Challenges Faced – Implications for Policy:

The Everyday Lives of Eastern European Women

in New Zealand

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the everyday lives, aspirations, and coping strategies of seven Eastern European immigrant women in New Zealand who came from Bulgaria, the former Eastern Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, and Slovakia. The answers to the research questions aimed to contribute to the deconstruction of the invisibility and marginalisation of these women in New Zealand.

Guided by the philosophies of Kaupapa Māori Research; the theory of Human Wellbeing; and the theory of Positive Psychology, and using the methods of narrative inquiry, three interviews were conducted with each participant. The focus of the first interviews was to learn about the everyday lives of research participants in their countries of origin. The second interview explored the reasons of relocation to New Zealand, the settlement process, and how women re-established their lives in their new locations. In the final interviews women talked about their current everyday lives and their plans for the future.

Interviews were recorded and summarised in interview summary reports which research participants modified in collaboration with the researcher until a final version was achieved. In addition, women participated in two focus group sessions. The first session was devoted to establish connections among the participants and allow themes to emerge from their conversations. The second group session aimed to explore areas women struggled with in their lives the most: relationships and employment opportunities.

The study yielded contributions to the research topic, to the acculturation literature, and to the design of research with migrants. Firstly, it revealed both negative and positive aspects of the participants' everyday lives and highlighted some under-researched cultural differences from the mainstream population.

Women highlighted as an important cultural difference their strong preference for straightforward communication which was often experienced as offensive and blatant by local New Zealanders. Research participants critiqued the necessity of networking to obtain jobs in New Zealand which is a clear obstacle for a newly arrived migrant.

This study also highlighted how the acculturation process is more individual and complex than conventional models have sought to explain. While traditional acculturation literature suggests that migrants go through some common patterns during their settlement that ideally leads to their assimilation to the host culture, in this research not all migrant women intended to assimilate. Indeed, those with a stronger wish to become part of the host culture reported more disappointments than those who embraced their cultural otherness as a positive aspect and did not mind reminding different from the dominant Pakeha culture.

Finally, for migrant studies a less common research design was applied by using the Kaupapa Māori framework. This philosophy proposes a research process that empowers immigrants to voice their needs and strengthen them as agents of their lives beyond the research process. While two strength based theories were used for data interpretation (the 3-D model of the Human Wellbeing Theory and the PERMA model of Positive Psychology), the data analysis revealed that both models showed some limitations by failing to incorporate the dimension of spiritual and physical wellbeing within their domains.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was devoted to learning about the everyday lives of Eastern European migrant women in New Zealand from their own perspectives and to contribute to the deconstruction of their invisibility and marginalisation. When my chief supervisor, Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora, at the Māori & Psychology Research Unit (MPRU), offered me the opportunity to take part in the *Everyday lives of women in New Zealand* research project by exploring the everyday lives of Eastern European women, I had some ambivalent feelings. On one hand, being a Hungarian migrant myself, it sounded very exciting to engage with migrants from my geographical neighbourhood. On the other hand, as the number of migrants from Eastern Europe is relatively small in New Zealand, I wondered whether the research topic would be regarded as 'significant enough' to warrant a doctoral thesis. Coming from a professional background in business, I was used to working with larger data sets that enabled making generalizable conclusions. This time, the requirement was to focus only on a small number of research participants and go into depth instead of width – which required from me the development of a very different mind-set. Immersing myself in the everyday life research was a truly transformational experience and one that enhanced my ability to pay special attention to details in people's life stories, which is one of the cornerstones of the psychological discipline:

> If you want to know me, then you must know my story, for my story defines who I am. And if I want to know myself, to gain insight into the meaning of my own life, then I, too, must come to know my own story. I must come to see in all its particulars the narrative of the self – the personal myth – that I have tacitly, even unconsciously, composed over the course of my life. It is

a story I continue to revise, and tell to myself (and sometimes to others) as I go on living. (McAdams D. P., 1993, p. 11)

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

In our age of globalisation—with its significant ecological, economic, and societal challenges—more and more people make the decision to relocate to another country. While traditionally women used to accompany their male partners or family members, according to Sorensen (2004), more and more women have migrated independently since the 1980s. The reasons for this phenomenon are multifold: changes in gender policies and relations, both in home and host countries; gender-selective demand for certain jobs; new economic and social challenges as well as opportunities for women (Badkar, Callister, Krishnan, Didham, & Bedford, 2007). However, as these authors suggest, "Despite the growing significance of the global feminisation of migration, including the feminisation of labour-market-related migration, this area has received little research or policy attention in New Zealand" (p. 3).

Looking at immigrants through the discipline of psychology, learning about and having a better understanding of their everyday lives is recognised as inevitable for proper diagnosis and treatment. According to Højholt and Schraube (2015), a shift in the conception of everyday life within the discipline of psychology occurred in the last decades, moving away from the researcher's or therapist's standpoint on the everyday life of a subject towards exploring the subjective perceptions and viewpoints of the individual:

> By structuring research through the experiences and involvement of human subjects, the complexity and problematic nature of everyday life can be dealt with more consistently. As a result, it becomes possible to explore what the world means for human life through everyday living and consider how this can be transformed for the better. (Højholt & Schraube, 2016, p. 2)

In line with these deliberations, this research project was devoted to learning about the everyday lives of Eastern European migrant women in New Zealand from their own perspectives. The study was undertaken as part of the research programme *Everyday lives of women in New Zealand* directed by Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora and Dr Bridgette Masters at the Māori & Psychology Research Unit (MPRU) at the University of Waikato.

The goal of this chapter is to provide background information about the research topic and research questions. First, this chapter will address some problems in the context of the wellbeing of migrants from Eastern Europe and describe the purpose and significance of this research (Chapter 1.1). Next, an overview about how the thesis is organised will be provided (Chapter 1.2). The positioning of the researcher will be addressed in Chapter 1.3 followed by an explanation of certain terms used in this research (Chapter 1.4). Throughout the thesis all chapters will close with a summary section (here Chapter 1.5).

1.1 Problem setting

As the title of the thesis indicates, this study explored the everyday lives of migrant women from Eastern Europe who have mainly arrived in the skilled migrant category in New Zealand since the end of the Cold War (1989). Throughout the thesis, the term Eastern Europe will be used to refer to countries which were classified as Eastern European due to their foreign political and economic ties to the former Soviet Union during the period of the Cold War between 1947 and 1991 (Figure 1.1):

Figure 1.1. Map of Eastern Europe.
Source:
http://goeasteurope.about.com/od/introtoeasteuropetravel/ig/Maps-of-Eastern-Europe/Map-of-Eastern-Europe.htm Photo Credit: Digital Vector Maps; Public Domain

While nations and cultures perceive each other as different on the European continent, upon arriving in New Zealand they become part of a melting pot often referred to in New Zealand statistics merely as 'other Europeans'. This term signals both a presumed sameness of all non-British Europeans as well as a lack of interest in who they are due to their relatively small numbers. 'Other Europeans', in general, are implied in immigration policies as a group that fits in and fades in relatively seamlessly to the mainstream Pakeha society. However, anecdotal evidence and the few studies conducted with people from Eastern Europe show that migrants from this region encounter more challenges in becoming part of the New Zealand society than is generally assumed (e.g. Maydell-Stevens, Masgoret, & Ward, 2007;

McIntyre, 2014). This will be covered in more detail in the literature review in Chapter 2. Besides their perceived political and economic insignificance, migrants from Eastern Europe have also reported experiences of not being 'Western' enough when applying for jobs in their (often academic) professions due to coming from countries from the Eastern side of the one-time Iron Curtain. At the same time, when approaching organisations supporting ethnic people, some of them found that they were not 'ethnic enough' due to their white skin colour. While generally the term 'ethnic' is used for all people who are of a different culture from the mainstream, when it comes to practical support in New Zealand (probably due to the scarcity of resources), the term was often restricted to the eligibility of individuals whose skin colour was not white.

Concerning the wellbeing and mental health of smaller migrant groups in New Zealand, the Minister of Health acknowledged in *Te Tāhuhu: Improving Mental Health 2005–2015: The Second New Zealand Mental Health and Addiction Plan* that:

> …there is no national strategy or policy to address the mental health issues of the full range of ethnic groups living in New Zealand. Building stronger relationships with people from diverse cultures and ethnic groups will be essential as we work towards developing strategies to address their particular needs. (Minister of Health, 2005, p. 1)

In line with this call, a study on Russian migrants' psychological and sociocultural adaptation challenges was conducted by Maydell-Stevens, Masgoret, and Ward in 2007 which revealed that there is a considerable struggle going on under the surface which has, so far, remained both publically and academically unaddressed. Hence the authors suggested that "future research should target small constituencies among the migrant population of New Zealand whose problems and

cultural specifics are often overlooked or under-rated due to their small numbers, but whose diversity contributes to the New Zealand national identity" (p. 195). My research sought to follow this call in the hope that it would be able to occupy some of the gaps identified by gaining insights into the everyday lives of, until to now, less visible migrants from the Eastern European region.

Seven women from seven different Eastern European countries participated in this research by talking about their journeys and lives in individual interviews and two group sessions. Their countries of origin were: Bulgaria, former East-Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, and Slovakia. Table 1.1 shows the number of people who identified with these ethnicities during the last New Zealand census in 2013 (a subdivision of Germans into former East and West Germany was not possible):

Table 1.1

Number of People from the Countries of Research Participants in New Zealand

Ethnic origin:	Bulgarian	German	Hungarian	Polish	Romanian	Serbian	Slovakian
Number:	570	12,810	1,368	2,163	1,452	1,059	300

Source: Statistics NZ, Census 05. March 2013

As the numbers show, these communities are indeed quite small in New Zealand and they are, probably apart from Germans, quite easily overlooked as distinct cultures. This research aims to provide more visibility for these groups by learning about how the seven women made sense of their immigration experiences in hindsight, how they live their everyday lives in New Zealand, and what hopes

they have for the future. A second important aim of the research was to empower and support the research participants by listening to their stories, and paying attention to their concerns and needs. Furthermore, comparing and contrasting the outcomes of the research with those conducted with other ethnicities, including the indigenous Māori population, might identify some common needs in the areas of education, employment, and social services of minoritised groups. Building a joint platform can provide a better chance to be heard by policy makers than if minorities voiced their issues separately.

Finally, by using philosophical and theoretical perspectives from different cultures as a framework and strategy—the Kaupapa Māori framework, the theory of Human Wellbeing as well as the theory of Positive Psychology—this research also sought to contribute to the field of research methodologies by discussing how this unique combination contributed to a greater understanding of the topic, and supported a culturally sensitive and empowering research to the benefit of all stakeholders involved.

1.2 Thesis Overview

The goal of this section is to familiarize the reader with how the thesis is structured and provide a brief summary of each chapter.

Chapter 2: Literature Review discusses literature on pre-migration, migration, and acculturation in general, and takes a position concerning the advantages and disadvantages of various acculturation models. This is followed by introducing international and New Zealand research on the everyday lives of migrants which identified the de-skilling of skilled migrants as a central problem. While literature on Eastern European migrant women is still limited, some relevant studies for the thesis topic will be identified. Subsequently, literature on Māori and

migrant interactions will be discussed and research on migrant mental health presented.

Chapter 3: Research Design starts by discussing the reasons for using Kaupapa Māori Research, the theory of Human Wellbeing, and the theory of Positive Psychology as the philosophical and strategic frameworks. Next, literature on narrative inquiry as the chosen methodology is presented and the case study design described in more detail. Information about the recruitment of participants, data collection and data analysis procedures as well as ethical considerations are also provided. This chapter closes with a short introduction to each research participant.

As the titles from *Chapter 4 to 8* reveal, instead of discussing the research participants' everyday lives thematically, disregarding time and space, a chronological approach was chosen which identified themes within each life sequent:

- *Chapter 4: My Life Before Coming to New Zealand*

- *Chapter 5: My Journey to an Imagined Society*

- *Chapter 6: My First Year in New Zealand*

- *Chapter 7:My Everyday Life in New Zealand*

- *Chapter 8: My Insights and Plans for the Future*

The advantage of the chronological approach was that it allowed a logical flow of the narratives which corresponded with how these women told their stories from past over present to future plans. This approach is also justifiable psychologically since, to be able to comprehend people's present aspirations and struggles, understanding their cultural background, values, and life experiences is inevitable. Another advantage of the chronological method was that it was not necessary to stick to certain themes through space and time as it allowed the

emergence of new themes and the dropping of old ones according to their significance for the main milestones in the research participants' narratives.

Chapter 4: My Life Before Coming to New Zealand, seeks to explore how the research participants perceived their lives in their home countries in hindsight. Relationships with friends and family, academic and professional aspirations, and everyday life in general were the main themes that emerged from the women's narratives. As these aspects contribute significantly to people's identity and self-concept, the information gained in this chapter provides an important background to understanding the differences between past lifestyles, expectations, and actual everyday experiences of the research participants in New Zealand.

Chapter 5: My Journey to an Imagined Society seeks to answer the following three questions:

- How did the idea to move to New Zealand emerge?

- What preconceptions did women hold about New Zealand?

- How were final decisions and preparation for their relocations made?

As literature on the pre-migration phase shows (e.g. Tabor & Milfont, 2011), the migration process starts well before people actually begin their journeys. Their attitudes to relocation to a new culture, their thoughts and feelings about leaving their families, and their readiness to give up social connections, status, and employment significantly influences their expectations about their future homes and everyday lives.

Chapter 6: My First Year in New Zealand is a collection of narratives on the women's experiences upon their arrival. The first year abroad is usually regarded as quite a stressful period both in good and bad terms. This is the time when dreams become, or fail to become, realities; when basic needs such as housing, secure income, and education for children need to be re-established, and

first impressions are developed during interaction with the local population and the institutions of the state. Migrants also need to learn and understand new customs; expectations towards them; and, even those who already speak English, need to find out how language is used and interpreted differently from what they are used to. While all these require an extremely large amount of energy from migrants, they usually still need to take care of what is happening to significant others left behind and to inform them about their new lives.

Chapter 7: My Everyday Life in New Zealand discusses into how the research participants experienced and made sense of their lives at the time of their interviews. Some of the women have lived in New Zealand for over 15 years while others less than five. This also makes a difference to their present perceptions of where they are in their personal journeys. In this chapter, the women will talk about their weekly routines, language use (mother tongue and/or English), maintaining relationships to their home countries, and their social connections to Pakeha (locals of predominantly British background), other migrants, and Māori. Women were also keen to talk about challenges they still straggle with and the coping strategies they use to improve their everyday lives.

Chapter 8: Insights and Plans for the Future can be interpreted as a stock take by the research participants at the time of their interviews about how satisfied they are, in hindsight, with their decisions to move to New Zealand; the good and bad aspects of their everyday lives now; whether they plan to stay here, move back or move to somewhere else; and their plans for the future. This last chapter is partially based on individual interviews and partially on two focus group sessions with some of the research participants.

The purpose of *Chapter 9: Conclusions and Implications* is to synthetize the main findings and to discuss the contributions to, and implications for, further

research. This will be done by revisiting the Kaupapa Māori Research guidelines, as discussed in Chapter 3, and assessing how they were implemented during the research process and how research participants felt about the research environment created by these guidelines. The second part of the chapter will synthesize the women's narratives through the lenses of the theory of Human Wellbeing and Positive Psychology. This is followed by discussing the implications for mental health service providers, policy makers, and migrants from the Eastern European region. Finally, the limitations of the study are presented and suggestions for future research provided.

1.3 Positioning of the Researcher

As the reader learnt from the *Preface* to this study, I am an immigrant woman originally from Hungary. This has a significant impact on my research since it has influenced my curiosity and engagement with the research topic, and with the lived experiences of the research participants who came from the same geographical and socio-political region. Many authors of the studies which are discussed in *Chapter 2: Literature Review* were migrants themselves (e.g. Tabor, Milfont, Maydell-Stevens, and Bürgelt). They found that their own experiences as migrants were positive assets during both data collection (e.g. engagement and rapport building with research participants) and data analysis. This is congruent with my personal experiences.

On the other hand, I needed to pay special attention not to seek validation for my own migrant experiences during conversations with the interviewed women and to maintain my open-mindedness as far as possible. Here I am deliberately not using the expressions 'neutrality' or 'objectivity', since "Social science has to wrestle with the problem of human beings creating explanations about themselves

and their society when they are part and parcel of that society" (Smith 1998, as cited in Denscombe, 2009, p. 91). As suggested by Denscombe (2009), those conducting research in social science should adopt a 'stranger's viewpoint', that is, to remain open-minded in order to make sense of other people's life events and/or narratives. Additionally, researchers should report about their own significant life experiences, social values and assumptions, and look for alternative explanations to understand the phenomena they investigate (Denscombe, 2009). Such self-disclosure helps the reader to understand both literally and symbolically where the researcher is coming from and what issues or life events may have shaped their interest to approach the topic from a certain angle. With these thoughts in mind, the relevant milestones of my story are described next.

Coming from an Easter European country, having lived in three different countries as a foreign student before relocating to New Zealand 14 years ago, and being married to my German husband for over 20 years provided me with rich multicultural experiences. It seems that both my husband and I, although from two very different countries from Eastern and Western Europe, can tick off most of the positive pre-migration characteristics suggested by Bürgelt, Morgan, and Pernice (2008): exposure to different cultures during our childhood, being and hosting exchange students, learning foreign languages since primary school, travels abroad, and having parents who are open minded and interested in other cultures.

Growing up in Hungary

I come from a small Hungarian town where four different ethnicities interacted with each other: Hungarians, Russians, a significant Roma population, and a similarly significant population of German Danube-Swabians. The Hungarians mainly lived in the town itself, at the outskirt of which was a Russian

military camp with blocks of flats and a Russian school for the wives and children of the soldiers. At another suburb the population was mainly Roma who came to work in town and whose children we went to school with. Next to our town, in an independent village, lived the Swabians with their own kindergarten and primary school run partially in German. The peaceful coexistence and interactions of these four cultures in this small town often led to mixed marriages in all sorts of variations, and living with someone from another culture has fascinated me since this early period.

My idea to move to New Zealand emerged quite early, when I was 13 and heard about how military equipment was stationed in bigger and bigger quantities on both sides of the Iron Curtain. I decided that when I had enough money, I wanted to live as far as possible from anything that would turn nations or ethnicities against each other and where everyone was a migrant. My childhood goal was to visit New Zealand before I turned 30. I left home at the age of 14 to become a boarding high school student in a bigger town which had a bilingual German-Hungarian high school where several subjects, such as history and geography, were also taught in German. I wanted to study foreign trade which would allow me to travel and at the end of high school I won a scholarship to study economics in Germany.

Seven Years as a Student in Germany

I moved to East Germany in 1989, which was the year of the political and economic transformation of the region and the fall of the Berlin Wall. It was a very exciting period to witness and live through. During my first four years in Germany, I mostly kept close friendships with Hungarians and people of other ethnicities, but not with Germans. The German students and adults I encountered appeared to me quite uptight in comparison to Hungarians, and I kept this assumption until the last

year of my studies, at the end of which I planned to return to start working in Hungary. In the last year of my studies, I met my husband, an adventurous West-German psychology student who was among the first West Germans to come to study in the 'wild East'. We married two years later and, upon my keen interest, we selected New Zealand as the destination for our honeymoon. We travelled for six weeks around the country and tried to imagine how it would be to live here. We liked Christchurch the most due to its European-style historical buildings which reminded us of our home towns and its beautiful, natural environment, and decided that after gaining work experience and saving some money in Europe, we would return there.

Back to Hungary for Six Years

After seven years as a student in Germany I wanted to return for a couple of years to Hungary before leaving for New Zealand. I had several reasons: we found it important that my husband learnt Hungarian so he would understand my culture and be able to interact with my family and friends. It was also important for me to enjoy some years with my family, friends, and relatives before moving to the other end of the world. A final consideration was that, when I received my scholarship to study in Germany, I was sent there in the hope that I would return and work in Hungary. Although there was no obligation to do so, for me it was a moral question to spend the same number of years working in Hungary as my country had supported me for as a student.

Life in Hungary was great for us as a young couple: I worked for a German business consulting company and was paid according to West-German tariffs, which was a significant amount at that time in Hungary. My husband was immediately hired as a human resources manager by a German company in

Hungary. The positive professional start allowed us to buy a nearly new family house within a year without any mortgage, to travel, and to enjoy a rich cultural life. We planned to have two children before relocating to New Zealand to allow grandparents to enjoy some time with them before we would leave. Our son was four and our daughter one year old when we decided to move.

