kept in a secured place. Your tapes, the computer disc used during the study will be kept in a locked place.

Following the study, my supervisor is required to keep all the information in a secured place at the Auckland University of Technology for 10 years, and it will be destroyed. If you withdraw from the study, your information will be destroyed immediately. You need to know that even if you use a fictitious name during this study, I cannot guarantee your anonymity, because of the nature of narrative methodology where your personal stories will be quoted in the thesis, it is possible that someone who knows you will recognise your story.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

The main cost of you participating is your time. I appreciate that your time is given voluntarily. I am happy to interview you in your home if that can be a quiet place and is convenient for you, if not; we can decide together a venue which you would be comfortable to use. If you sustain any other costs relating to the project we can discuss appropriate reimbursement.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

If after thinking about the information on this sheet, you would like more information, or are interested in being part of my research, I would be delighted for you to leave a message for me at TEL 0800626252 ext 7148, or email listed below and I will contact you.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

Thank you for reading this information sheet and considering being a participating my study. I have included with this information the consent form, kindly complete this and use the stamped address envelope to post it to the address given below.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

If you would like the opportunity to receive feedback on results of the research this can be arranged and will be discussed with you at our initial meeting.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project

Supervisor,

Jan Wilson

Counsellor Health, Counselling & Wellbeing Akoranga

Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Health Studies

Auckland University of Technology

Private Bag 92006

Auckland 1020

Phone: 099219999 Ext 7808

E-mail: jan.wilson@aut.ac.nz

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTECH, Madeline Banda, *madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz*, 921 9999 ext 8044.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Researcher Contact Details:

Adesayo Adelowo

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E-mail: jan.wilson@aut.ac.nz

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 20 October 2008,
AUTEC Reference number08/207**

Appendix C

Consent Form



Project title: The Psychological adjustment of African migrant women living in New Zealand: A narrative study.

Project Supervisor: Jan Wilson, PhD

Researcher: Adesayo Adelowo

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated, 15th July 2008
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐

Participants Signature.....

Participants Name:.....

Participants Contact Détails (if appropriate):

.....

.....

.....

.....

Date:

***Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 20 October 2008
AUTEC Reference number 08/20***

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Appendix D



MEMORANDUM

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

To: Jan Wilson

From: Madeline Banda Executive Secretary, AUTEC

Date: 20 October 2008

Subject: Ethics Application Number 08/207. **The psychological adjustment of African migrant women living in New Zealand: a narrative study.**

Dear Jan

Thank you for providing written evidence as requested. I am pleased to advise that it satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) at their meeting on 8 September 2008 and that the Chair of AUTEC has approved your ethics application. This delegated approval is made in accordance with section 5.3.2.3 of AUTEC's Applying for Ethics Approval: Guidelines and Procedures and is subject to endorsement at AUTEC's meeting on 10 November 2008.

Your ethics application is approved for a period of three years until 20 October 2011.

I advise that as part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTEC:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/about/ethics>. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 20 October 2011;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/about/ethics>. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 20 October 2011 or on completion of the project, whichever comes sooner;

It is a condition of approval that AUTECH is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTECH approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are reminded that, as applicant, you are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

Please note that AUTECH grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to make the arrangements necessary to obtain this.

When communicating with us about this application, we ask that you use the application number and study title to enable us to provide you with prompt service. Should you have any further enquiries regarding this matter, you are welcome to contact Charles Grinter, Ethics Coordinator, by email at charles.grinter@aut.ac.nz or by telephone on 921 9999 at extension 8860.

On behalf of the AUTECH and myself, I wish you success with your research and look forward to reading about it in your reports.

Yours sincerely



Madeline Banda

Executive Secretary

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: Adesayo Adelowo adesayo.adelowo@manukau.ac.nz

Appendix E

RESEARCHER SAFETY PROTOCOL

This research requires that I undertake interviews at participants' home. I am aware that I might be exposed to some risks during this process. To minimize such risks I need to make suitable arrangements for my safety. Such arrangements to ensure my safety are outlined below.