It was not an easy decision and was pushed to a large extent by me. Reading about the immigration requirements at that time we figured that, if we postponed our application, we might earn fewer points in the age category. For my husband the question was why we should go when we have everything: good jobs, nice home, children, friends, and family. For me it was more a question of giving up a dream without having tried to make it happen. Finally, we agreed that we could return any time, thus we had nothing to lose, and even if things did not work out to our satisfaction, we would interpret this period as a unique life experience. With this mind set we gave ourselves six months in New Zealand to decide whether we want to stay or to leave.

Dreams and Realities in New Zealand

While we found much pleasure in the beautiful natural environment, our hearts sank when we moved into our first rental property in 2003. It looked very run down in comparison to what we were used to, even as students, in Germany and Hungary: the house had no insulation, double-glazing, or heating. While we learnt that this was the standard in New Zealand, it was often a topic of conversation with other migrants how 'Kiwis' - as the locals like to call themselves - could be satisfied with unhealthy, cold homes. After we got our residency status we bought a house and upgraded it with double-glazing, European style central heating in each room, and insulation, as we regarded these features necessary to feel ourselves at home.

My husband's degree from Germany, upon which he was registered as an organisational psychologist in Germany and Hungary, was not accredited by NZQA: despite its internship and thesis component it was assessed as equal to a New Zealand bachelor's degree level qualification only. We found this unjust, but my husband decided not to put further study and money into a local accreditation. His MBA degree from the United Kingdom (UK) was accepted. I had similar experience with my five-year economics degree from Germany which, despite an intensive internship and thesis component, was accepted at bachelor level only. I also hold two master's degrees which entitled me to start my first PhD study at the Canterbury University.

Having a four-year-old and a one-year-old child with us, I wanted to be a full-time mother for two more years and study while at home with the children. It took my husband over 40 applications to find a job in his area of profession and, although he used to work as a human resources manager before, he accepted a step back in a supporting role. His colleagues and supervisors realised his potential and one year later he became a manager again. While my husband felt accepted by his local colleagues, in the first years he experienced some cultural challenges: it disturbed him when colleagues did not keep mutually agreed deadlines, it took them much longer to make decisions than in meetings in Hungary, and local employees avoided direct confrontation as far as possible.

As reported by many other migrants, our first friends were compatriots. We did not mind this as keeping both the Hungarian and German language with our children was important to us. While we sought to establish connections to German families with children as well, we were less successful as most of them already spoke English with their children, which we wanted to avoid. My first connection to Māori was through the local play centre which I went to with my second and,

later, third child who was born in Christchurch. We learnt flax waving and I very much enjoyed sitting with the women in a circle and listening to their stories about symbols, ancestors, and everyday life.

As we kept speaking only German and Hungarian at home, I realised after two years that, while I understood everything, due to my strange accent I felt very handicapped when speaking: I first learnt English in Germany from a South African woman. I decided to join a drama course at a theatre company because I knew this way I would be forced to speak, even on stage in front of people. I spent two great years there and later also completed training in film and television production.

When we think and talk about our lives in New Zealand, the Christchurch earthquakes in 2010 and 2011 have a significant place in our stories. We often mention whether something happened before or after the earthquakes. Our house became badly damaged and our suburb was one of the most badly hit in the city, so we decided to leave Christchurch as it no longer provided the lifestyle which made us move there initially. The question arose whether we should move back to Europe in order to be closer to our parents and relatives, and also to provide our children with another cultural and educational experience. Finally, we decided to stay in New Zealand. Some of the reasons for this were the high level of bureaucracy in Europe, the likelihood of having longer commuting times between homes, workplaces, and school, and the lack of available part-time work in our professions, which we got very fond of in New Zealand. As many 'earthquake refuges' of this period, we were looking for a geographically safer area and a smaller city with a university and good high schools. This is how we arrived in Hamilton in August 2011.

Here we were again, hunting for jobs and houses. My husband found a job in his profession within two months; however, with three children I wanted to work

part-time only in the first year, until they could settle in their new environment. Having been trained in foreign trade and policy as well as in change management, I was confronted with the fact that most relevant jobs were in Auckland and Wellington and even those were full-time jobs. Based on my positive experiences in supporting people during the earthquakes and having completed a diploma in life coaching, I thought this might be a field worth immersing myself in professionally. After volunteering for Life Line, Victim Support, and Refugee Resettlement I decided to start from scratch and retrain in psychology. The volunteering experiences and participating in multicultural events allowed me to quickly make myself known in the migrant community and establish a feeling of belonging. Both we and our children felt very welcomed by schools and different agencies in Hamilton and this helped us to reassure ourselves that it was a good decision to settle down here.

Our encounter with Māori people in Hamilton is more frequent than it used to be in Christchurch. My husband completed a one-year study of Māori language and culture while I have done a bicultural psychology paper and a one-year diploma in Māori mental health. Being one of two migrants among sixteen Māori and no Pakeha students was a very interesting and rewarding cultural experience. When I thought about conducting academic research in psychology, it was quite logical for me to approach the Māori and Psychology Research Unit first since most of the mental health service users are Māori in New Zealand.

Parallel to my studies I had some part-time jobs in the mental health sector. At one, although I was hired due to my life coaching diploma and experience working with earthquake refuges, I was only allowed to stay back in the kitchen and wash the dishes after a sudden change in the management. It was quite a strange and disheartening feeling not being allowed to do the work I was hired for despite

my relevant degrees and work experience. My husband suggested I spend no more than three months there unless I could do more meaningful work. Finally, after a yoga instructor left, I was allowed to hold classes in Tai Chi, which I practised myself although I had no qualifications in it. To make my job more fulfilling, I incorporated life coaching elements into my group sessions which were well received by the service users. While I developed good relationships with colleagues, the management showed clear signs of not allowing me to progress professionally. I had a more positive experience with other agencies I worked for where I was given similar responsibilities to that of senior colleagues after the first months. Although my negative professional experience lasted six months only, it taught me to understand how skilled people can feel shut down and forced to do jobs that make them question their identity and undermine their self-esteem and wellbeing.

Concerning our feeling of belonging to New Zealand society, while we feel at home and integrated thanks to our jobs, even after 13 years we do not feel we are locals or Pakeha. We feel we are migrants, as do our older children. The third child, although born here, states that she feels she is a mix of three cultures. We still speak German and Hungarian at home, and none of our children talk in English with us or with each other unless having non-Hungarian friends over. We kept most of our mixed German and Hungarian values and customs and took on some local customs as well. We keep visiting Europe every second or third year and our overseas relatives and friends come to visit us in other years. Using Skype regularly to see our parents and to allow them to talk with their grandchildren became part of our everyday lives.

As for the future, while we plan to spend the majority of our working years in New Zealand, we sometimes think about how it would be spending a couple of years back in Europe after our children have grown up. We would like to encourage

them to spend at least part of their student lives in Europe to broaden their horizons and strengthen their multicultural competence. In the end, our children will decide for themselves where they would like to settle down, as my husband and I did for ourselves. Next, my position towards the theoretical framework will be presented.

Encountering the Guiding Philosophies of the Thesis

My first academic encounter with Māori research paradigms took place during my undergraduate psychology studies at Massey University in 2013. Taking papers such as Tirohanga Rua o te Taha Hinengaro: Bicultural Perspectives in Psychology, Social Psychology, Health Psychology, and Forensic Psychology opened the door to a very rich and often misunderstood and under-appreciated culture. Subsequently, I came to the conclusion that I needed to learn from Māori and be among Māori students to gain a deeper understanding of Māori values and world views. I felt very privileged when my application to study Māori health and mental health was accepted by Anamata, a Tūhoe tertiary education provider, since I was one of two Tauiwi among 17 Māori students.

My exposure to positive psychology came through various informal, non-academic channels when reading about strength-based psychological approaches in my capacity as a life coach and addiction counsellor. It seemed that the values incorporated in the philosophical framework of positive psychology can be well aligned with the Kaupapa Māori framework. (See more about this under Chapter 3: *Research Design*.)

Finally, I encountered the theory of Human Wellbeing only in the second phase of my research period, when I started analysing the interview summary reports. Interestingly, while doing the preparatory literature review to the research topic, this theory did not 'pop up' initially. As themes emerged from the narratives,

they prompted me to look for literature in domains I had not considered before as relevant such as the concept of whiteness or that migrant experiences can be explored more successfully with less known theories than some of the classical and widespread acculturation models.

1.4 Operational Definitions

Acculturation: This term has been defined in many different ways by scholars for the last hundred years. Most recent theories and interpretations will be discussed under Chapter 2.2. Synthetized from the acculturation literature (for example Berry, Kim, Power, Young, & Bujaki, 1989; Berry J. W., 2005, 2008; Bourhis, Moise, Senecal, & Perreault, 1997; Collie, Kindon, James, & Podsiadlowski, 2010; Friedman, Dyke, & Murphy, 2009; Matsumoto & Juang, 2008; Sam & Berry, 2006; Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010), acculturation refers in this thesis to the psychological and socio-cultural adjustment process that migrants go through during interaction with agents of their new cultural environment in order to feel settled and at home in their host country.

Eastern European women: unless otherwise specified, this term refers to the research participants in this research only and not to women who live in the Eastern European region in general.

Ethnicity: Statistics New Zealand defines ethnicity as "a measure of cultural affiliation, as opposed to race, ancestry, nationality or citizenship. Ethnicity is self-perceived and people can belong to more than one ethnic group" (Statistics New Zealand, 2015). Further on, the following characteristics of group members are listed by the same source, based on the work of Smith (1986):

Members have

- a common proper name for their group;

- one or more elements of common culture which need not be specified, but may include religion, customs, or language;

- unique community of interests, feelings and actions;

- a shared sense of common origins or ancestry, and

- a common geographic origin.

Everyday life: This term refers to the "daily activities, habits, routines and personal arrangements of things and social relations" people carry out "in and across a multiplicity of spaces and contexts (home, work, educational institutions, shopping venues, recreational arenas, digital spaces, etc.)" (Højholt & Schraube, 2016, pp. 1-2).

Home country: The country of migrants' origin which they leave to establish themselves in another country.

Host country: The country migrants choose to move to for the purpose of settling down long-term.

Migrant and immigrant: These two terms are used interchangeably and refer to people who relocated to another country with the intention of settling down.

New Zealander, locals, and Kiwis: These terms are used by research participants interchangeably and refer to New Zealand citizens born in New Zealand.

Pākehā: While originally this term was used in reference to people of European origin by the indigenous Māori, today it is often used to refer to any people with white skin colour. In this research, it will be used to refer to people of European origin who are at least 2nd generation New Zealanders.

Tauiwi: This term refers to all non-Māori in New Zealand in this research.

1.5 Summary

This chapter introduced the topic of the study. References were made to some literature to underpin the purpose and significance of undertaking this research such as the statement of the Minister of Health (2015) about the necessity to learn more about smaller migrant communities in order to enhance their health and wellbeing.

Next, the structure of the thesis was reviewed which provided a brief summary of each chapter and explained the reasons why the thesis was built this way. I also reflected on my double role as a researcher and an Eastern European migrant woman and how I sought to address this throughout the research process. I provided insights into how I came across the different theoretical philosophies that guided the research and shaped my learning during the research period and beyond. Finally, terms that are often used differently in various pieces of literature and everyday discourse were defined to explain how they are interpreted and applied in this study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

During the 13 years I spent as a migrant woman from Hungary in New Zealand, I experienced several times that the general public has very limited understanding about the Eastern European region, in general, and about migrant women from this area, in particular. Common misconceptions I encountered were that these countries were, or are, part of Russia and that the language of their inhabitants is Russian. Those who held some more accurate knowledge often mentioned the Polish refugees during the Second World War and the Hungarian refugees following the uprising in 1956. The most contemporary information people had about this region was that some of the countries joined the European Union and about some international achievements in sport. Migrants from Eastern Europe who I met during these years reported similar experiences. Thus, for the purpose of this study, I was keen to explore the contemporary academic awareness of women (or migrants) from Eastern Europe in New Zealand with a special focus on the countries my research participants came from. Since such literature is very scarce, I broadened my literature review to studies about Eastern European women as migrants in other countries, as well as to other migrant women's experiences in New Zealand. As this is not a historical, economic or political study, literature with such focus on the Eastern European region was not systematically reviewed and it was incorporated only where special background information was necessary to inform the reader about the context of the narratives. Another goal of the literature review was to learn about migrant and host country interactions, in general, and about migrant settlement experiences in New Zealand, in particular. Here again the review was extended to relevant oversees studies without the aspiration of incorporating all migrant studies in general, but to focus on those about Eastern European women. Special attention was paid to models that were developed to

explain the difficulties of settlement processes and the societal context, possible reasons, and power imbalances behind them.

With these considerations in mind, this chapter starts with reviewing the acculturation literature and the concept of minorities and whiteness. Next, literature on migrant women's everyday lives is reviewed followed by research on migrants' mental health. To provide local context, the goals of New Zealand settlement policy and literature on migrant-Māori interactions will be described next. Finally, based on the insights received from the literature review, the research questions will be presented.

2.1 Acculturation Literature

Pre-migration Phase

Tabor and Milfont (2011) differentiate between macro and micro factors that affect people's lives and may generate their desire to move. Although the most often cited macro factors are political and economic reasons, the issue of safety both in regard to crime and extreme climate or environmental hazards plays a more and more important role in people's decision to migrate. Concerning micro factors, according to a recent study on reasons for migration, the motives are increasingly multifold in comparison to 30 years ago: "Social processes, neighbourhood characteristics, and lifestyle are important forces in the migration process and are, in combination with employment opportunities, the underpinning of changing places." (Clark & Maas, 2015, p. 65).

As Tabor and Milfont (2011) point out, most cross-cultural studies about voluntary migration are concerned with the last stage of the migration process only, the acculturation. Most probably because this is the stage when there is a chance to 'compare and contrast', a vital element of such studies. The acculturation of migrant

people, however, is greatly influenced not just by circumstances they encounter in their host countries but also by what they leave behind. Thus aspects such as motivations, expectations, cultural identities, family and relationships, and personality have great impact on how a person settles into a new cultural environment (Bhugra & Becker, 2005). Following an ethnographic research approach, Tabor and Milfont (2011) observed and participated in three online discussion forums for British migrants to New Zealand over a period of two months before, during, and after settlement in their new homes. Using thematic coding methods when reviewing posts they identified the main themes and developed a "Migration Change Model" to describe the pre-acculturation phases of migration (Figure 2.1):
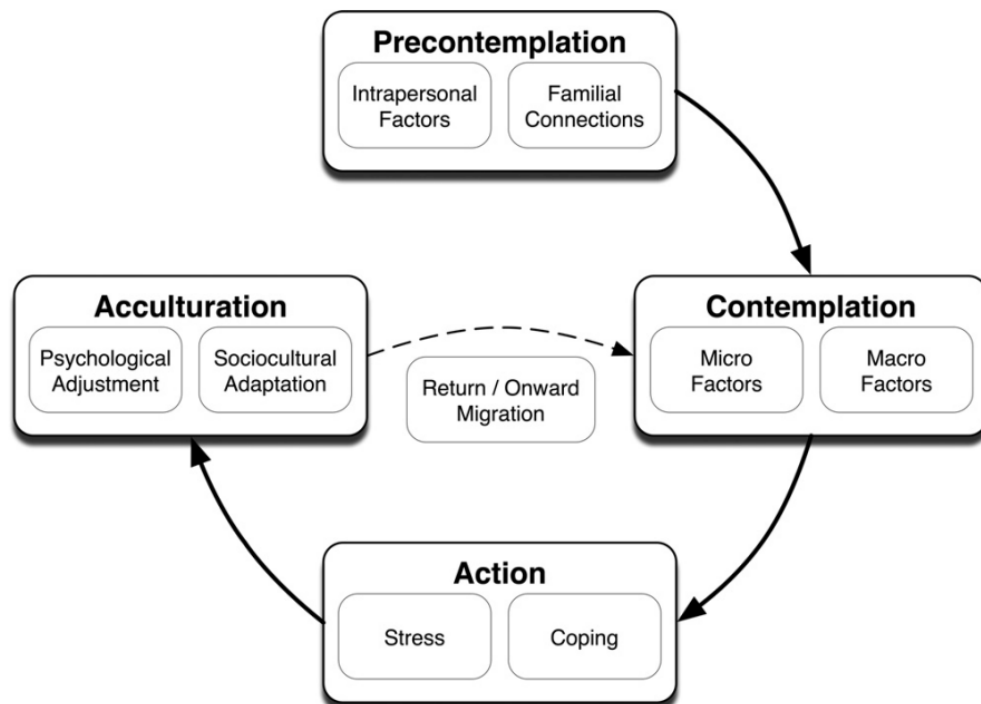
Figure 2.1. Migration Change Model. *Source:* Tabor and Milfont, (2011, p. 828)

The authors concluded that intrapersonal factors such as novelty seeking, openness and curiosity concerning other cultures, as well as familial connections (whether both partners want to move or not, whether children are involved or dependent older relatives, etc.) all play a crucial role in how the attitude toward migration is formed, and the settlement process managed and experienced. These findings have been echoed also by Bürgelt, Morgan and Pernice (2008) in their study on *Pre-migration influences on the migration process of German migrants to New Zealand* that included four German couples, who decided to stay in New Zealand and four German couples who decided to return to Germany.

Coming back to the *Migration Change Model* (Figure 1), the second step is the contemplation phase during which macro factors such as safety and the political and economic situation of the receiving country are often taken into consideration. At the micro level, the desire for a better life style (not necessarily equal with more income) dominated. In the study by Bürgelt et al. (2008) especially those research participants with children looked forward bringing up their children bilingually.

The third step of the *Migration Change Model* is when action is taken. Migrants' feelings of stress can peak during this phase especially due to different degrees of uncertainties and unforeseen challenges. Here, coping strategies (for example social connections, personality traits, past experiences) play a crucial role in the migrant's sense of settlement experience (Tabor & Milfont, 2011). How people experience this stage has an impact on their acculturation later which is defined here as psychological adjustment and sociocultural adaptation. According to Bürgelt et al. (2008), those German couples whose decision to migrate was encouraged and supported by friends and family at home could cope with the challenges faced upon arrival in New Zealand easier than those whose decision to migrate was not understood in their country of origin. Whether both partners wanted

to migrate or one of them was a follower made a further important difference to the couple's experience and sense making of their migration (see more under section Acculturation below).

Similar observations have been made by Maydell-Stevens, Masgoret and Ward (2007) who studied the acculturation difficulties of Russian migrants (N=6) through semi-structured interviews. They found that, based on Berry's *Acculturation model* (1997) which will be discussed in more detail under the section *Acculturation*, participant's acculturation strategy fell either into the category of integration or separation. Integration was selected by those who have made their own decision to move New Zealand, and who stayed open to retraining and re-qualifying. They had more chance to secure full-time employment and to socialize with the host society (Maydell-Stevens et al., 2007, p.193). Those who associated their migration to New Zealand with duty or self-sacrifices made for their families or partners had more difficulty adjusting to the new cultural environment.

Cultural Identity

Cultural identity develops through the interaction with the social and physical environment we are born into, where people share common values, beliefs, customs, understandings, and norms (Marsella & Yamada, 2000). As we change our physical and social environment, however, new impulses affect us through contacts with people from other cultural groups. As a result, we might modify some aspects of our cultural identity by accepting new norms or changing certain parts of our values and understandings. Such a negotiation of cultural identity is not merely an inward process as it affects both people we maintain connections with from our primary culture as well as people we interact with in our new cultural environment (Collie, Kindon, James, & Podsiadlowski, 2010). From a psychological point of

view, being aware of the cultural identity of a person is quintessential to truly understanding the emotional response that a person may have in relation to their own cultural group(s) (values, expectations) and to the dominant culture in which they live (Bhugra & Becker, 2005). The psychological and physical wellbeing of people is greatly influenced by the extent to which they are able to live according to their cultural identity, including opportunities for "cultural expression and cultural endorsement within society's institutions" (Durie, 2001, p. 54). Some features of cultural identities are visible such as wearing a traditional dress (external identity), while others remain more hidden (internal identities) such as moral considerations (Durie, 2001). While it is possible to list a number of determinants that influence cultural identity (e.g. upbringing, religion, education), it is not the scores in these categories but it is the individuals themselves who decide the extent of their affiliation with one or more cultures (Jensen, Arnett, & McKenzie, 2011).

Cultural identity should also be considered as a person's dynamic characteristic which may vary over time according to social interactions and experiences (Sussman, 2000). Accordingly, some people have multiple cultural identities and easily practice a "cultural frame switching" (Matsumoto & Juang, 2008, p. 343). Others may make strong positive "cultural reaffirmations" while living in a different culture for a long time, but it is also possible for some to experience cultural "identity denial" by people of the same culture (Matsumoto & Juang, 2008, pp. 342-343). Such identity denial can occur when a cultural group does not accept someone who identifies with them as one of 'theirs'. This might be due to the person's different skin colour or due to them marrying someone of another faith or cultural group.

Acculturation

Acculturation occurs when individuals or groups are permanently exposed to a new cultural environment which requires a certain degree of psychological and social-cultural adaptation from them in order to manage their everyday lives (e.g. Bourhis, Moise, Senecal, & Perreault, 1997; Matsumoto & Juang, 2008; Tabor & Milfont, 2011). According to these scholars, while psychological adjustment occurs upon the meaning making of subjective experiences, socio-cultural adaptation refers to the adjustment of behaviour and ways of living as far as deemed to be necessary to the norms of the dominant culture. In this respect the cultural identity of migrants plays an important role (see section above on cultural identity).

Concerning theories on acculturation, studies often refer to the 'Culture-shock' or 'U-curve model' by Oberg (1960) and/or Berry's four category 'Acculturation Attitudes' model (1991). According to the culture shock or U-curve model of acculturation (Oberg, 1960), migrants experience a honeymoon-like period characterised by euphoria about having made it so far and positive expectations towards the future upon arrival at their chosen destination. They are excited about new occupational opportunities, meeting new friends, and having a chance to accomplish something they could not achieve in their earlier lives (Friedman, Dyke, & Murphy, 2009). Most migrants have an expectation of facing some difficulties and possible misunderstandings with locals initially but picture themselves mastering the hurdles usually within a couple of months after their arrival (Friedman, Dyke, & Murphy, 2009). If things do not work out as planned or take significantly longer than anticipated due to unexpected challenges, the honeymoon period can gradually dissolve into frustration and disillusion which is often referred to as culture shock or confrontation representing the bottom of the 'U' (Friedman, Dyke, & Murphy, 2009). A move upwards on the 'U' symbolises

successful adjustment and reorientation which ideally leads to reconstruction of identities, understanding of cultural differences, and regaining autonomy and satisfaction in the migrant's life (Hodgetts, et al., 2010). However, a move along the 'U' is neither automatic nor proportional: depending on the interplay of multiple contextual factors influenced by the host society as well, some migrants shift back and forth between the stages or never reach the last phase of reconstruction and acculturation (Figure 2.2):

Figure 2.2. Culture shock or U-curve model. *Source:* El Said, 2006.

Berry's Acculturation Attitudes model (1997) describes how migrants may respond to two questions concerning their acculturation, namely maintaining their cultural identity and maintaining links with other groups (Berry, 1997, 2001, as cited in Collie, Kindon, Liu, & Podsiadlowski, 2010). Based on their answers, the model proposes four different outcomes for acculturation: integration, assimilation, separation, or marginalisation (Table 2.1):

Table 2.1

Acculturation Attitudes Model (Berry, 1997)

Acculturation attitudes		Is it considered to be of value to maintain cultural identity and characteristics?	
		YES	NO
Is it considered to be of value to maintain relationships with other groups?	YES	Integrated	Assimilated
	NO	Separated	Marginalised

According to this model, if migrants manage to maintain their cultural identities while interacting efficiently with the dominant culture, they are considered as integrated into their host society. On the contrary, if they do not find it important to interact with other ethnic group(s), they separate themselves and it can become increasingly difficult to build bridges to mainstream society. Individuals who thrive towards immersion in the host culture and only weakly identify with their culture of origin can be described as assimilated. Those who neither manage to build bridges to the host culture nor maintain relations to their cultures of origin experience a sense of marginalisation.

The outcomes of research undertaken by Collie, Kindon, James, and Podsiadlowski (2010) with young Assyrian women in New Zealand found, however, that instead of belonging to one category or the other, the level of acculturation is rather a question of careful negotiation according to the situational

context of the migrant person (N=122, 400 hours of participatory ethnographic work). Thus, depending on their social and environmental milieu, individuals may feel and verbalise more or less identity with their own culture or with the dominant culture. This phenomenon is described as mindful identity negotiation (Ting-Toomey, 2005) and refers to the need of people to receive approval and acceptance from those with whom they live, socialise or work. On the other hand, depending on personality traits, such identity negation is not easy and not perceived as acceptable by everyone.

While Berry's original model has been widely used and adopted in the acculturation literature, some researchers criticised the model due to its clear cut clusters, arguing that, in reality, these categories often overlap with each other and are influenced by host and migrant community expectations as well (Schwartz & Zamboanga, 2008). According to Bourhis, Moise, Perreault, and Senecal (1997), migrants do not leave their home countries with the intention of becoming marginalised in their host countries. Rather, if they feel or become marginalised, it is seen as the result of failed attempts to get accepted by the dominant culture. The authors also report that an increasing number of migrants think more individualistically and cosmopolitanly, and as they move across countries, even if they settle, they do not necessarily want to adopt a certain culture. Such migrants may take on only some features from diverse cultures while rejecting others (Van Oudenhoven, Ward, & Masgoret, 2006). The length of this adaptation can also vary, depending on how long migrants feel that the new customs enhance their wellbeing (e.g. cooking differently, dressing differently, working faster or slower than accustomed to adjust workplace climate).

Bourhis et al. (1997) modified and extended Berry's model with five acculturation orientation attitudes of the members of the host society: assimilation,

integration, segregation, exclusion, and individualism. Those from the host society who support integration propose a multicultural society where people can maintain their own cultural practices while adopting some aspects from the dominant culture. The proponents of segregation prefer to separate people of other cultures from the majority culture. Those in favour of assimilation expect migrants to give up their own cultural heritage and take on the culture of their host country. Citizens who support the exclusion of migrants consider them dangerous to their society, mostly fearing the intrusion of different cultural and religious values in their culture and the loss of jobs and other economic and societal privileges to migrants. Lastly, citizens of host societies with an individualistic orientation towards migrants suggest that "there is no one right way to manage identity issues as individuals should be empowered to adopt any strategy that they see fit" (Van Oudenhoven, Ward, & Masgoret, 2006, p. 642).

Berry's updated acculturation model (Berry J. W., 2005) goes beyond his initial model by acknowledging that acculturation is a two-way process between migrants and the larger society. Thus, the outcome of interactions among the members of these groups is also influenced by the quality of relationship the dominant culture seeks to uphold towards ethnic minorities. Accordingly, host societies can pursue the strategy of multiculturalism, segregation, melting pot or exclusion.

History and contemporary news provide many examples on how the mismatch between the expectations of migrants and that of the dominant group in a host society can lead to societal and political conflicts, and even lead to violent clashes between them. Thus, before making any judgements about the ability and willingness of migrants to integrate or acculturate into the host society, an analysis

of its citizens and policy makers' attitudes and practices towards migrants is inevitable.

Taking his critique on the concept of acculturation one step further, Rudmin (2006) proposed the complete move away from its presentation as an ideal or beneficial status for migrants to achieve. According to him, claims of researchers in favour of acculturation are not supported by robust data from interviews or surveys with migrants. Rudmin (2006, p.1) suggests that

> the community of acculturation researchers is biased and blinded by an ideology, probably the commendable ideology of liberalism, which advocates freedom of choice, tolerance, plurality, and redress of harm. Phenomenological observations that challenge the paradigm include the absence of studies of majority group acculturation, the well-replicated fact that minorities never prefer pure uniculturalism, and the indistinctiveness of cultures, and the predominance of researchers, theory and data from similar Anglo-Saxon settler societies (USA, Australia, Canada).

Thus, Rudmin (2006) advocates for listening to the voice of migrants and letting them determine what circumstances, opportunities, and cultural interactions they find as beneficial. This notion is also supported by Wright (2010) who proposed the application of Human Wellbeing theory in order to focus "attention on what migrants themselves consider necessary to 'live well', and the barriers that stand in the way of achieving their goals and meeting their needs. This approach accents the psychosocial aspects that migrants themselves consider important" (Wright, 2010, p.366). Wright (2012) argues that the material, relational, and perceptual domains in people's lives are strongly interconnected with each other and the quality of these interactions make up people's wellbeing (see also

McGregor (2007) and White (2008)). A holistic approach encompassing these areas is suggested to be especially suitable for exploring the everyday lives and wellbeing of migrants. More detail on Human Wellbeing theory will be provided under Chapter 3 *Research Design*.

After reviewing arguments both for and against the concept of acculturation, and based on personal experiences as a migrant for more than 25 years in different countries, and on insights received by regular interaction with other migrant communities, the author's positioning is the following: Most migrant communities are proud of their cultural heritage which they are keen to preserve and pass on to future generations. However, they also accept that when they leave their doorsteps, they need to adjust to the routines and laws created by the majority in order to get on with their lives. Some of these new customs are adapted from their own cultures, some modified, and some rejected. Nevertheless, the barriers migrants encounter in their host societies have significantly more impact on their settlement experiences than the smaller everyday adjustments.

When aspiring to successful settlement, a far more important role is played by obstacles that hinder migrants in accessing equal opportunities for employment, education, and health care, and which reduce opportunities for social interaction with members of the dominant cultural group. Hence, in this research, instead of assessing research participants on their level of acculturation and interpreting this as a success or failure, the emphasis will be put on learning how research participants view their everyday lives by recalling both factors that supported and that hindered their settlement in New Zealand. As the acculturation literature often refers to migrants as minorities, the concept of minorities will be discussed next.

2.2 Ethnic Minorities and the Concept of Whiteness

The term minority is generally defined as a group of people who show characteristics that are different to the majority of people in their environment. The differences can be various and are not limited to faith, culture, gender, occupation, educational level, political orientation, health status etc. The minority status is usually coupled with less decision making and influence making power. It is strongly related to discrimination in the form of the limited or prohibited access to certain resources in comparison to the opportunities available to the majority group (Feagin, 1984). Although various international protocols and national legislations are in place to eliminate discrimination in any form (for example, the Protocol No. 12 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms; the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; and in New Zealand, the Human Rights Act, (1993), and discrimination and other minority problems remain a significant issue in our contemporary world (Lindstedt, 2010).

Schaefer (2012) emphasises that the minority status is not necessarily coupled with being outnumbered by the dominant group as those in power may be less in number. He lists five characteristics of minorities (Schaefer, 2012, p. 3):

- unequal treatment,

- distinguishing physical or cultural traits,

- involuntary membership,

- awareness of subordination, and

- in-group marriage.

Within minorities, the term ethnic minority refers to a group of people who share common cultural heritage, such as language, food, values in social

interactions, etc., and are of the same national origin (Schaefer, 2012). Literature on power inequalities between ethnic majorities and minorities often speaks about discrimination based on skin colour, putting non-white citizens in a clearly disadvantaged position when seeking educational or occupational opportunities or when seeking social services such as health care or when interacting with the justice system (e.g. Harris, 1993; Lipsitz, 2006; Man, 2004; Moreton-Robinson, 2011; Schaefer, 2012). Ethnic minorities can be both migrants and descendants of migrants (such as multigenerational Chinese citizens in New Zealand), and indigenous people (e.g. the native people of New Zealand, South Africa, and America) whose former living space was occupied and colonised by people of European origin. As part of the colonisation process, those in power sought to establish and maintain supremacy and privilege by providing whiteness with a legal status: "The law's construction of whiteness defined and affirmed critical aspects of identity (who is white); of privilege (what benefits accrue to that status); and, of property (what legal entitlements arise from that status)" (Harris, 1993 p.1725). In the case of New Zealand, although Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi) was established to regulate the rights and responsibilities between iwi Māori and the Crown in 1840, guaranteeing, among other things, Māori property, cultural and social rights, self-governance of iwi and hapū, and equal citizenship rights for the contracting parties, the treaty was severely violated by the Crown (Durie, 1996). The negative consequences for oppressed minorities are well documented in both indigenous and migrant literature, for example loss of identity, loss of property and financial security, high unemployment, segregation, division among members of the cultural group, health and mental health problems, lower educational achievements, and stronger tendency to criminal activity (e.g. Arrigo, 2013;

Draganović, 2011; Durie, 1996; Ho, Au, Bedford, & Cooper, 2003; Lindstedt, 2010; Maydell-Stevens, Masgoret, & Ward, 2007; Wright, 2010).

Samaluk (2014) argues that, while the concept of white privilege grew from American colonial history dividing people into whites and coloured, this traditional concept of white privilege tends to perceive white people as a homogenous privileged group. As such, it often overlooks disadvantaged minority populations within. White people become minorities among others on the base of their sexual orientation, different physical or mental abilities, age, and on their ethnic background if they are different from the dominant group and/or do not fall under the category of white British/American origin:

> The designation "multi-cultural" has, thus far, been reserved for people of colour and ethnic groups other than white…While Whiteness generally carries privilege in European-American contexts, the extent of such privilege depends greatly on principles of intersectionality or mattering. That is, white women and men of different classes, disabilities, and sexual orientations are not equally privileged in equivalent circumstances. (Dottolo and Kaschak, 2015, p.179)

However, despite the shades of privilege within the white group, the whiteness itself still provides advantages for the less fortunate groups in comparison to people with other than white skin colours. For example, when receiving treatment, white people with disabilities or mental health problems often receive faster or higher quality treatment than their non-white peers (Came, 2012). Finally, disadvantaged white people also seek to strengthen their privileges to reach a standard as defined by those most powerful among them. Due to the scarce

resources, such goals can often be only reached at the cost of people with other than white skin colour.

As the New Zealand public perception and media portrayal is still very much influenced by British views and statements, literature on being from Eastern Europe on the European continent will be discussed next. As Böröcz (2001) elaborates, the Eastern enlargement of the European Union since the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989) showed various elements of colonial imperialism, such as the export of governmentality and geopolitical interests and the unequal exchange of economic rights. Based on the ideology of an idealised modern Western state which was made equal to the concept of being European, countries from the former Eastern Bloc were evaluated on different economic and legal parameters to allow them to join the EU. The final goal of this social-politically disastrous process for the future member states was often proclaimed with the slogan 'to return to Europe' in international diplomacy, indicating that these countries were not European enough until they fulfilled the set requirements (Riemsdijk, 2013; Samaluk, 2014).

Concerning the current perception of migrants from the former Eastern Europe in the West, "imagined geographies of the Cold War affect the ways in which migrants from CEE[1] are perceived and treated today" (Riemsdijk, 2013, p. 378).

A review of research on the perceptions and experiences of Eastern European migrants in Western Europe was undertaken by Samaluk (2014, p. 374-375), who summarised her findings as follows:

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[1] CEE: Central and Eastern Europe: This term is used in reference to the former socialist countries on the European continent.

In the UK labour market A8[2] workers are simply referred to as "Eastern Europeans" and defined through the narratives of hard work, high work ethics and their willingness to work without complaint (Anderson et al., 2006; Samaluk, 2011; Wills et al., 2010). Due to their unmarked skin colour they are specifically desired for low-paid service sector jobs (Dyer et al., 2010; McDowell et al., 2007). As a result, A8 workers often face de-skilling, devaluation and racism (Anderson, 2000; Currie, 2007; Downey, 2008; Stevenson, 2007; Wills et al., 2010). They are used by employers to fill less skilled jobs, are more likely to be underpaid, are often utilised for temporary work, and are less likely to be on standard contracts of employment (Anderson et al., 2007; MacKenzie and Forde, 2009; McKay, 2009). (Abbott, Wong, Williams, Au, & Young, 1999)

As this research summary indicates, despite their white skin colour, people from the former socialist states do experience discrimination and marginalisation similarly to migrants with other than white skin colour. At the same time, being a white minority makes these migrants not 'ethnic enough' to claim togetherness with and/or receive support aimed at non-white ethnic minorities. In their attempts to become recognised as European and to belong to the most privileged who set the rules, people from Eastern Europe seek to derive power both from their white skin colour as well as their education and way of working. They often hold multiple degrees, show more endurance, resilience, and flexibility in employment in order

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[2] The term A8 (Accession 8) is often used to refer to the 8 member states that joined the EU in 2004: Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

to get the same or similar privileges as their Western counterparts. Such overachievements in work and/or study cannot only generate a feeling of entitlement to the same privileges but consciously or subconsciously make people from Eastern Europe feel 'more' entitled than other ethnicities with non-white skin colour. This study will also reveal extent to which these assumptions are present in the everyday lives of Eastern European women in New Zealand.

2.3 Everyday Lives of Migrant Women

As research on everyday lives of migrant women is very limited, the following section also incorporates also some research on migrants' lives in general, irrespective of the gender of the research subjects. Everyday activities and routines, such as shopping, visiting the library, getting children ready for school, are equally important in creating the feeling of being at home and belonging to a societal micro and macro environment:

> Everyday life is connected to places where women and men live, work, consume, relate to others, forge identities, cope with or challenge routine, habit and established codes of conduct… (Vaiou & Lykogianni, 2006 p.731)

For migrants, carrying out such mundane activities is especially import as it allows them to develop a sense of control over their lives and helps them to gradually build confidence, which is easily lost in an unknown, not-yet-understood environment. In her book *Being Human, Being Migrant: Senses of Self and Well-Being,* Groset (2013) turns her attention to how migrants need to navigate between two worlds: the one they carried with them to their new homes with its values, memories and practices from their homelands, and the new world which they enter each day when they leave their houses. Living in two distinct but partially overlapping life-worlds encompasses bodily, existential, emotional, and cognitive

domains of migrants' everyday lives. They need to learn new, and relearn previous, patterns of social and institutional interactions, and the outcome of these interactions will greatly influence the development of their identity, feeling of belonging and wellbeing (Groseth, 2013). Additionally, first generation migrants often use the expression 'home' to refer both to their homes of origin and to their newly established homes (Liu, 2013). Thus, they experience a belonging to two spaces.

From a similar angle, a narrative research study undertaken by Wen Li about the wellbeing of older Chinese migrants in New Zealand (2011, N=32) found that the physical 'shifting' of households often means a shift in the dynamics and power relations within families of multiple generations as well. In Chinese families the elders are especially respected and their opinions are sought before making main decisions in a number of family matters. Older parents moving with their children to New Zealand experience a loss of 'status' due to not having the 'knowledge' of what to do and how to function in the new environment. The leading role concerning the everyday routines of a family shifts into the hands of the young adults of the household who speak English and develop connections and experience through work and/or study with the local population. Older Chinese parents and grandparents show resilience by focusing on activities they can carry out with confidence, such as gardening and spending time with grandchildren. Gardening Chinese vegetables has both symbolic and practical significance in their lives: it is an important aspect of their culture that they can continue cultivating in their new homes and, by giving some to the neighbours, it helps to establish a bridge to, and receive acknowledgement from, them. The relevance of this study for my research was that it steered my attention to areas and activities that my prospective research

participants might find less interesting or intriguing to talk about initially, as they seem to be 'just normal everyday routines'.

An important piece of literature about the migration experiences and everyday lives of Eastern European women in the European Union is the anthology *Women Migrants from East to West. Gender, Mobility and Belonging in Contemporary Europe*, edited by Passerini, Lyon, Capussotti, and Laliotou (2010). The essays and biographical narratives explore the experiences of Hungarian and Bulgarian women in the Netherlands, Denmark, and Italy and critically highlight issues around cultural barriers, prejudice, and the disadvantages they experience both in their professional and social lives. Parts of this anthology will be referred to in more detail during the discussion of research participants' narratives in Chapters 4 to 8.