BASIC PROTOCOL

- I need to carry with me an AUT student identity card.
- I need to have a comprehensive knowledge of the area in which the participant resides.
- I need to have a mobile telephone and phone cards (for areas with poor mobile reception). This would ensure communication between myself and my supervisors, colleagues and participants.
- There is need for me to maintain a visit schedule as well as a personal diary as a means of logging visits. The visit schedule sheet would be made available to my supervisors and colleagues who are monitoring my visit.
- I am aware that I should not carry large amounts of money or valuables with me.
- If I feel uneasy about conducting a home visit on my own, I will ask a colleague to accompany me.
- It is essential for me to obtain information about where I am visiting before the visit and to ask how many people will be at the visit.
- Risk assessment-I need to ensure that there is opportunity to feedback relevant information from a lone visit- for example if I felt at risk or if there was an incident. This should be formally recorded and reviewed with my supervisors and other members of my team to ensure appropriate follow up action is taken to minimize any risk in subsequent visits.

PRE VISITS

- There is a need for me to make and keep pre- arranged appointments, and notify the participants if I cannot keep them.
- I will arrange to conduct interviews during daylight hours.

When visiting the home of participants, the visit schedule sheet would be completed and this information would be left with a nominated colleague who has formally agreed to monitor the duration of my visit. It is important to ensure that my nominated colleague is available on the phone and contactable by me for the duration of my visit.

The information that I need to provide on the visit schedule sheet would include:

- The name, address and telephone contact for where the interview will take place. I will take care about interviewee confidentiality.

- The time of the appointment, when I expect the visit to be completed or the time that I expect to contact my nominated colleague to let them know that my visit safely completed.
- State the make, model, colour and registration of the car I will be driving and the route I will be taking.
- Contact my nominated colleague if I am late for my appointment who will note this on the visit schedule sheet.

Though I will provide the above information on the visit schedule sheet, it would be important for me to leave my mobile telephone switched on during the interview.

I will prepare myself for difficult meetings by finding out everything I need to know before arriving and planning in my mind how I am going to deal with the situation.

DURING A VISIT

- I will not enter someone's home if did not feel comfortable or safe.
- I will not to enter a house if the person I have arranged to see is not there. I will be aware of, and maintain, personal safety at all times during the visit.
- I will always explain my research role clearly to the participants and the conditions of confidentiality.
- If the participant is anxious, I will encourage them to have a friend/relative within sight/ hearing.
- My safety is the primary concern, which should be placed above completion of research tasks

HOME VISITS

- I will let my nominated colleague know if I am arriving late for my appointment, who will record the revised time on the visit schedule sheet.
- When visiting people's home, I will let the tenant lead the way and avoid being the first to go in to any room. I will make sure that the exit from the room is clear.
- Animals in the home: If I am unsure about the behaviour of animals in the home, I will ask for it/them to be locked away while I am visiting.
- I will not undertake an interview in the bedroom.
- I will not give my personal telephone number or address to interviewees.
- I will not interview anyone who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- A professional and friendly attitude would be adopted but I will avoid over familiarity with the participants.
- I will remember that the interviewee may also feel anxious about the interview and my visit. I will bear this in mind while also ensuring my own safety.

AFTER A VISIT

- It is my responsibility to phone my nominated colleague as soon as I have completed the home visit.

- It is the responsibility of the nominated colleague to ensure s/he is available to receive a call and monitor the time when the visit should be over. If circumstances change, h/she should arrange for another colleague to monitor the visit.
- If the interview is still in progress as the deadline for contacting my supervisors /nominated colleague approaches, I would excuse myself and call my nominated colleague to inform him/her.
- If the deadline passes and I had not contacted the nominated colleague, the nominated colleague should ring my mobile telephone number.
- If there is no answer, the nominated colleague should inform my supervisors immediately and ensure the police are informed immediately.

EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

I intend to meet with my supervisors after home visits to discuss any issues arising from an interview.