In the paper *Young, hardworking, caring and exploited with a smile: Commodification of Central and Eastern European migrant workers for aesthetic and emotional labour*, Samaluk (2011*)* critically discusses how Western European recruiting companies depict Eastern Europe women in their marketing strategies and turn them into cheap but reliable commonalities. Norton (2001) studied migrants' experiences from a linguistic perspective over a period of twelve months by using interviews, diaries and participant observation. Her focus of interest was how new migrants engaged with members and other migrants in their host societies and what aspects supported or hindered their attendance in language courses. As some of her research participants came from the former Czechoslovakia and from Poland, their stories provided reference points when analysing the narratives of my research participants from these countries. Romocea (2014), a Romanian researcher, undertook research on identity and belonging with Romanian migrants in the United Kingdom. Her study paid special attention to her own influence and

interaction with the research topic and research participants as a migrant researcher from the same ethno-cultural background. Her reflections about the research process and ethical dilemmas were a useful reference point for my own journey as a migrant researcher from the same region as my research participants. In the anthology *Paradoxes of Integration: Female Migrants in Europe*, Anthias, Kontos, and Morokvasic-Müller (2013) collected studies that provided comparative analyses of the experiences of migrant women in eleven European countries. The contributions to this book cover a wide range of topics that affect female migrants' every day such as labour market access, migration policies and restrictions, domestic work, care work, prostitution, as well as the women's responses and coping strategies.

As both anecdotal evidence from migrants I encountered during my stay in New Zealand and the literature refer frequently to migrants' difficulties to having their qualifications acknowledged and gaining employment that corresponds to the level of their skills and expertise, I found it important to review literature with a special focus on such experiences. Deskilling refers to the employment of people below the level of their professional qualifications and/or work experiences by ignoring their skills and abilities in the area of their profession. The reasons for such 'professional gate-keeping' by the dominant culture to can be multifold: the fear of 'others' (lack of trust in migrants' abilities) is as often present as the fear of being found to have inferior skills/knowledge to a migrant employee.

Three Canadian studies echoed similar experiences of migrants with Canadian qualification authorities. Creese and Wiebe (2012) conducted in-depth interviews (N=61) with skilled African immigrants. They found that three-quarters of participants could not find employment in their professions, instead they had to accept low-skilled, low-wage "survival employment" to secure some income.

Finding "survival employment" was especially difficult for women as most of this work is male dominated (heavy lifting, work on building sites, etc.). However, women in the study were more prepared to retrain and secure jobs later with their Canadian education. Still, many women struggled to secure work due to lack of "Canadian experience", "Canadian accents", and "Canadian credentials" (Creese & Wiebe, 2012, p. 68). Similar experiences were shared in an earlier study by Man (2004, N=20), about the deskilling of academic Chinese women in Canada. As one of the participant's said, "… they use professional people to do menial labour. How do you expect us to function well psychologically?" (Man, 2004, p.145)

Finally, the research by Shan (2009, N=21, using life history style interviews) had similar outcomes with previously discussed studies. However, Shan (2009) went one step further by investigating possible reasons behind the discriminative Canadian credential and employment practice. According to her, the goal of the Canadian credential system is to preserve the neo-liberal, market orientated, "patriarchal and white supremacist power" in Canada by creating an expensive and "expansive training market that is instrumental in feminizing immigrant women's labour" (p. 353). Further on, such policies support the oppressive majority by segregating the society to maintain power inequalities (Iredale, 2005).

Turning our attention to migrant employment experiences in New Zealand, anecdotal evidence and the few in-depth studies conducted with migrants often quote slogans aimed at migrants such as "the Kiwi way of doing things", "Do not mend what's not broken" (meaning no improvement is necessary if it is still working, even if it is far from being optimal), and the necessity of having a "Kiwi work experience". These statements are often used to justify employing migrants in lower level jobs and to maintain the power status quo within institutions (e.g.

McIntyre, 2014). While such negative experience is often 'taken for granted' for migrants of non-European origin, as some of the following research shows, non-British European migrants face similar challenges as well.

In the study by Bürgelt et al. (2008) German migrants with highly regarded qualifications and professional positions from their home country found it especially difficult to understand and cope with the rejection or lack of acceptance of their degrees and work experiences. Those who were not willing to 're-educate' themselves by taking expensive academic papers, often at a level below their qualifications, decided to return to Germany or to move to another country. Congruent with these experiences are the accounts of European migrants with various ethnic backgrounds who participated in the study by Tipples (2006): *Half a World Away: Contemporary Migration from the European Union to Canterbury, New Zealand*. Using both surveys (N=52) and in-depth interviews (N=10) with migrants of Dutch, English, French, German, and Hungarian origin, Tipples found that while those who decided to stay in New Zealand were satisfied with their overall lifestyles, they also complained about the initial stress they felt due to limited transferability of their European qualifications and the lack of acknowledgement of their work experiences.

In another study Meares (2010) explored the experiences of South African professional migrant women in New Zealand by using the *Biographical Narrative Interpretative Method* based on in-depth interviews (N=6). Research participants experienced, to various extents, disrupted or damaged careers such as un- and/or under-employment, a move away from full-time to part-time work with less responsibilities and professional stimulus, a complete change of career path through re-training and starting from scratch, and the move from earning enough to care for themselves and their families to becoming economic dependents of their partners.

These experiences correlated with an increase in their domestic responsibilities and isolation from professional and social life. Psychologically, unexpected changes were experienced as "painful shifts in identity, from professional women to house wives" (Meares, 2010, p.479) and from economic independence to dependence on their partners. The struggle between public and private expectations, limitations, and personal desires are additional challenges migrant women have to face in addition to those associated with moving to a new country.

Maydell completed a larger study with Russian migrants (N=20, 2010) by means of in-depth and ethnographic interviews, and media analysis. She found that, despite the fact that skilled Russians came into the country through the professional short list and skilled migrant's scheme which acknowledged their qualification, after becoming eligible to work in New Zealand, the New Zealand Qualification Authority (NZQA) did not accept their qualification. Like many others, they were asked to re-train or change profession. People who participated in the research expressed feelings of disappointment and betrayal by the system. Further in-depth studies of experienced discrimination by and in workplaces in New Zealand are discussed in the article by Carr, Inkson, and Thorn (2005) as well as in the book *The psychology of mobility* edited by Carr (2010).

Besides the master's thesis by Tipples (2006), I could only find one other research study conducted partially with people from Eastern Europe in New Zealand: a doctoral thesis by Nancy McIntyre (2014) on *Acculturation experiences and workplace cultural diversity dynamics: A comparative study of Chinese, Indian and Eastern European migrants in New Zealand*. McIntyre conducted interviews with 30 research participants, of which 10 (5 women and 5 men) came from countries from Eastern Europe, namely Croatia, Hungary, Romania, and ex-Yugoslavia. Interestingly, although the research was conducted recently, the

research participants who came from the former Yugoslavia and were not Croatian either did not specify their ethnic origin (e.g. Serbian or Macedonian) or asked to be mentioned as Yugoslavian. Although the author did not elaborate on this, one reason might be that most migrants from Serbia after the Yugoslav war preferred not to mention where they were from due to the negative reputation and prejudice against Serbians. The outcome of the research showed some differences between the Eastern European migrants and the Chinese and Indian research participants. While Indian and Chinese participants experienced that an open, less formal communication was more encouraged in their workplaces than in their countries of origin, those from Eastern Europe reported that they had to curb down their straightforward manner when addressing issues and behave in a politer and formal manner than what they were used to. All migrants found that the work environment in New Zealand was less stressful and demanding than in their home countries and they experienced more security and less fear of losing their jobs when making mistakes, which happens especially easily in Eastern Europe. Participants reported that establishing relationships with locals would have hardly been possible without their employment. On the other hand, as migrants, most of the research participants seemed to spend their leisure time with people of their own ethnicities or other migrants.

Pio (2005) conducted her study on Indian women (N=12) by using in-depth interviews to reveal ethnic identity and the process of their acculturation. She explored three strands of experience: entry into the world of work; staying in the world of work; and the impact of work experiences on ethnic identity. She concluded that "it takes approximately two years to start integrating experiences and coming to terms with life in the new country as minority ethnic women" (Pio, 2005, p. 1296). Indian women found that the most defining factor in this process is

work: the nature of their work and how they are accepted and appreciated by their work colleagues had a major impact on their personal wellbeing and on the success or failure of their acculturation.

During my literature review I encountered two local, New Zealand Hamilton-based studies. The first, conducted by Philipp and Ho (2010), explored what the term 'home' means for South African migrants (N=6) by using narrative inquiry methods. The phenomenon of being 'home' at two places but with a different emotional connection is a very common experience among migrants. A quote from the study illustrates how this perception is communicated by a research participant in a casual conversation: "At home [in New Zealand] I rather cook like at home [in South Africa], very spicy food" (p. 95). The study also revealed the symbolic and practical importance of bringing certain objects, such as a piece of furniture, from South Africa to New Zealand to create the feeling of being at home while away from home. One of the participants, however, decided to cut all ties to her homeland. She admittedly never felt truly at home in South Africa and never shared the values and accepted the hierarchical societal norms she was born into. Immersed in a less hierarchical society in New Zealand, she felt more at home here than she used to feel in her country of origin (p. 94). Thus acculturation can be lived and experienced very differently even among people of the same cultural background.

The second Hamilton (New Zealand) based study aimed to understand how migrant women (N=11) from 11 different countries made sense of their identity, belonging or not belonging to Hamilton, and how they shared their feelings with each other about their lives (Johnston & Longhurst, 2011). Research participants migrated to New Zealand from South Africa, Singapore, Korea, Iraq, Thailand, Hong Kong, Somalia, Japan, Indonesia, Mexico, and India. The authors applied an

ethnographic action research method by both taking part in the conversation and observing the interaction among the participants. Participants had 11 sessions together in a community kitchen where they took turns preparing food from their country of origin for each other. While conversations started around the recipes and ingredients, they developed further into discussions about customs, history, politics, the process of migration and current issues in the everyday lives of the research participants. Over the research period these ethnic women developed a special bond with each other.

There was a common understanding among research participants in this study (Johnston and Longhurst, 2011) that, while interaction and support among various ethnicities and non-profit organisations is available, it is more difficult to get accepted and included by the mainstream population. Being not accepted or appreciated was experienced at institutions and workplaces where management was in the hands of the majority population (e.g. health care and schools). Thus, the feeling of belonging or not belonging to a place is greatly influenced by the political power sharing of the ruling elite, as well as inclusion or discrimination, justice or injustice experienced during interactions with various agencies (Johnston & Longhurst, 2011, p.330). As a conclusion, the authors pointed to the strong relationship between identity, place, and power in the everyday experiences of migrant women. This research has implications for my planned research as it shows how sharing the food in a common place with each other furthers openness, sympathy, and connections between people. As discussed under the section Methodology in more detail, when conducting the final focus group session with research participants, sharing food from their countries of origin with each other proved to be a positive experience.

2.4 Migrants and Mental Health

Turning to international literature on the mental health of migrants, the comprehensive book "Determinants of minority mental health and illness" edited by Loue & Sajatovic (2009) provides insights into a broad range of issues such as impact of city living on migrants, mental health courts and the rights of minorities, the role of media in stigmatising mental illness, and health access barriers for minorities. While there are a number of studies available on Latin American, African and Asian migrants in the international literature, my aim to find domestic and international research on the mental health of migrants from Eastern Europe was unsuccessful. Only one study has been identified, which was conducted by Draganović (2011), who surveyed the mental health and coping strategies of 200 Bosnian immigrants in Switzerland. While a number of disorders have been identified (stress, depression, anxiety, somatic complaints, insomnia and social dysfunction), participants reported social support as their main coping strategy. This study also found that migrants rather avoid the professional mental health care system.

From a clinical psychological point of view, Abbott, Wong, Williams, Au, and Young (1999) conducted their research on Chinese migrants' mental health involving a large number (N=271) of participants using written questionnaires. They concluded that while most respondents managed to adjust to their new environment without major mental health problems, 19% of the respondents showed diagnosable mental health issues. Migrants' adjustment difficulties and mental health problems are seldom reported and often overlooked or misinterpreted by health care providers. Thus, it is important to pay more attention to these problems and to ask the migrants how they feel during physical health screenings as well.

Ho, Au, Bedford, and Cooper prepared a comprehensive literature review of the mental health needs of Asian migrants in New Zealand for the Mental Health Commission in 2003. They identified the following main causes of adaptation problems: language difficulties, employment problems, disruption of family and social support networks, acculturation attitudes (integration or separation), traumatic experiences prior to migration, and perceived negative attitude from the host society. Migrants often faced various barriers to access to mental health service providers (language difficulties, lack of cultural sensitivity of health care provider, institutional barriers). The authors called for relevant health and mental health related information accessible to migrants prior and upon their arrival in their own languages, as well as raising the cultural awareness of mental health professionals. The lack of cultural competence when treating people of non-Pakeha origin is, like in the educational sector, an example of the self-centred, self-serving attitude of the New Zealand governing elite. Providing professionals with culturally relevant education is not regarded as priority by the decision makers; there is an expectation that everyone needs to adjust to what is here, etc. The same attitude exists with indigenous Māori population in health care.

In their study with Russian migrants, Maydell-Stevens, Masgoret and Ward (2007, p.193) identified the following mental health problems, especially among those who had difficulty findings jobs and coming to terms with a lost social status or acknowledgement of their previous qualifications and professional experience: feelings of hopelessness, low self-esteem, pessimism, feeling of loss and grief, depression, and anxiety. These people felt socially isolated and also perceived discrimination at various levels by the host society. Most people used social support from their own families and friends who migrated with themselves. Those people without extended families in New Zealand had less social support networks to rely

on. Other coping strategies such as "positive thinking, self-persuasion, re-framing and perspective-taking" (Maydell-Stevens, Masgoret & Ward 2007, p.194) were seldom used and only by certain participants. The authors conclude that immigration policies which aim to restrict the settlement of family members and relatives are detrimental for the mental health of migrants by both causing distress and worry about those left at home, and by cutting them off from their support systems. Migrants with language difficulties and without information about the available social and mental health support for them become more isolated and tend to develop more severe forms of mental health problems (addictions and co-existing disorders). Maydell-Stevens et al. (2007) advocate providing migrants on their arrival with a leaflet in their own language that explains stress and resulting mental health problems they may encounter during their settlement, the Western-style mental health support practiced in New Zealand, and a list of agencies (including translation services) they can turn to when needed. While the intention to provide information is well-meant, it illustrates the expectation of the majority that minorities should adapt to their systems.

Most recently, Adelowo (2012) explored the immigration experiences of African women (N=15) using narrative research theory and methodology. She pointed out the big differences between African and traditional Western health and mental health concepts which are the greatest barriers and reasons why migrants of African origin do not seek the help of mental health professionals. Thus acquisition of adequate cultural knowledge and skills for mental health professionals is quintessential to productively supporting ethnic communities.

The *Te Tāhuhu - Improving Mental Health 2005-2015: The Second New Zealand Mental Health and Addiction Plan* acknowledges that

…there is no national strategy or policy to address the mental health issues of the full range of ethnic groups living in New Zealand. Building stronger relationships with people from diverse cultures and ethnic groups will be essential as we work towards developing strategies to address their particular needs (Ministry of Health, 2005b, p.37).

Such needs have been advocated by a comprehensive mental health study on migrants from Asia by DeSouza (2006). As a response, a new initiative was launched by a Japanese counsellor, Kou Kunishige, in September 2013 under the name 'Diversity Counselling New Zealand Trust', which is the first multi-ethnic counselling service in Hamilton and nation-wide. The trust operates as a charity and currently has seven counsellors from different cultures. Being one of the counsellors helps me to receive additional insights into the mental health needs and coping strategies of migrant people.

2.5 New Zealand's Settlement Goals

New Zealand has tailored its immigration policy, especially in the last fifteen years, to attract skilled migrants both to counter skills shortages and emigration of New Zealanders to other countries as well as to balance declining birth-rates. The 2013 New Zealand Census of Population identified that 25% of people were born overseas. According to the New Zealand Immigration Service (2004, as cited in Spoonley, Peace, Butcher, & O'Neill, 2005, p. 86), the following six goals should be achieved for migrants, refugees, and their families to allow them to settle successfully and to lead a satisfied life:

1. Obtain employment appropriate to their qualifications and skills;

2. Become confident using English in a New Zealand setting or be able to access appropriate language support;

3. Access appropriate information and responsive services that are available to the wider community (for example housing, education and services for families);

4. Form supportive social networks and establish a sustainable community identity;

5. Feel safe expressing their ethnic identity and be accepted by and become part of the wider host community; and

6. Participate in civic, community, and social activities.

However, the study by Henderson on settlement experiences of migrants in New Zealand (2004) showed that even skilled migrants with competent language skills experience most difficulties in achieving Goal 1: an employment appropriate to their qualifications and skills. The lack of adequate employment undermines the desired social participation of migrants, since "Employment provides the income, status, and leisure time for social activities" (Henderson, 2004, p. 3) where migrants would have the chance to interact with locals and develop a feeling of belonging to their new home. The following list describes the main employment related problems identified in Henderson's study (2004, pp. 2-3):

- While immigration policy continues to target skilled and business immigrants, such immigrants continue to experience difficulties finding employment and immigrant underemployment and unemployment levels remain disproportionately high.

- Skilled migrants experience limited skill transferability and a penalty for being from a non-English speaking background which goes beyond actual English language proficiency to include visibility and accent.

- Underemployment often goes unnoticed among immigrants and may be promoted or exacerbated by settlement programmes where the goal is entry to the labour market, rather than suitable employment.

- Immigrant responses to discrimination in the labour market include: the acceptance of underemployment, involuntary self-employment, "astronauting" (the return of one or more family member to the country of origin to work), onward or return migration, and further education or retraining to gain New Zealand qualifications which further add to the financial burden of migrants.

- Post-migration discrimination, underemployment, and unemployment are related to anxiety, depression, and other health problems. There remains a need for culturally appropriate social services, social support, and health services.

More than ten years have passed since Henderson's study was conducted and the six goals of the migration strategy were developed. However, not much progress could be reported in newer research conducted with migrants (e.g. (Adelowo, 2012; Maydell-Stevens, Masgoret, & Ward, 2007; McIntyre, 2014). Anecdotal evidence collected through my interaction with a wide range of migrant populations over the last 13 years at migrant forums and ethnic cultural events in

Christchurch and Hamilton also did not indicate much improvement. Although the reluctant acceptance of oversees qualifications and work experience was criticised in the studies referred to above as they prevent migrants from entering desired employment, as Figure 2.3 shows, the new Migrant Settlement and Integration Strategy of 2014 seems to emphasise even more the necessity of a so-called "New Zealand ready" qualification to gain relevant employment:

Figure 2.3. Migrant Settlement and Integration Strategy. New outcomes framework for migrant settlement and integration (New Zealand Government, 2014).

The website does not provide further information about when a qualification is regarded as "New Zealand-ready". The six goals from 2004 have been reduced to five, omitting some parts of previous goals and merging or streamlining the rest. Since an important goal of the immigration policy is to attract and retain educated and skilled migrants, the question arises: Why do these groups of migrants need further education and re-training to be able to work in New Zealand? While migrants are used as an extra revenue generator for the education industry, as some

studies (e.g. Henderson A. , 2004; Poot & Stillman, 2010) and anecdotal evidence indicated, obtaining the often unnecessary and expensive New Zealand qualification did not enhance significantly the employment chances of migrants.

To understand the acculturation process and its impact on migrants' health and wellbeing in New Zealand, migrants have increasingly become the focus of academic research due to their growing number in the past ten years. Initiated by the Department of Labour two large-scale (N=715) "Settlement Experience" surveys have been conducted (2005 and 2007) by Research New Zealand about the expectations and life satisfaction of migrants in New Zealand. According to the outcomes of the 2007 survey 9 out of 10 immigrants are highly or very highly satisfied with their lives in New Zealand after the first 12 months of their residency (Department of Labour, 2008). As the literature review before showed, this extremely positive picture was seldom echoed by smaller scale qualitative studies conducted with various ethnicities. One reason might be that migrants in the large scale study were still very much in the initial euphoric or honeymoon stage of their settlement experiences, since the study was conducted 12 months after their arrival in New Zealand. In 2009 pilot surveys were conducted both with migrants and the domestic population to assess migrant's settlement and their labour market outcomes, employers' experiences with migrants, and to receive insights into the attitude of the community towards migrants (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Labour, 2009). A common characteristic of these surveys conducted on behalf of the Government are that immigrants are grouped in five categories only (Department of Labour, 2008, pp. 54-55):

1) United Kingdom/Ireland,

2) ESANA: all other countries from the European continent, and the USA,

3) Asia: North Asia, South Asia, and South-East Asia combined,

4) Other: Africa, Russia, Arabic countries, countries from South America,

5) Pacific area: according to the "Settlement Experience" document (2008) referred to above, Pacific people were put into the group of 'Other' and referred to subsequently as 'Other' since their sample size was "not large enough to conduct meaningful analysis" (2008, p.55).

Migrants from Australia did not feature in any category. The question is, certainly, what can be regarded as a 'meaningful' analysis? If the goal is to learn about the settlement experiences of migrants, their problems, difficulties, and abilities adjusting to everyday life in New Zealand, how can people with such different cultural backgrounds as, for example, Russian, Pacific, African, and Arabic be covered in one category? Similarly, are various very distinct ethnicities under the second group (ESANA), such as people from the Balkan countries, supposed to have similar attitudes, needs and aspirations as people from the USA or Scandinavia?

To better understand the needs of ethnic minorities and raise awareness of the problems they face, the Department of Internal Affairs set up the Office of Ethnic Affairs (OEA) which provides policy advice to the government, information and networking opportunities for ethnic communities, and various diversity and intercultural dialogue promoting training and events for employers. Additionally, both the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) office have policies that target the assistance, monitoring, and prevention of discrimination and disadvantages based on ethnic origin, faith or cultural belonging. While a deeper policy analysis would fall outside the scope of this research, the agencies indicate the growing awareness of ethnic minority problems at institutional levels.

2.6 Migrant –Māori Interactions

While investigating the relationship between migrants and the dominant host society is important, it is of equal significance to understand the development of relationships between migrants and the indigenous Māori population: How do contemporary migrants interpret the Treaty of Waitangi for themselves? What are their perceptions of Māori people and what connections do they cultivate with them? My attempt to find literature in this context was less successful, resulting in just a couple of studies. They highlighted the fears and negative attitudes of Māori respondents towards migrants and New Zealand's immigration policy due to the losses suffered from both historical and contemporary colonisation practices (Ward & Masgoret, 2008). As both Māori and ethnic people are disadvantaged, both groups seem to compete for the scare resources held in the hands of the Pakeha government. The authors stress the importance of reinstituting and securing the rights, position, and societal role of the Māori as indigenous people of New Zealand as a prerequisite to establishing a multicultural society. Other studies looked at the development of relationships and perceptions between Māori and Chinese people (Ip, 2007; Liu, 2009). Liu concluded that the negative representation of Māori in Chinese media is less based on negative personal encounters between the two ethnicities, it is rather due to taking over and translating news from the mainstream Pakeha media, where Pacific and Māori people are often depicted negatively.

It is also worth exploring how migrants receive their first information about the indigenous population. If they look up general information about New Zealand on the internet prepared by governmental bodies and tourism corporations, they will find that Māori and Pacific people are depicted to underpin an exotic, traditional cultural flair of New Zealand. According to Olsen (2009), who looked at both websites and prospectus made by Pakeha but also by Māori tourist enterprises, one

cannot find Māori people in pictures illustrating anything modern and technically advanced. Such photos usually portray white people dressed in middle class dress or young white tourists. As the author states, "…it is still difficult to imagine that tourist brochures will include images of Māori sitting at their word processors!" (Olsen, 2009, p.182). While such a one-sided portrayal of the indigenous population is discriminative, Māori enterprises also seek to market their people as genuinely traditional and something different from the mainstream. Thus, before the first real encounter, immigrants learn about the exotic, traditional culture of Māori, and upon arrival they hear about the high crime and unemployment rates of this population. It will be interesting to learn about the perceptions held by Eastern European women about Māori.

2.7 Research Questions

This literature review revealed some significant gaps concerning knowledge about the aspirations and everyday lives of Eastern European women in New Zealand. They are often referred to in large-scale surveys as 'other Europeans', and the general perception is that, due to their white skin colour, they must not encounter any special issues settling into their new environment. To explore to the extent to which these assumptions are true and contribute to closing the knowledge gap about these migrants, the following research questions have been developed:

1. How was the everyday life of research participants in their countries of origin?

2. How did their idea to move to New Zealand emerge?

3. How is the everyday life of research participants in New Zealand in comparison to their hopes and aspirations?

4. What coping strategies did these women develop to overcome difficulties and challenges?

5. What theoretical contribution can be made from the experience of using Kaupapa Māori Research paradigms, the theory on Human Wellbeing, and the theory of Positive Psychology with migrants?

By answering these research questions this thesis seeks to raise awareness of this group of migrants by revealing their aspirations, strengths, resourcefulness, and needs as well as the special challenges they encounter in their everyday lives.

2.8 Summary

Both international and New Zealand literature presented in this chapter showed similarities concerning the barriers and difficulties immigrants face during their settlement process. Issues such as integration or separation, non-acceptance of overseas qualifications and work experience, and difficulties accessing culturally appropriate mental health care have been mentioned most frequently. The most widely used coping strategies were family and peer support. Apart from studies on Māori and Chinese interactions there is a lack of research on the relationships and connections between migrants and the indigenous population. Setting the scene by providing some insights into the discrepancies of the immigration policy aimed at skilled migrants was necessary to enable the reader to put the narratives of research participants in context and to understand how their every life was affected by these policies even years after their immigration. Only two researches were found in New Zealand that had some participants from Eastern European countries and provided them with the opportunity to talk about their migration experiences.

The literature review also raised some important questions concerning the nature of the New Zealand institutional system and its regulations in the areas of

health, education and employment. My readings on migrants' experiences, compared with my readings from psychology papers taken in 2013 (social, community, and health psychology, Nga tirohanga rua o te taha hinengaro: Bicultural perspectives in psychology), revealed many similarities between the experiences of these migrants and other ethnic minorities such as Māori, Chinese, and Pacific people.

Summing up the most relevant methodological insights of the literature, it seems that studies with a qualitative design using in-depth-interviews in combination with some sort of ethnographic observation provided the richest data about the experiences and sense making of people about their lives as migrants. These findings led me to explore narrative enquiry as a possible research method for my thesis (see section under Research Methodology).

The theoretical paradigms discussed under the section on acculturation directed my attention to theories that follow a holistic interpretation of lived experiences and attempt to explore the everyday lives and wellbeing of migrants from a strength-based perspective. These considerations led me to use the Wellbeing theory and the theory of Positive Psychology as analytical frameworks for the research participants' narratives. From a cultural perspective and also influenced by the authors' keen interest in learning about Māori research frameworks, the Kaupapa Māori Research paradigm was chosen as methodological guiding principle (see more under Chapter 3 on Research Design).

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN

The first three sections of this chapter familiarise the reader with Kaupapa Māori Research, the theory of Human Wellbeing, and the theory of Positive Psychology, all of which provided philosophical guidelines for the study. Subsequently, a detailed description of methodology will be presented and ethical considerations discussed. Finally, the seven research participants will be introduced with a summary of their biographical data to provide context for the data analysis in the second part of the thesis.

3.1 Philosophical and Strategic Frameworks

The aim of this study was to provide insights into the everyday lives and psychological coping strategies of Eastern European women in New Zealand. The everyday life of ethnic and cultural minorities is interwoven by frequent negotiations between different identities and belongings as they interact with different spaces, times, and people (Wright, 2011). While they still feel a sense of belonging to their communities in their home countries and to the person whom they used to be at home, they learn to develop a new identity as migrants and seek to establish new belongings to different communities in the host country. This requires them to make compromises between their old and new self, and the self they envision becoming after their successful settlement (Bhugra, 2004). Such compromises happen in interaction with the dominant culture as responses to situations, opportunities, and restrictions. They can cause significant stress since migrants experience it as a partial loss of whom they were, are or intended to become in order to comply with the rules and expectations of the dominant culture. As this research sought to empower participants by creating a space where they

could freely talk about the struggles and compromises they made across time and space, I wanted to use a theoretical framework which would contribute to this aim. From an ethno-cultural perspective, as a native of the research participants' geographic region, I understand that the value system in Central and Eastern Europe is a special mix of collectivism and individualism (Krzysztof & Tornquist-Plewa, 2011), which certainly does not mean that there isn't any diversity across individuals values within these societies. For this reason, I was keen to work with a theoretical framework that would allow me to respect this duality during my interaction with the research participants. Based on these considerations, the three main strategic and theoretical frameworks of the study will be presented next.

Kaupapa Māori Research Framework

Breaking with the tradition of choosing only Western psychological theories when conducting research on and with people of European origin, I decided to incorporate a local indigenous approach as a set of guiding principles: the Kaupapa Māori research philosophy. Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi) was signed by Iwi Māori and by the Crown in 1840 to share the rights and responsibilities in New Zealand's governance (Glover, 2002). The Crown's breach of the treaty and its ongoing colonisation practices undermined the core principles of the treaty, namely partnership, protection, and equity. The establishment of legal, institutional, and educational systems which were one-sidedly based on British traditions to protect the Crown's and its white population's interests made the self-determination rights of Māori Iwi and Hapū impossible (King, 2007).

To counteract especially cultural and educational oppression, Kaupapa Māori emerged as a strategic and political response of a broader movement since the 1980s: "Māori academics began to challenge the way that certain knowledge

was established as legitimate and the way that other knowledge, like Māori knowledge, was not viewed as legitimate; they also challenged the exploitative nature of much research on Māori" (Walker, Eketone, & Gibbs, 2006, p. 332). Due to these reasons, the Kaupapa Māori movement called for research undertaken by Māori researchers with Māori research participants in the interest of Māori (Smith, 1999 as cited in Walker, Eketone, & Gibbs, 2006).

Since neither the researcher, nor the research topic or the research participants in this research are Māori, the question arises whether it was appropriate to reach out for this philosophy in the first place. It is important for me to acknowledge that as a non-Māori, migrant researcher my knowledge about the complexity of this epistemology is limited. Attending an academic training in Māori health at a Tūhoe tertiary education provider, Anamata, in 2014 provided my first experience of how Kaupapa Māori philosophy could be implemented in research and education. When I approached literature to learn about how Kaupapa Māori research can be defined, I found not one but many interpretations which, as I learnt to understand, all add, shape, and contribute to its ongoing development (e.g. Bishop, 1999; Mane, 2009; Pihama, 2001; Smith, 1997). As reported in these studies, views about whether Pakeha researchers should be involved in research related to Māori differ. However, there is a common understanding that Kaupapa Māori research seeks to address the multiple forms of oppression that exist. These include oppressions based on race, class, and gender, in all their many forms, and which includes analysis of these forms as they exist in a context of colonisation. (Pihama, 2001, p. 138) Hence, "Kaupapa Māori theory must be about challenging injustice, revealing inequalities, seeking transformation. (Pihama, 2001, p. 110)". While Pihama (2001) used the term 'theory', as my Māori chief supervisor Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora explained to aid my understanding, one should

not think about theory as defined by science and a worldview of European origin: "Kaupapa Māori theory is a liberation framework that seeks to resist positivism and mainstream dominance and to privilege and legitimate the knowledge creation systems and ways of knowing of those who are the focus and primary beneficiaries of research." (L. W. Nikora, personal correspondence, November 3, 2015) In this sense, unlike other liberation theories, the application of Kaupapa Māori theory is not restricted to the process of data analysis and interpretation in a study. Rather, the whole research process from its design to the dissemination of its results should be carried out in a manner that corresponds with its aims and underlying values. To achieve this, several principles were developed which are applicable in a wide range of institutional and research settings (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). According to the elaboration by Walker, Eketone, and Gibbs, (2006, pp. 333-335), these key principles are:

- Tino rangatiratanga (the principle of relative autonomy) refers to sovereignty, self-determination, governance, autonomy, and independence. In this sense Māori hold control about the research purpose, process, and dissemination of research outcome.

- The principle of social justice is about the right of Māori to benefit from research and to strengthen their rights and wellbeing.

- The principle of recognising Māori world view states that Māori epistemology (culture, language, values, and worldview) needs to be acknowledged in its own right, without the need to justify it in front of mainstream academia.

- The principle of whakawhanaungatanga refers to the process whereby Māori can identify themselves, and develop and maintain relationships with each other.

- The principle of Te reo stresses the importance of using the research participants own language to truly understand their values, beliefs, and histories.

- The principle of whanau incorporates not just family or extended family but can refer to the members of a wider collective or community as well. The emphasis here is on shared interests and relationships among whānau members.

Upon familiarising myself with these principles, I wondered whether it would be suitable to apply their core messages in a research devoted to learning about, and contributing to, the wellbeing of ethnic minorities. It is important to acknowledge at this stage that Māori knowledge has been, and still is, widely exploited by non-Māori researchers, politicians, and businessmen (Mahuika, 2008). As I adjusted some elements of Kaupapa philosophy to suit the migrant research environment (e.g. instead of using te reo it was endeavoured to speak the mother tongue of the research participants), my intention was not to exploit this philosophy but to acknowledge it for its own rights and to use it to raise awareness on an overseen minority group.

During my literature review I did not encounter any other study which applied this framework in context with migrants. Thus, one of the contributions of this research to academia is its attempt to use the Kaupapa research principles throughout the research with non-Māori ethnic minorities. Since women migrants from Eastern Europe are a barely noticed group among migrants in New Zealand, participating in this study allowed them to voice their struggles and concerns and celebrate their achievements outside of their families and ethnic groups.

The relevance of Kaupapa Māori research for my research topic is multifold. Firstly, it accepts and legitimates the knowledge and worldview of these women in their own rights which is often denied, questioned or evaluated as of lesser value by mainstream New Zealand educational and employment authorities. Second, upholding the principles of Kaupapa Māori research throughout the research process prevented the exploitation of the research participants by the research itself. As was discussed in the literature review and based on research with migrants, many theories have been developed concerning how migrants should ideally 'integrate' in the dominant community, yet their individual voices were less often presented by them (Rudmin, 2006). Third, Kaupapa Māori research created a framework in which research participants had an active say in what to keep, change or omit from data I collected from them and benefit from both their participation and the dissemination of research outcome. This contributed to the empowering of the research participants since they not only were the source of the data but the co-creator of the research process and outcome as well. Research participants also benefited from the interviews through which they could experience a genuine interest in their lives. According to Prochaska and Norcross (2014), experiencing such attention allows people to feel more reassured and confident about themselves.

Finally, based on Bishop's (1999) recommendations on how to conduct Kaupapa Māori research, my considerations for this study are summarized in Table 3.1:

Table 3.1

The Relevance of Kaupapa Māori Philosophy and Strategy for the Thesis

Principles*	Examples from my study
Legitimation of diverse epistemologies (culture, language, values, and worldview).	I acknowledged and showed interest in learning about the research participants' concept of life, being, knowledge, and wellbeing.
Collective ownership and benefits from research.	Research participants benefited from being listened to during the interviews; they co-created their interview summary reports; and were included in the dissemination of results.
Culturally relevant methodological practices.	Research participants could influence how they intended to tell their stories using a range of interview methods which accommodated their preferences for time and location as well.
Critical analysis of existing power relationship.	Research participants were encouraged to discuss issues of marginalisation, discrimination, and other power inequalities they experienced and these point were analysed and highlighted in the study.
Long-term development of mutual purpose and intent between the researcher and the researched.	Research participants were encouraged to tell what benefits they would like to see from their participation and how I can contribute to achieving these. Our relationships developed further and were upheld beyond the scope and duration of the research period.
Personal investment of the researcher by openness and self-disclosure.	As an Eastern European migrant woman I was not only interested to hear these women's stories but also shared with them my own experiences and insights when they asked for it.

*Note. This column is based on Bishop (1999).

In contrast, a traditional positivist, quantitative research paradigm would have required the development and testing of a theory on the research participants'

lives and would not allow consideration of new themes, should they have emerged. To make generalisations, it would have required a large sample and would have neglected individual differences. In such research, relationships between participants and the researcher are strictly regulated: the researcher is in power through his position and expertise; the purpose of the research is to benefit the researcher and his affiliates; and research participants are in the subordinate role to deliver data that is deemed by the researcher as necessary (Coolican, 2004). Although there are a number of qualitative research paradigms that work with case studies, narratives and seek to address power relationships critically, they rarely allow a collective ownership or benefit research outcomes. They often hold a predetermined position to the research topic that shapes the interpretation of findings: for example, feminist theory addresses themes through the lens of gender inequality (Tuffin, 2005).

In comparison, Kaupapa Māori philosophy did not require me to perceive migrants from a certain ideological perspective and the ethical and methodical guidelines it proposes served as useful practical signposts throughout the research process. I find it important to acknowledge that an indigenous researcher would use the Kaupapa Māori research framework in a different way based on his or her deep, embedded knowledge and insight of Māori culture. As a Hungarian migrant researcher, I do not have access to such Māori wisdom and insight. Hence, I attempted to find connections to my cultural values and worldview and apply it to the benefit of the research participants. Therefore, the process I followed often involved using the principles to check whether I was on the right track. However, as discussed above and in the beginning of this chapter, Kaupapa Māori research is more than a list of principles in that it seeks the liberation and empowerment of being and knowledge of those oppressed or neglected.

When meeting the research participants for the first time, apart from answering questions concerning their participation in the research process (see detailed steps under the section 3.2 on Methodology), I also explained that the research was guided by a Kaupapa Māori paradigm and undertaken in the Māori and Psychology Research Unit. As by chance, all participants had at least an honours level academic background based on Western research paradigms, they were keen to find out how co-ownership and co-creation of their stories would enfold.

Theory of Human Wellbeing

The Human Wellbeing theory has already been shortly addressed under the section on acculturation in the *Literature Review* (Chapter 2) where Wright (2010) argued that this theory was especially suitable to conduct research on ethnic minorities due to its holistic nature. Various disciplines such as economics, sociology, health research, and psychology have shown keen interest in exploring what constitutes wellbeing and, according to their focus of interest, have defined wellbeing differently, for example, as health related wellbeing, socio-economic wellbeing, emotional wellbeing, or life-satisfaction (see more about these different angles under Di Tella et al. 2003 and Layard, 2005 as cited in Wright, 2012). Although influenced by these different disciplines, the theory of Human Wellbeing has its roots in Sen's theory (1985, 1987, 2009) on entitlements, capabilities, and functions as well as Nussbaum's research (1988, 1992, 2000) on non-economic human capabilities (for more discussion on both see McGregor, 2007 and Wright, 2011).

This thesis applies the 3-D model developed by McGregor (2007) which unites the different angles economy, sociology, and psychology take on human

wellbeing. The theory suggests that the *material, relational,* and *perceptual* (or subjective) dimensions of human wellbeing are interrelated, thus they should not be studies in isolation but in interaction with each other:

> Human wellbeing approaches encapsulate the interplay between *material dimensions* (concerned with welfare and standards of living relating to aspects such as income, employment or housing) and *perceptual dimensions* (values, perceptions and experience relating to how people think and feel about what they can do and be), and the *relational dimension* (concerned with personal and social relations, with human wellbeing framed as a state of 'being' with others). (Wright, 2011, pp. 1461-1462)

According to McGregor and Sumner (2010), development studies and measures of poverty and inequality are primarily based on the *material dimension* for which a number of measuring scales and instruments have been developed and used. Influenced mostly by Western neo-liberalist ideologies, such one-sided focus suggests that wellbeing equates with the acquisition of certain minimal material components such as housing and income. In this sense, the goal of such early aid-policies was to provide people in need with a basic shelter and income and, once provided, the agenda could be considered as 'done'. A significant positive shift from the sole focus on the material dimension occurred during the development of the Millennium Development Goals (2000) and more lately in the Sustainable Development Goals devised by the United Nations (2016). These studies emphasise the importance of strengthening human freedoms and capabilities, which are emphasised in the relational and perceptual components of the Human wellbeing theory, too.

The *relational dimension* assumes that social relations and interactions significantly influence the ability of people to exercise their rights and to get access

to resources and opportunities (Wright, 2012). The history of the colonisation of many groups showed that the provision of material support by those in power, without an opening up of close-knit networks, made those in need more dependent on future aid and only a minority of them managed to get access to further rights and resources. Also, as material aid was scarce, this further contributed to the division among the minority groups who competed for the same resources. This spiralled further down to personal relations among members of the same cultural groups by either dissolving them or making them overly protective, closed, and isolated from the 'others' (e.g. Wright, 2010).

Finally, the significance of the *perceptual dimension* lies in the acknowledgement of the subjective perception of the individuals of themselves and the world, and their rights to determine their roles and aspirations in it:

> (It) is focused on what people can do, can be and feel, rather than on the deficits in what they have and can do. This sets a different agenda for development policy, which warns against externally and paternalistically defined and imposed notions of wellbeing, and rather calls for the profound integration of self-determination and participation. (McGregor & Sumner (2010, pp. 106-107.)

In an empirical study concerned with the lived experiences and everyday lives of migrants, the advantage of this theory over the theories discussed in the acculturation literature is that it considers a whole range of life domains that influence a migrant's wellbeing without stamping the migrant as resistant, isolated or acculturated based on reductionist criteria. Information from migrants about these dimensions also reveal policies and practices that hinder or prevent their self-determination concerning the course of their lives: For example, based on the outcomes of a study conducted with migrants from Peru in London (UK) and in

Madrid (Spain), Wright (2011) found that the four most often mentioned obstacles to their wellbeing were the loss of autonomy, enjoyment, relatedness, and social status. For the purpose of my study, such a critical approach promised to align well with the Kaupapa Māori research framework since both advocate the liberation of those oppressed by giving them the opportunity to speak up and using the research they participate in as means for attracting attention to injustice. Also, both theories question the one-sided acceptance of knowledge and ways of being as determined by those in power.

Since this research was conducted within the discipline of psychology, I was also keen to explore psychological theories that would extend and deepen our understanding of the psychological wellbeing of migrants. As both Kaupapa Māori research and Human Wellbeing theory are critical and holistic approaches which advocate the empowering of research participants (e.g. Hudson, Milne, Reynolds, Russell, & Smith, 2010; McGregor & Sumner, 2010), looking for a strengths based psychological approach seemed to be more appropriate than a deficit based one. These considerations led me to explore psychological wellbeing as defined by the theory of Positive Psychology.

Theory of Positive Psychology

When reviewing relevant New Zealand and international literature on the lives of immigrant people, the challenges they face generally, and their acculturation difficulties (e.g. Maydell, 2010; Mojab, 1999; Organista, Marin & Chun, 2010; Pio, 2005; Rundberg, et al., 2006; Tipples, 2006), I realised that most of these studies focused on the negative sides of immigrant experiences, such as acculturation difficulties causing stress, depression, and vulnerability to various addictions. I considered it, however, equally important to attend to the

psychological challenges immigrants face from a strength based point of view when conducting interviews and presenting insights received from the narratives of the participants.

Developed by Seligman and Csíkszentmihályi (2000), the theory of Positive Psychology can be defined as "…the scientific study of optimal human functioning, the goals of which are to better understand and apply those factors that help individuals and communities to thrive and flourish" (Magyar-Moe, 2009, p. 1). According to this paradigm, psychologists should move away from solely focusing on wanting to cure what is wrong with a person. Current mainstream practice perceives and screens clients through the disease model of functional deficits and weaknesses, almost completely neglecting the individual's positive emotions, strengths, traits, and other areas of wellbeing (Cowger, 1994; Cromby, Harper, & Reavey, 2013). Following Magyar-Moe (2009), the core theories of positive psychology are the following:

1. *The Strengths theory:* Helping people to discover and use their strengths on a regular basis in a variety of situations will make them feel more engaged with their lives and boost their feeling of self-confidence, happiness, and satisfaction.

2. *The Broaden and build theory of positive emotions:* This theory proposes that when people experience positive emotions, they tend to produce a wider variety of thoughts and ideas in comparison to when they do not experience positive emotions. In a positive emotional state one is more ready to try out new ideas that come to mind and the experiences made broaden one's personal resources such as social connections, physical abilities, intellectual and psychological capacities. Consequently, when

facing difficulties, people are more resilient and choose healthier coping strategies (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005).

Being a relatively new and evolving discipline, Positive Psychology encompasses a wide range of strength based theorems and hypotheses, such as hope theory, post-traumatic growth, resilience, positive life-span development, and flow theory, just to name a few. For the purpose of this thesis the wellbeing model of Positive Psychology developed by Seligman (2011) will be relied on and elaborated in more detail. Readers interested in learning about the wide range of modalities and their applications in various settings are referred to the *Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology* (2nd ed.) (Lopez & Snyder, 2009) for a comprehensive overview of the discipline.

Seligman (2011) identified five elements that people from various cultures perceive as prerequisites to their psychological wellbeing and happiness and he developed the acronym *PERMA* which stands for **P**ositive emotions - the ability to remain optimistic; **E**ngagement - being completely absorbed in activities; **R**elationships - being authentically connected to others; **M**eaning - leading a purposeful existence; and **A**chievement - having a sense of accomplishment and success (Seligman, 2011). Seligman (2011) found it important to emphasise that these elements are interconnected and they define wellbeing as a whole, not in isolation from each other.

Such overlapping of domains is also postulated in the Human Wellbeing theory described in the previous section of this chapter. By the application of these two models, my research will address how the five domains of the PERMA model can be related to, and provide additional information about, the three dimensions (material, relational, and perceptual) of the Human Wellbeing theory. Additionally, the PERMA model was used to gain a better understanding of research participants'

wellbeing when interpreting interview summary reports from a psychological point of view.

Finally, it is important to note that as Positive Psychology is a relative new discipline which quickly gained popularity, it provoked some criticism from mainstream psychology about the lack of robust research behind its theories and positive view when approaching psychological problems (e.g. Azar, 2011; Miller, 2008). As a response to that, it is important to acknowledge that Positive Psychology is not about neglecting pathological symptoms and the problems of life, it rather advocates the "…seeking of vital balance in the way that people are understood and treated" (Magyar-Moe, 2009, p. 12). Accordingly, people's own definition of wellbeing and their aspirations need to be acknowledged in their own right. Through positive regard for, and appreciation of, their skills and mastery researchers and health professionals should contribute to strengthening the confidence, resilience, and self-determination of people and communities (Lopez & Snyder, 2009). With these thoughts and aspirations in mind, when conducting the interviews and writing the interview summary reports, I was also keen to highlight the resourcefulness, personal growth, and successes of the research participants in addition to the challenges they faced.

Integration of the Three Theories

The three theories I selected to use have many commonalities: they are all strength-based, critical approaches; they take a critical stance on how those in power make decisions in matters that concern minority groups and those less privileged; they question the right of those in power to determine what is knowledge. All theories suggest optimal ways of doing research with or working

with people in a way that benefits them the most, and all address issues both at individual, community, and institutional levels to different degrees.

Apart from differences in their cultural, social, and historical background, Kaupapa Māori research seems to be the most overarching liberation framework, the philosophy of which requires the researcher to honour its principles from the intention of research development until and beyond the dissemination of research outcomes. The 3-D model of the Human Wellbeing theory fits well in this framework to study what constitutes wellbeing in everyday life from the point of view of minority groups. Its categories of *material, perceptual,* and *relational* dimensions are defined broadly enough to use it as a holistic approach. The PERMA model of Positive Psychology will be used in this study to investigate the *relational* and *perceptual* aspects of the everyday lives of the research participants in more detail. Chapter 9 will report about how suitable these three theories were for this study.

3.2 Methodology

The theoretical framework and proposed research questions necessitated the use of a methodology which would allow the researcher to engage "in considerations of disclosure, advocacy, consciousness, participation, identification, positioning, and agency" (Bishop, 1999, p. 104). Qualitative research aims to explore and interpret the interaction between individuals and/or certain groups of people in a multidimensional (space and time) socio-cultural context (see more under section on data analysis procedures). According to Charmaz (2006), the aim is not to test a pre-set hypothesis and to arrive at a generalizable statement about a phenomenon (reductionist approach) but rather to discover patterns upon which theories can be developed by analysing and interpreting a rich data set (grounded

theory). Despite having a research plan, the research process is not rigid and derivations in, for example, data collection method, timing or location do not undermine the credibility of the research. Unforeseen changes and circumstances become data of the data set themselves and enrich findings through the interpretation of the researcher (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). In this context acknowledging the individual stance of the researcher and the idiosyncratic interaction between them and the research participants builds a distinctive part of the final research outcomes. As the main instrument of this interaction is language in oral and written format, it is important to acknowledge its special role in the research process.

People interact with each other through the use of language, the result of which motivates them to make certain decisions and to undertake (or not) certain actions. This indicates that there is more information there to reveal than what is referred to as the face value of the language (Tuffin, 2005). In contrast to positivism, the ontological basis of social constructivism claims that there exists not only one, rigid reality and that visual observation is just one way of perceiving a certain layer of reality (Seel, 2012). Language provides another layer through its ability to create new realities from different peoples' point of views. Thus, knowledge generation (epistemology) happens while people exchange their thoughts with each other and create a new meaning of either an abstract or concrete phenomenon in their lives (Tuffin, 2005). The construction and reconstruction of these realities occurs through story telling (Schiffrin, Fina, & Nylund, 2010).

Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry is a human centred and holistic approach that seeks to capture and understand life stories in their richness and complexity (Webster &

Mertova, 2007). This approach fits well into the overall goals of Kaupapa Māori research, the theory of Human Wellbeing and Positive Psychology, as narratives seem "to be in the unique position to promote human empowerment, and to challenge oppression, unnecessary suffering, and discrimination" (Hiles & Čermák, 2008, p. 149). Telling a story allows individuals to interpret and reinterpret their past experiences, to become the agents, owners, and shapers of their story that unfolds according to their own goals and preferences. Narratives allow their tellers to renegotiate their identity by choosing how they present themselves in their stories (Benson, Barkhuizen, Bodycott, & Brown, 2013; Hiles & Čermák, 2008; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). This freedom of representation provides the psychologist researcher with valuable insights into the issues that really matter to the story-teller. By being an open-minded, interested audience, the researcher can experience and co-create a new reality with the research participant that has a positive impact not just at the individual level, but at meso- and macro- levels in the society as well (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). Such benefit comes mostly from empowering the story tellers to express their ideas, thoughts, and opinions about experiences that had an impact on their lives. This opportunity often leads to new interpretations and insights, more confidence, and better strategies to deal with changes and challenges. Research participants can share their new insights and knowledge with their closer and wider community (family, colleagues, and friends) which can have a positive spill over effect to wider societal areas and institutions. From the part of the researcher, the dissemination of new knowledge co-created with the story tellers can influence other stakeholders and policy makers to reconsider practices and improve processes (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). The emphasis on personal narrative shifts from factual truth (a shared opinion about how things happened) to the truth of how it was experienced, remembered, and re-constructed by the

storyteller (Heikkinen, Huttunen, & Kakkori, 2000). Since my study is interested in learning how Eastern European women experience and make sense of their past and present everyday lives, their narratives were not proved on factual truth:

> These stories are the result of a confluence of social influences on a person's inner life, social influences on their environment, and their unique personal history. These stories are often treated as the epiphenomenal to social inquiry – reflections of important social realities but not realities themselves. (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p.41)

Along this approach I applied the methodological triangulation as proposed by Connelly and Clandinin (2006) which refers to the intertwine and continuous influence among the dimensions *Interaction* (personal and social, also incorporating the interaction between researcher and research participants); *Time/Continuity* (looking at past, present and future experiences of the story teller and researcher); and *Situation/Place* (context and physical space of stories and storytelling). This framework, as will be discussed in more detail under the section *Data Analysis Methods*, puts a strong emphasis on the relationship between the researcher and the storyteller as well as on their interaction when negotiating and mutually shaping the meaning of the narrative. For those in favour of objectivity and factuality such an approach may appear as a limitation since my experiences and interest in certain aspects of the stories shaped the data collection process. As a result, stories developed into a direction that both me and the interviewees found beneficial at the time of our mutual interaction - which might differ from that of other researchers.

In the next section the design of the study and the methods of participant recruitment will be discussed. This is followed by a description of the data collection and data analysis procedures.

Study Design and Participant Recruitment

This narrative study follows a case study design. While case studies are often used to illustrate a hypothesis, they are also suitable for research of an explorative and comparative nature. According to Wells (2011) "the case study design allows for an intensive examination of a phenomenon in context" (p. 16). Case studies used for narrative inquiry explore the contradictions and complexities of subjective experiences and their connection to the societal context (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Using multiple cases permits comparison between them by discovering common patterns and distinctive features. On the other hand, they are criticised for being less suitable for generalisations, unless a statistically significant number of case studies of the same phenomena have been collected (see Benhabib, 1990; Mitchell & Charmaz, 1996; Roth, 1989; Rouse, 1990; White, 1990, as cited in Flyvbjerg, 2006). However, if the purpose of the study is not to make wider generalisations but to learn about and understand a certain phenomenon in depth, case studies can provide a rich data that is otherwise hard to obtain (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Noor, 2008). In addition, by raising awareness to certain phenomena case studies are also important political tools for the liberation and self-determination of those less privileged minorities whose interests and struggles are often overseen by those in power (Hodgetts & Stolte, 2012).

Sampling for case studies necessitates a purposeful sampling method instead of probability sampling (Wells, 2011). This can be achieved by setting up criteria for participation which should be based on the overall aim of the research. As the study presented here aimed to explore the everyday lives of Eastern European women in New Zealand, the following criteria for eligibility as a research participant were developed:

- Ability to communicate in English, German or Hungarian without needing an interpreter;

- Age restriction: 20 years or older;

- Residence in New Zealand: minimum one year;

- Relocated to New Zealand as an adult;

- Ethnic background: country of origin part of the former Eastern Bloc in Europe.

- Due to time and cost considerations potential participants currently residing in Hamilton were approached first.

As field work with repeated data collections and in-depth analysis of narratives is time-consuming, the maximum number of research participants was restricted to seven. It was intended that at least five research participants would to receive a rich data set. My goal was to involve seven women from seven different Eastern European countries, the cultural backgrounds of which locals tend to know very little. Being a regular participant in ethnic cultural events and symposiums on immigrant issues has allowed me to meet a wide range of immigrants. As my current research started to take shape, I informed people I met at these forums about my planned research and asked them to inform their acquaintances who might be interested. I also sent emails (Appendix 1) to the coordinators of various Eastern European ethnic groups by using the Ethnic Directory booklet published yearly by the Hamilton City Council. As a result, eleven people from nine countries expressed interest to participate in the study. Four people did not meet the selection criteria for the following reasons: one came to New Zealand as a child; one would have needed an interpreter; one participant was just about to move to Fiji for two years but suggested to do the interviews via Skype; and one woman was from the former Soviet Union, thus outside the focal geographical area.

Finally, seven women from Bulgaria, Germany, Hungary, Serbia, Slovakia, Poland, and Romania received the Participant Research Information form which informed them about the purpose of the research, about their rights and the tasks in the research process (Appendix 2). People were asked to participate in three in-depth interview sessions, each with a duration between 60-120 minutes, during a period of two to three months. All of the seven women signed the consent form to participate (Appendix 3). However, the Serbian candidate's life has become very busy and, while she was very keen to participate, after several postponements of her interview it became clear that due to my time restrictions I needed to make a decision to either proceed with six participants or to try to recruit a seventh participant in her place. She understood my concerns and she offered to ask one of her friends whether she would participate. The friend agreed and I managed to complete all interviews with a delay of four weeks.

Since I limited the residence of potential research participants to Hamilton, people from smaller Eastern European communities mainly present in Auckland or Wellington were not contacted (e.g. Albania, Macedonia). Also, the decision that seven women from seven different countries will be interviewed prevented a comparison of lived experiences in the home countries within the same community. An alternative could have been limiting the research to two or three countries from the region with more research participants. Through a comparison of interviews this approach might have yielded more detailed background information about the culture and society of a certain country.

Data Collection Procedures

From the point of view of the research, exploring how people make sense of their daily lives by reflecting on their special objects, customs or rituals is of

special interest. The flexible use of various techniques in narrative enquiry also allows the engagement of a wider range of participants (e.g. not just students or academics) and enhances the interest and commitment of research participants in contributing to the research (Mack, Woodsong, Macqueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005). In addition to the before mentioned three interview sessions, I was open to the idea of, and invitations from participants, to spending additional time together. One such occasion was an invitation from the German participant to attend an exhibition of her artwork, at another time meeting her and the Bulgarian participant at a cultural festival, going with the Slovakian participant to a theatre performance, as well as catching up with the Romanian participant at an event at the University of Waikato and meeting with the Hungarian participant while our children played together.

Interviews. The goal of the first interview was to explore the socio-cultural background of participants, when and why they came to New Zealand, what challenges they faced, and how they overcame these in the first year of their settlement (coping strategies). The second and third interviews concentrated on more recent developments in their lives, on their goals and aspirations as well as resources participants used to achieve these. Special attention was paid to coping strategies (used either consciously or subconsciously) from a psychological point of view. Subsequent interviews also provided occasions for clarification of information from previous interviews to arrive at the final version of their stories.

At the end of the interviews, participants were thanked for their time and contribution and asked about how they felt themselves; whether they needed any assistance to cope with any sad feelings that might have occurred during the interview; and whether they had any questions regarding the research project or any wishes concerning the procedure or location of the subsequent interview.

Participants were also informed that, within a week, they would receive an interview summary along with a request for feedback to be provided within seven days. Four out of the seven participants felt initially uneasy about correcting or suggesting any changes to their interview summaries as, according to them, I knew best what would work for the thesis and they did not want to exercise any critique on what I had written. I managed to convince them that not changing anything on their interview summary reports would be the real trouble for me since this could signal that they did not feel ownership about their stories or that I failed to create an atmosphere where they would feel confident to do so. Upon this explanation they subsequently embraced this opportunity. However, their well-meant attitude to 'please the researcher' highlighted the importance of paying attention to how perceived or real dynamics and power-relations between researcher and research participants may contaminate the data. In addressing these issues the Kaupapa Māori framework proved to be a useful philosophical, ethical, and strategic guiding principle as it raised my awareness of power-dynamic questions I could have easily fail to consider while conducting the research. Some participants were positively surprised about the influence they could have on their own stories such as selecting their own pseudo names or leaving out or changing certain aspects of their narratives.

Participants were contacted roughly two weeks before the date of their subsequent interviews to make arrangements (time/location). They also were encouraged to contact me by email/phone during the research period with any concerns or questions between the interviews. At the end of the last interview, I thanked participants for their contribution with a small gift and offered the opportunity to meet with other participants as a focus group to share insights and experiences and to celebrate their contribution to this research.

Focus group sessions. Originally, three focus group sessions were planned. All participants wished to exchange their contacts and get to know each other. The first group meeting was held at the end of February (2015) but three women could not attend due to unforeseen duties. Subsequently a second meeting was planned, to be held in April, which needed to be postponed to May (2015) due to difficulties finding a time suitable for most people. There were some group dynamics in both focus group sessions where one research participant was especially eager to share her experiences and views and tended to dominate the conversation. Using my group moderator skills, I managed to hear the voice of those quieter women. Due to the unexpected male guest in the second session it happened often that parallel conversations were maintained among the participants. This limited my ability to listen to both conversations and use data from them. Unfortunately, due to time clashes and lengthy overseas travel of three participants, we could not organise a third focus group sessions within the period allocated to data collection.

Depending on the cultural and personal preferences of research participants, several tools can be used for data collection in narrative research. While some participants may find it easier to talk about photos or a particular object when telling their stories, others may prefer other methods that the researcher is probably unaware of when designing the study. Thus, open mindedness and flexibility is required throughout the research process to accommodate the needs of research participants as much as possible. Subsequently, the data collection methods I used will be discussed in more detail.

Semi-structured interviews. Interviews are generally divided into three distinct types depending on the rigidity of their form and content (Roulston, 2010). In their most extreme form highly structured interviews not only have predefined

questions, a derivation from which is not supported, but they also often prescribe a set of possible answers from which the interviewee has to choose. This interview form is usually used to generate quantitative data and as such is not suitable for qualitative studies. At the other end of the spectrum are unstructured interviews, often used in ethnographic research along participant observations. According to DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006), even unstructured interviews have some structure as their questions aim to clarify and understand a phenomenon or a story the researcher is exposed to. These questions usually emerge in the scene of action where the researcher observes the research participant(s), thus, they are not part of a 'questions-to-ask' plan developed by the researcher. I conducted semi-structured interviews which allowed me to define the broad direction of my enquiry while providing time and space for new stories and themes to emerge.

During the narrative enquiry process the main tools of data collection are semi-structured in-depth interviews (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998): "The in-depth interview is meant to be a personal and intimate encounter in which open, direct, verbal questions are used to elicit detailed narratives and stories" (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 4). As the name indicates, interview topics and main questions are planned based on the research questions of the study. The question format is open-ended to allow the elicitation of rich information. The interviewer and the interviewee engage in a conversation and during this interaction additional unplanned questions and responses support the flow of the narrative (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Such mutual involvement of the interviewer and interviewee results in a spiral discourse which leads to a co-construction of new story lines (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). Semi-structured in-depth interviews usually last between one and two hours to allow the development of trust and rapport between the interviewer and interviewee. Without this, deep insights into the life of

the story tellers and the discussion of sensitive topics would not be possible. In the context of my study, the length of the interviews varied between one and two hours and their direction usually moved from less sensitive towards more sensitive topics where research participants felt the need to disclose more details.

I faced some challenges with limiting time to 1.5-2.00 hours. Some participants would have preferred to talk longer thus some stories may have remained untold. This limitation was counteracted by providing the opportunity to participate in three interviews, two focus group sessions, and additional weeks to review and add to the stories. Thus, it seems realistic to assume, that these women managed to tell the stories they were keen to share.

Photo or object elicited interviews. Some interviewees feel more at ease when talking about an object or photo, brought with them from their homeland, while gradually revealing how their lives were before their migration: "Photographs appear to capture the impossible: a person gone; an event past. That extraordinary sense of seeming to retrieve something that has disappeared belongs alone to the photograph, and it leads to deep and interesting talk" (Harper, 2002, p. 23). Photo- or object- elicited interviews can be especially useful in cross-cultural studies as they serve as bridges between the culture of the interviewer and the interviewee. Similar supportive functions can be fulfilled by talking about cultural customs and rituals, especially if the date of the interview is close to a significant cultural or historical occasion for the research participant (e.g. Easter). Conversation about the everyday life of the interviewee can also be raised, such as daily or weekly plans ('to do' lists), or drawing the daily routes taken by participants on a city map. These tools are especially useful for the second or third interview, after initial rapport has been established in the first interview. Again, their application should be negotiated with the research participant. During the interviews some of my research

participants used photos to illustrate their narratives, others cookbooks, a special dish, paintings made by them or a special object such as an icon.

Narrative frames. Narrative frames are sentence starters within a narrative structure that help their user to focus on describing a particular event, experience or feeling (Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008). While narrative frames have been developed particularly to encourage reflective writing in educational setting, they can be useful tools in preparing interviews as well. Some research participants may feel more at ease knowing the focus of the planned interview in more detail, and having time to think and prepare some answers in advance can boost their confidence, especially if the interview is not in their mother tongue. On the other hand, some people might find the pre-given sentence starters too rigid or strange and might feel that they limit the topic they would like to disclose (Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008). Thus, before this tool is handed out to participants, they need to be reassured that their use is optional. Two out of my seven research participants' preferred to use narrative frames in their first interview (see Appendix 4).

Participant observation. Participant observation has been used in ethnographic studies as one of the main research tools to generate data (Kawulich, 2005). This method contributes to a deeper understanding of "… the physical, social, cultural, and economic contexts in which study participants live; the relationships among and between people, contexts, ideas, norms, and events; and people's behaviours and activities – what they do, how frequently, and with whom." (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005, p. 14)

Participant observation plays an important role in narrative inquiries by providing contextual background to the story through the observation of daily routines, customs, and rituals. The researcher can take different positions while

observing participants on a scale that reaches from observer to participant observer, through to full participant in the everyday lives of those observed (Gold, 1958, as cited in Kawulich, 2005). In my research, my position varied from being an observer to being a participant observer. For example, when I was invited to events at which some of the participants gave a speech or exhibited their artwork I could observe how they interacted with other people of various ethnicities and how they felt about being the centre of attention. I could observe how they interacted with their family members in their homes, and how they related to each other during our focus group session. As participants agreed to my presence at these events, they were aware of my informal observations. However, I also reassured them that insights I received this way are not the direct object of my analysis. They rather supported my own understanding of their everyday and helped me to see their narratives in context. Due to these reasons it was not necessary to obtain separate consents from people the research participants interacted with during these events.

  Field notes. Field notes are a common accompanying tool of participant observation in ethnographic research. They are written records made by the researcher either during the observation of the focus of interest or shortly after leaving the 'scene', in which case they are reflective notes. They can contain both records of observed behaviour and happenings as well as personal interpretations, knowledge and insight gained, questions, and feelings that emerge in the researcher while in the field (Mack, Woodsong, Macqueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005; Wolfinger, 2002). In the case of narrative inquiry, attention should be paid when deciding on taking notes during an interview. As the interview is usually tape-recorded, the necessity of taking additional notes might not be understood by the interviewee and might also hinder the natural flow of conversation between them and the researcher. As all seven women agreed to tape record our interviews, I did

not take field notes on location. This allowed me to focus not merely on the content but on how these women expressed their thoughts and feelings (e.g. gesticulations, tone of voice, body language). I took notes straight after arriving home from the interviews while still having a fresh memory and these notes built part of my research journal (see section on research journal).

Language use. Although from the same geographical region, apart from the Hungarian participant, we came from different cultures, thus it was especially important to understand how women translated their thoughts into English. It also occurred to me that we were searching for the right expression in English in vain, such as the name or the taste of a food, or a feeling that is a mix of positive expectations, excitement, and worry. At such occasions additional examples or culture-specific metaphors were exchanged with heavy gesticulations and lots of laughter until we felt we shared a common understanding without the need to agree on a proper English translation.

English was the language of the interview with the research participants from Bulgaria, Poland, Serbia, and Romania. In the latter case it was interesting that the Romanian woman preferred to have our informal conversations in Hungarian which she speaks fluently, but when we started the interview, she preferred to lead the conversation in English. After I thanked her for the interview and stopped my recorder, she switched back to Hungarian. Her reasons were twofold: as my thesis is in English, I would not need to translate her narrative; and, since the thesis would be read mostly by a New Zealand audience, she preferred to express her thoughts the same as she would if talking to them. She perceived her participation in this research as a tool to convey her message and observations to a New Zealand

audience in a way that would probably be more difficult in direct interaction with locals.

The interview with the German participant was conducted in German, and interviews with the women from Hungary and Slovakia in Hungarian. While the Slovakian participant spoke Hungarian fluently, she occasionally used a slightly different dialect and ways of expression than used in Hungary. Thus, I had to focus to avoid misunderstandings, similar to when interviews were conducted in German or in English. As I did not take field note on the spot, I made notes about my feelings and observation at home, straight after the interviews. These were than extended with further reflections and plans.

Research journal. Keeping a research journal about the research process and about the personal perceptions, feelings, and reflections of the researcher is an increasingly appreciated and expected tool for the qualitative researcher (Borg, 2001; Ortlipp, 2008). The usefulness of research journals is multifold. According to Borg (2001) both the writer and the reader benefit from the self-reflections of the researcher. The research journal contains the documentation of the flows, struggles, turnings points, and successes during the research process as experienced by its writer. By putting in agendas it also becomes a reminder and supports the researcher to keep the focus and direction of the research. Highlighting difficulties, how they managed to be overcome, and recording successes provide important learning opportunities for the author and the reader (most often scholars facing similar dilemmas and research tasks).

My research journal became a mix of Hungarian, English, and German notes depending on the language of the interview. Working mostly under time pressure, it was easier to remember ideas straight after an interview in the language in which

the interview was conducted. Besides field notes, as described in the previous section, my journal included the dates of interviews; time preferences of participants (due to work and family commitments) for prospective interviews; topics that had not been covered; topics that emerged unexpectedly and seemed to be important to discuss with other participants; and technical problems with my voice recorder. I also recorded ideas and suggestions from my supervisors concerning the data collection process and certainly some partially embarrassing, partially funny moments such as turning up at an interview one hour earlier or turning up at the right time and finding the interviewee enjoying an afternoon sleep, or after the fourth postponement of a date wondering whether the interview would be conducted at all. Thus, a research journal can become also a useful place for the researcher to vent when stressed or worried. I have to confess here that while I was quite enthusiastic about my research journal during the period of the first and second interviews, it seemed less practicable after the third interviews as I put my notes and questions directly in the final interview summary reports and asked research participants to comment on them.

Interview summary reports. The interviews were recorded electronically and saved on my computer. It was decided in the designing phase of the study that, instead of turning the audio material into transcripts, the data analysis would be based on interview summaries co-constructed by the research participants and the researcher. Interview-summary reports have two functions: in their initial form they allow a first review and organising of the data and, subsequently, they serve as a basis for the material to be analysed. As far as possible, I endeavoured to listen to the interviews straight upon returning home, after I recorded my field notes. First, I listened to themes that 'popped up' and seemed to have special importance for the

narrator. This was signalled by either the length of time devoted to the topic and the details provided about it or by the emotions it generated in the narrator. In the consecutive days interviews were listened to two to three additional times and the themes were filled up with stories. Then they were organised in a sequence that revealed either contextual or timely connections among them. After the last version was developed, I compared it with my research questions and evaluated whether it was necessary to obtain further information. I also made notes about issues that needed further clarification. Thus, in its first version, the interview summary report contained how I, the researcher understood the story of the interviewee. As far as possible, I used the expressions of the story teller and I incorporated direct quotes as well. This report was emailed to the research participant for a first review. Upon response, I undertook modifications and corrections as requested by the participant. This process was followed after all interviews. Finally, I integrated the three interview summary reports into one document and asked the research participant for final comments and modifications. Upon satisfaction research participants signed the release report.

The steps described above are referred to as the 'co-construction process'. As described in the previous sections, reading about their lives through the voice of another person was a unique experience both for the researcher and the research participants. According to the research participants, reading about their lives written by another person provided them with a sense of importance and appreciation of their person and lives. They felt that their voice was strengthened and perceived the final interview summary report as a tool which not only retold their stories but conveyed their messages to prospective readers. On the other hand, these reports were also shaped by my cultural background and personal experiences as a migrant from the same region, thus the interviews and subsequent summary reports would

look differently if conducted by a native New Zealander or even if they would have been written by the research participants themselves. The interview summaries aided my analysis as they contained the most important messages and experiences of these women and the analysis was not distracted by narratives that were used between the interviewer and interviewee to enhance their interaction (e.g. "Would you like more biscuits?"). Also, as English was not the native language of any of the participants, reading word-by-word transcripts which would have recorded all the grammatical mistakes could have a negative impact on these women's self-confidence. Finally, as rapport developed during the interviews, women revealed more personal details about their lives about which they felt comfortable talking, but seeing them word-by-word and knowing that these data would be worked with could have made them to feel embarrassed or otherwise uncomfortable. The summary reports were created with this sensitivity in mind: they contain the story and message with respect to the storyteller's privacy and intentions.

The only difficulty I experienced when analysing the data from the interview summary reports was that, since weeks passed between completing the reports and starting the analysis, I sometimes I had to re-listen to certain parts of an interview to recall the context of a statement. After having been acquainted with the data collection procedures applied in this research, the following section discusses the analysis procedure.

Data Analysis Methods

Different models exist to analyse a narrative inquiry. Hiles and Čermák developed a flowchart (2008, p. 153) that helps researchers to understand and follow a sequence from data collection to data analysis while allowing flexibility in choosing between six different interpretative perspectives when assessing the data:

sjuzet-fabula method, holistic content analysis, holistic form analysis, categorical content analysis, categorical form analysis, and critical narrative analysis. Hiles and Čermák (2008, p. 4) define fabula as "the basic outline of the events as they occurred (or might have occurred!)", that is fabula can be described as the storyline. Sjuzet, on the other hand, is the manner in which the story is told. Holistic content analysis is less interested in the manner or timely sequence of the narrative, it rather seeks to recognise links and connotations across the whole story. This usually involves the identification of different themes of significance for the story teller and how they relate to the story as a whole (Hiles and Čermák, 2008). Holistic form analysis refers to the manner in which the 'plot' of the story unfolds, while categorical form analysis is interested in dividing the text into relatively independent content segments and examining them thematically. Finally, critical narrative analysis looks at how the narrator positions his- or herself in the story and in relation to different topics that emerge in the narrative, and what underlying interests and processes might have contributed to this positioning (Tuffin, 2005). Out of these perspectives, I followed the steps of the holistic content analysis (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998) which started with reading through the text as a whole several times until themes started emerging. As suggested by Lieblich et al. (1998), I made notes about my impressions from the readings each time and also paid attention to discrepancies within a story.

As a next step, I identified different themes and, preferring the use of hard copies, I matched each theme with a highlighter and marked the themes on the left margin with the corresponding highlighter. Where a section of the narrative was related to two or more themes, I marked the section with all the relevant colours. This approach is supported by Lieblich et al. (1998) who recommend following though each theme by identifying their starting and ending points as well as possible

intersections and transitions between them. Themes should also be interpreted in context to the story as a whole and evaluated along their importance for the story-teller.

Having identified the broad themes of the narratives, the "Three-Dimensional Space Narrative Structure" model developed by Connelly and Clandinin (2006) provided an opportunity to perceive the research process and obtain data in three interconnected dimensions, namely interaction between personal and social aspects, continuity from past over present to future, and the interaction among context, time, and situation or place (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2

The Three-Dimensional Space Narrative Structure

Interaction		Continuity			Situation/place
Personal	Social	Past	Present	Future	
Look inward to internal conditions, feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions, moral dispositions.	Look outward to existential conditions in the environment with other people feelings, and their intentions, purposes, assumptions, and points of view.	Look backward to remember experiences and stories from earlier times.	Look at current experiences, feelings, and stories relating to actions of an event.	Look forward to implied and possible experiences and plot lines.	Look at context, time, and place situated in a physical landscape or setting with topological and spatial boundaries with characters' intentions, purposes, and different points of view.

Note. From Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (2006, pp. 477-487).

Clandinin provided the following explanation to their model:

> …the idea of working within the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space highlights the relational dimension of narrative inquiry. Narrative inquirers cannot bracket themselves out of the inquiry but rather need to find ways to inquire into participants' experiences, their own experiences as well as the

co-constructed experiences developed through the relational inquiry process. (Clandinin, 2006, p. 47)

The "Three-Dimensional Space Narrative Structure" is congruent with the paradigm of Kaupapa Māori research in that the latter also suggests an interaction between personal and social environment and paying attention to past experiences to understand the present. The same paradigm is relevant when trying to understand how people make sense of their lives from a psychological point of view. Thus, when analysing the data, it proved to be a very useful tool to help me to apprehend people's experiences in a wider context

Finally, I would like to discuss why the data analysis occurred manually instead of electronically. As writing a thesis should also provide a candidate with a learning opportunity in using various software programmes or other technical equipment for data gathering and analysis, I enrolled in two workshops at the University of Waikato to learn about the use of the NVivo-10 qualitative data analysis software and other open source data analysis programmes. I also reviewed and compared publications in favour and in opposition to software use in similar research and talked to fellow students and researchers about their experiences which were various. While the data analysis programmes showed endless opportunities to find, group, and synthesise data, it seemed to me that they are more suitable for larger data sets to save time for the researcher and where other contextual factors in interpreting the information are less important. As my learning style is based on printed books and manually written notes, and as scanning through written materials spread around me stimulates my thinking when my computer is turned off, I decided to stay with manual data analysis.

Reflection on Methodologies Used and Limitations

  Reflections. The advantages and shortcomings of the methodologies as discussed in the previous sections showed how methodologies are seldom used on their own, rather, as in my research, they are often intertwined to enhance the likelihood of capturing the essence of the data. The next section provides some examples on how some features of other qualitative research methods were drawn upon in my study and why they were not used in their entireness.

  Although my research has *ethnographic features* (e.g. I observed some random interactions of research participants with family members and friends), these observations served as secondary data besides the narratives. While the research participants in my study felt comfortable sharing their life stories and homes with me, they would have felt less so if I wanted to observe them and their family members for several days. Also, the purpose of my study was not the description of how I perceived their everyday lives while observing them, but how the women themselves made sense of their past, present, and future every day.

  My study also features some *phenomenological characteristics* by aiming to capture and understand the lived experience of individuals. I followed the request of this methodology for the researcher to reflect on personal experiences made during the research process. While data collection methods are similar to those carried out in my study, instead of using interview summary reports, phenomenologists rather rely on transcripts with lots of attention to detail. The data interpretation often aims to capture differences in the sense making engaged in by research participants and researcher. While checking of meaning making between the story tellers and myself was also used in my study, it was done with the aim to arrive at a shared understanding and acceptance of the interview summary reports and to provide a basis for the data analysis. In addition, my data analysis can also

be regarded as a form of *hermeneutics* since my aim was to interpret and make sense of the interview summary reports and interviews.

When I presented my study at various academic seminars and forums, I was often questioned about my preference of *narrative analysis* over *discourse analysis* for my research topic. The enquirers emphasised the main advantage of this methodology, namely, its ability to assess the truthfulness of the narratives but pointing out incoherencies. Such method appears to have advantages when assessing positioning or opinions of research participants on a certain topic, which was not aimed of my research. Since I was interested in the everyday lives of women as they understood it at a certain time and space, I accepted the validity of their narratives. Looking for and pointing out eventual indifferences in their stories would have shifted the focus from lived experiences of these women to assumptions about their reliability and intentions as storyteller which was not the purpose of my study.

The examples of alternative qualitative research methodologies described above are not exhaustive. They rather indicate that some of the methodologies are better suited than others for a certain topic and whether they are used is greatly influenced by the aim of the research and positioning of the researcher themselves.

Limitations. Those who are looking for more generalizable, objective findings supported by a larger data set will find this study limited in its ability to meet such an expectation. Since the goal of this research was not to undertake a large scale analysis of migrants' experiences but to provide insight into single cases, implications from findings need to be compared with findings in similar research and interpreted in the context of single case studies conducted in a certain location at a certain time.

My emotional closeness to the research topic as an Eastern European migrant woman also needs to be addressed as the narratives of the seven research participants often resonated with my personal experiences or with stories from many migrants I encountered over my 13 years in New Zealand. While I undertook great effort to make sure that research participants' views and voices were transmitted to the written medium as authentically as possible, for the interpretation of their stories the responsibility lies with the researcher. Reviewing New Zealand and overseas literature related to the research topic was an important tool to widen my own understanding of everyday life and migrant experiences in support of more objectivity. However, in this context I also realised that the same narratives can be interpreted differently by different readers. Thus, this thesis presents the insights and knowledge I derived from the research process and the narratives without the claim that this would be the only possible way of interpretation. I hope that the readers will find messages in the narratives beyond what is presented here.

Since English was not the first language of the research participants, or me, there was a slight difference in the richness of language between those participants who could converse with me in their mother tongue, and those with whom I could speak English only. Discussing and modifying the interview summary reports several times was also an attempt to counteract this shortcoming, and to make sure that the voices of the research participants were captured as authentically as possible under these circumstances.

Closely related to the case study form of the research, generalisations about the Eastern European countries from which research participants originated should not be made as women disclosed their own personal views about their countries as they perceived it at the time of their interviews. Their narratives often described past experiences and, since some of them have been in New Zealand for more than

five years, in the present fast changing global environment those who remained in their home countries can have very different views on everyday life.

Finally, while implications for policy makers and mental health stakeholders based on literature and narrative analysis will be made in Chapter 9.4, it was beyond the scope of this research to go into deeper analysis of the identified problem areas and to recommend an action plan to resolve the identified issues.

3.3 Ethical Considerations

This research involved the participation of human subjects. An application for ethics approval was submitted during the period of conditional enrolment to the Faculty Ethics Committee which approved the project (Appendix 5). Throughout the research period I was keen to adhere to the three key principles of the Treaty of Waitangi: partnership, protection, and participation. Research unfolded in partnership and mutual agreement between the research participants and myself as a researcher, and the interests of other stakeholders, such as my supervisor committee and the Māori & Psychology Research Unit of the University of Waikato, were recognised. While preparing this section, apart from reviewing the University of Waikato's ethics regulations, the following literature served as a guide: Bishop (1999) on Māori ethical considerations, Heine (2008) on intercultural psychology, and Josselson (1996) on ethics and processes when conducting a narrative study of lives.

Exploring and learning about the everyday lives of various ethnicities in depth requires cultural competence from the researcher since:

Cultural competence in research plays a critical role in study design and implementation processes, including the development of research questions and hypotheses, outreach and recruitment strategies, consent activities, data

collection protocols, analysing and interpreting research findings, drawing conclusions and presenting the results. (Harvard Clinical & Translational Science Center, 2010, p.6)

The most important cultural competence skills are: cultural awareness and sensitivity; an ability to self-reflection on own experiences and values; the consideration of the research participants in the context of their historical and socio-cultural experiences and embeddedness; and language skills. These prerequisites together with the proposed research questions necessitated the use of an explorative and interpretative research design with guidelines to ensure cultural sensitivity and competence.

Conducting research on personal experiences and lives of people requires special sensitivity to, and awareness of, their vulnerability as people may re-experience stress and sadness by retelling negative life events during the interviews. To protect the wellbeing and interest of research participants, before they consented to participate, they were informed in writing about the possibility of becoming sad or upset during interviews. They were made aware of the following rights:

- to talk about events only they feel comfortable to share;

- to use the free counselling services of the Diversity Counselling New Zealand Charitable Trust, who supported my research as an interested stakeholder;

- to ask for free counselling at the Waikato University; and

- to withdraw from the research at any time.

Further attention was paid to data and identity protection to maintain confidentiality. Interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis, audio records were listened to by the researcher only and they will be destroyed at the end of the

research period. Interview summaries were discussed with the participants and the supervisory committee only, names and other data that would allow the identification of research participants was not revealed or was altered in the thesis in agreement with the research participants and supervisory committee. Research participants had the right to review the summaries of their interviews and ask for modifications (additions or removal of certain sections).

Research participants understood and accepted that, in accordance with the relevant regulations of the University of Waikato, all data will be retained until such time as the final work is unlikely to receive any academic challenges or inquiries, which is generally seven years. The summary reports will be retained by the Māori & Psychology Research Unit (MPRU) indefinitely and will form part of the data pool for the MPRU's investigation into the *Everyday Lives of Women in New Zealand* which is led by Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora. This will involve further analysis of the interview summaries, and the publication of journal articles or the dissemination of results in conference and teaching activities.

The aims, goals, and processes of the research have been discussed openly with the research participants. Beyond the minimal ethical requirement of not causing any harm to the research participants, my aim was to provide them with an opportunity to reflect on their positive experiences and support them when developing insights from their life experiences to improve their everyday lives. Informed consent was obtained by making sure that potential participants not just read but understood the written research information. This was achieved by giving them the opportunity to ask questions and discuss any uncertainties or concerns relating to the research.

I do not have any conflict of interest to declare. My relationships with the research participants were based on openness and mutual understanding. My goal

was to establish an equal partnership between myself and the research participants which did not exclude the development of friendship. I am aware that my Hungarian cultural background and international academic, professional, and life experiences shaped my interest in the research topic and they influenced my approach to the research throughout its various stages. However, according to Borkert and De Tona, (2006),

> … the experience of *foreignness* is a very important experience in this respect, connecting academic migrants to migrants as research participants. This particular relationship is negotiated in the localised and situated position of both actors being "dwellers of somewhere else", "outsiders" and "foreigners". In sharing the same position of outsiderness, the migrants and the researchers become insiders as foreigners. (para 26)

On the other hand, any personal views and experiences were clearly identified as such in the relevant sections of the thesis. According to Schwandt (2003, p. 302), "meaning is negotiated mutually in the act of interpretation; it is not simply discovered". In this sense, the interpretation of life stories and the arrival at conclusions in this study are influenced by my culture and values, my lived experiences, and my situational context as a migrant researcher woman from Eastern Europe. Readers are encouraged to think about how these stories resonate with their knowledge and experiences, and what additional or different conclusions they can arrive at.

3.4 Introduction of Research Participants

The purpose of this section is to provide the reader with some basic background information of the seven women who participated in this research. As

mentioned previously, participants chose their pseudonyms and altered some bibliographical data such as professional or educational background and/or references to family members to protect their identity. Participants considered it necessary to undertake changes in a way that would not alter their narratives significantly in order to maintain the authenticity of their stories, insights, and messages. Subsequently research participants will be introduced in alphabetical order of their country of origin.

Albéna from Bulgaria. Albéna (55-59) came to New Zealand in 2007 with the intention of settling as a solo mother with the two youngest of her three sons who were at that time 8 and 12 years' old. She had a degree in engineering and worked as a researcher before becoming a professional artist and opening her successful art school in Bulgaria. As neither her previous qualifications nor her work experiences have been acknowledged in New Zealand, Albéna faced much difficulty finding employment, both paid and voluntary. She retrained and worked part-time as an accountant.

Angela from Germany. Angela (40-44) arrived in New Zealand with her husband and 8-year-old son in 1999. She studied art and offset-printing in Germany but later specialised in trade management and accounting. Her husband was a carpenter. They came to New Zealand initially as tourists with the intention of touring the country for a year and returning to Germany. They realised the need for carpenters and decided to stay and launch their own business. Some years later Angela decided to strengthen her skills in business management and completed an MBA degree with a focus on business and art. Finally, she ran her own art studio and provided both individual tuition and business consulting.

Brigi from Hungary. Brigi (40-44) moved to New Zealand as a single woman in 2009. She obtained a master's level degree and worked as an English

language teacher, and later as a business administrator in Hungary. Besides her work she trained as a massage therapist in Budapest. As her training was based on Māori cultural foundations and was run by a Māori man from New Zealand, Brigi became very interested in the culture and arrived in New Zealand with the aim of running her own massage studio. She married a Māori man and they have a daughter, but neither her masseur nor her teacher qualification secured her a job. At the time of our interviews Brigi worked part-time as a housekeeper and trained to become a yoga instructor.

Paula from Poland. Paula (35-39) arrived with her partner, a researcher, and her 2-year-old son in 1999. Back in Poland, Paula completed a master's level degree in social science and worked for a newspaper as a journalist. Shortly after she met her husband they relocated to Germany due to a job offered for her partner. By the time she started feeling at home in the country, her husband accepted another research position in New Zealand, so she followed him in the hope that a new life in a new country would also solve some marital problems. Finally, they divorced and Paula lived with a Pakeha partner and his children and shared custody with her ex-husband when I met her. As she did not manage to find employment in line with her qualification and work experience, she worked part-time at a travel agency.

Anca from Romania. Anca (25-29) moved to New Zealand as a single woman in 2011, following the relocation of her parents and two siblings in 2006. She completed a bachelor's degree in psychology in Romania, which was not acknowledged in New Zealand. First she enrolled in a course in history, than she switched to linguistics and worked part-time as a language teacher and waitress. She also met a Pakeha partner and moved with him to an apartment close to her parents. While she won a scholarship and was accepted as a PhD candidate at the time of our interviews, Anca was not satisfied with her life in New Zealand and her

long-term goal was to relocate back to Europe and support her parents to move back to Romania.

Mila from Serbia. Mila (50-54) arrived in New Zealand with her engineer husband and two daughters, at that time 4 and 8 years' old, in 1994 to escape the war in Yugoslavia and to start a new life in a peaceful environment. Mila trained and worked as an architect in Serbia. Upon arrival she also experienced a lot of difficulty getting her qualifications and work experience acknowledged. Finally, she started volunteering for an architect bureau which eventually led to paid employment. In the meantime, Mila has become a partner in an architect bureau. One of her daughters preferred to relocate back to Europe and the other one was also not sure whether to stay in New Zealand in the long-term. While Mila was satisfied with how her life developed in New Zealand in financial terms, if both of her children would relocate back to Europe, she thought about following them.

Sophie from Slovakia. Sophie (35-39) moved to New Zealand as single woman to accept a job offer as a yoga instructor in 2013. She had a master's level degree in teaching English from Hungary, and she worked as a project manager in Slovakia and in the Czech Republic before she moved to the USA to train as a yoga instructor. As she liked travelling and living in different cultures, Sophie's intention was initially to stay in New Zealand for a year and to return to Europe. However, she met her current partner, a Hungarian, and they thought about staying in New Zealand, buying a house, and starting a family.

3.5 Summary

First**,** this chapter introduced the philosophical and strategic frameworks of the research, namely Kaupapa Māori Research, the theory of Human Wellbeing, and the theory of Positive Psychology. The values and principles of these three

paradigms suggested the use of narrative inquiry as research methodology, which was discussed next. Third, the design of the study and participants' recruitment procedure was presented, followed by detailed information on various data collection procedures. The next section discussed how data was analysed and ethical considerations adhered to throughout the research period were described. Finally, some short biographical data of the seven contributing women were presented. This section closes the first part of the thesis and leads to the second part which is devoted to the analysis of the narratives and discussion of findings.

CHAPTER 4: MY LIFE BEFORE COMING TO NEW ZEALAND

The goal of this chapter is to provide a range of insights into how the memories of the seven Eastern European women manifest themselves in their present life; how they position themselves in relation to the physical locations they used to live in; what social interactions they used to maintain; and what aspirations they had for themselves.

4.1 Narratives of the Past

It is a widely accepted psychological paradigm that to understand people's present behaviours, motivations, and perceptions of the self and their environment, one needs to learn about their past (Alwin & Wray, 2005; McAdams & McLean , 2013). This is especially true in the case of migrants, who leave behind both micro (family) and macro-environments (socio-cultural space) to establish themselves in a new, more or less unknown milieu. Whether the setting is that of a researcher– research participant, teacher–migrant student or mental health provider–service user, asking migrants to talk about their past and culture can be a valuable rapport building tool (Axner, 2015). It signals the interest of the interviewer and empowers the interviewee to talk about something he or she knows best: a past life in a world which is more or less unknown to the interviewer.

Apart from having the knowledge to tell the story, an additional empowering factor for the narrator is having the authority to decide how to tell the story: they can leave out, add, or change certain aspects of their narratives depending on their interest in that moment (Bruner, 2010). How a story is told can evoke sympathy, empathy, admiration and/or acknowledgment from the listener (Cohen, 2010). Building rapport has a positive impact on the readiness of the

interviewee to disclose information about present significant matters in their lives at a later stage (Eltaiba, 2014; Petrie, 2005).

When reviewing the interview summary reports of the seven Eastern European women about their lives before coming to New Zealand, it became clear that they all had a 'sense of belonging' to their home of origin which was very hard to replace or re-establish in a new environment. Belonging is an important psychosocial construct of rich content (Dusi, Messetti, & Gonzá, 2015). Depending on context, "belonging should be analysed both as a personal, intimate, feeling of being 'at home' in a place (place-belongingness) and as a discursive resource that constructs, claims, justifies, or resists forms of socio-spatial inclusion/exclusion (politics of belonging)" (Antonsich, 2010, p. 645). The term 'sense of belonging' usually refers to both a certain geographic or spatial location and to various groups of people within this space (Mee & Wright, 2009). The sense or sensation is a subjective emotional experience: we have all felt at some times in our lives that, while we can physically be in a common place with a group of people, we do not necessarily feel a sense of belonging to them. Our experience will depend both on our own intentions and that of the group as well as how mutual signals are experienced and interpreted. People who do not feel a sense of belonging can experience isolation, alienation, lack of self-esteem and self-confidence which in the long run often contributes to the deterioration of their mental and physical health (Correa-Velez, Gifford, & Barnett, 2010; Young, Russell, & Powers, 2004).

To develop a sense of belonging takes time and is especially significant in a new cultural environment. While in the case of migrants their sense of belonging to their new culture can extend from non-existent to feeling fully at home, talking about their lives before migration can provide them with an opportunity to re-experience the powerful feeling of belonging to a special geographical location and

to people with shared cultural values. In this context, the following main themes emerged across the seven narratives about life before coming to New Zealand: family, culture and education, career, and managing everyday life. Some of these themes, such as family and employment, recurred throughout the interviews signalling their significance in the present life and future ambitions while other themes were dropped and new themes emerged. For example, preconceptions about life in New Zealand is a new theme in Chapter 5, as is identity shifting in Chapter 6.

Finally, Table 4.1 provides a short summary of the research participants' background and the language we used during the interviews with the aim of aiding their identification across their stories.

Table 4.1

Research Participants

Name	Age (2014)	Country of origin	Language used during the interviews
Albéna	55-59	Bulgaria	English
Anca	25-29	Romania	English/Hungarian
Angela	40-44	Germany	German
Brigi	40-44	Hungary	Hungarian
Mila	50-54	Serbia	English
Paula	35-39	Poland	English
Sophie	35-39	Slovakia	Hungarian

As not all women felt comfortable disclosing the name of the town they come from, this information is not included in the table. This appears, however, in the narratives of those women who agreed to mention it.

4.2 Family

As introduced in more detail under the section on philosophical frameworks (Chapter 3), both the 3-D model of the Human Wellbeing theory and the PERMA model of Positive Psychology regard the relational dimension as one of the key aspects of wellbeing. Learning how to be authentically connected to others and how to first establish personal and social interactions through which people can feel validated and supported starts in the family (McCarthy, 2012) which, as will be discussed subsequently, may include different individuals in different cultures. The concept of family or whānau is also one of the central pillars of Kaupapa Māori philosophy since, according to this paradigm, individual wellbeing is tightly intertwined with the wellbeing of the whānau (Walker, Eketone, & Gibbs, 2006). Thus, from a wellbeing perspective, it is no surprise that when research participants talked about their past lives, the theme 'family' was a dominant one in all narratives.

While in New Zealand the understanding of a European family is that of the nuclear family of parents, children and eventual grandparents, the Māori concept of whānau extends this circle to blood relatives (grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins) and special close friends of the family. Despite their European origin, the research participants' conception and significance of family and extended family turned out to be much closer to the Māori paradigm than to that of the traditional European. As Angela from Germany stated: "What I appreciate very much is that the Māori are family and community oriented and as such they have similar values to ours from Eastern Europe."

Angela was happy to tell me about a beautiful childhood she spent in Thüringen, in the former German Democratic Republic. They lived together with their grandmother in a big house with a huge orchard. Her father did a lot of gardening and she learned to sew and paint from her artistic mother at an early age.

They lived in a self-sufficient way producing everything they needed, which meant a lot of work. According to Angela, these early experiences of hard work prepared her to be persistent achieving her goals as an adult.

Concerning the role of families in Serbian people's life, Mila also used a comparison to Māori culture:

> I can see similarities especially concerning family relationships and how they treat their family connections. Māori are very welcoming people and generally Serbian people are very welcoming as well. Guests are very important and food plays a significant role in our hospitality. (Mila from Serbia)

In Serbia, grandparents play a significant role in raising the grandchildren: they look after them while parents are at work and holidays are often spent with grandparents: "We spent every third weekend with our parents. This connection was very important to us and also our children felt very close to their grandparents." Similarly, aunts, uncles and cousins had regular, close connections and supported each other when someone faced difficulties.

Anca had similar experiences in Romania: her parents and grandmother lived in close proximity to each other and she and her two siblings were taken care of by extended family members as well:

> We spent the weekends and holidays together; we lived close to each other; and we always knew what is going on in each other's lives. If anything happened to you, you had 5-6 people ready to jump there and save you, no matter what and that was fantastic. (Anca from Romania)

In her first interview, Brigi from Hungary talked about how she lived with her sister as a young adult in Budapest, spending each weekend at home with her parents who lived in the Hungarian capital as well. After some confusion in the first

interview, it turned out in the second interview, that the young woman she referred to as her sister was not a relative but a very close friend. Mila also referred to a similar close friendship where special friends are regarded as an extended part of the families: "We had very close, supportive relationships even with our neighbours." Although, as an adult, Paula from Poland lived more than 200km away from her parents, she went each second or third weekend to visit them.

The more collectivist nature of the family concept of people from Eastern Europe has different consequences for their lives as migrants in New Zealand as well: despite having their partners and/or children with them, they can experience grief about the loss of connections and significant people from their lives. One common coping strategy is to put energy into keeping connections from home alive through saving money to be able to travel home or support family members to come to New Zealand. Mila and her family, for example, decided to save enough money to allow them to go home to Serbia at least each third year and in the meantime they used internet technology (Skype) to keep in touch with friends and family. Angela and Brigi also regularly put aside money to allow them to return home to Germany and Hungary each second or third year. When facing difficulties in their everyday lives in New Zealand, Paula, Brigi, and Anca preferred to talk to friends and family members from their countries of origin by using Skype. According to Mila: "For me, my best friends are those I knew from my childhood or I have known them for a very long time." Putting in effort (time, money, and emotions) to maintain these old connections can result in less need and resources to establish new relationships in the new environment and can impact the process of settlement as well. While all three theories that guide my study address the importance of personal and social interactions, the 3D model and the PERMA regard only the quality of these interactions as influential for the individual's wellbeing. Kaupapa Māori

philosophy, however, goes further by suggesting that not only the quality of interactions but also the wellbeing of those involved in the relationship have a significant impact on the individual's perception of wellbeing. This paradigm explains more why many migrants continue to focus on their friends and family members who remained in their home countries: just because they have moved away, they do not feel less responsible for or less impacted by incidents that happen to them. These points will be discussed in more detail with illustrations from the interviews in Chapters 6 and 7.

All research participants came from countries where having more children was encouraged by generous family assistance programmes of governments in the former socialist era (Rostgaard, 2004). At the same time, however, women were also encouraged to study and work to be able to lead an independent life (Penn & Massino, 2010). Thus, the idea of the 'emancipated woman' was accepted in former socialist countries (Ghodsee, 2004) and built in to the official ideology and value system within which two to three generations of women grew up (Chorvát, 2007). While the research participants stressed the significance of extended family in their lives, they did not envision themselves in the role of full-time mothers with many children. Mila became a mother of two children only after she completed her studies and gained some work experience as an architect in Serbia. According to Albéna, in Bulgaria it has become "more common to have one child only and I was a solo Mum with three children!" She decided to raise them on her own as she found she could not rely on her two ex-partners' support in sharing everyday tasks around the children and the household. Albéna is of the opinion that "Bulgarian men in general feel less responsible for family." She did, however, not perceive any negative prejudice for being a single mother in her closer and wider environment. On the contrary, she was often held up as an example for her achievements as a single

mother. Despite the generous East German family policy (Dennis, 1998; Duggan, 2003), Angela and her long-term partner did not marry and have only one child. Sophia and Brigi also preferred to study, work, and save some money for their futures before starting a family. While they thought about having children at some stage, they evaluated their relationships as not satisfying enough to settle down just for the sake of getting married and having children. Paula also thought about having children in a more rational way: she regarded it as a next step in her life that she would make once married, but unlike women who cannot wait to become wives and mothers, she was not occupied with this idea emotionally. Anca was still a full time student fresh from high school, thus the question of having children was not relevant to her while living in Romania.

In line with the relationship component of the PERMA and 3-D models and the whānau concept of Kaupapa Māori philosophy as discussed above, the narratives of the research participants suggest that maintaining and nurturing connections with their extended families was an important aspect of their everyday lives. At the same time, except from Albéna, these women did not envision themselves with more than one or two children so that they would be able to fulfil other aspirations besides being mothers. Thus, as the Human Wellbeing theory suggests, other dimensions such as the perceptual and material dimension also had an impact on these women's wellbeing: they made decisions about how many children they plan to have in order to be able to devote time and material means to other aspirations. Their ability to make such decisions also illustrates how these women exercised their rights of self-determination when planning a family. The self-determination of women about their prospective families and about pursuing personal goals falls under the concept of social justice according to the Kaupapa Māori philosophy, without which women's wellbeing is undermined. The next

section discusses how these women sought to fulfil their lives through aspirations outside their homes.

4.3 Aspirations

Aspirations refer to ambitions and hopes of an individual to achieve something and as such require a positive, optimistic mind-set. To understand where these women's aspirations come from, it is important to learn about their cultural values first.

Culture is a broad concept that can refer to language, values, customs, rituals, thinking, believing, and doing things in a certain way, and can include various subcultures within a dominant one (Heine, 2008; Jahoda, 2012). When research participants talked about their culture, they used this term both in the sense defined above and in reference to various cultural events or art forms.

In addition to their mother tongue, ethnic food, special traditions, and customs, education was considered by all research participants to be a significant component of their culture. Although the values and ideologies of communism and socialism were to different degrees present in the former Eastern Bloc countries, education was regarded as a priority and, like primary and secondary schooling, tertiary education was free for everyone (Hatos, 2013). Compulsory subjects both at middle and high school level such as world history, physics, chemistry, biology, geography, and foreign languages, were regarded as important prerequisites to what was called a 'general cultural level' that everyone was expected to reach. Those, who failed the tests at the end of the year in any subject, needed to repeat the whole school year both at primary and high school level. Thus, students who could not read or count adequately, could not progress automatically with their peers.

Women were also encouraged to study traditionally non-female occupations such as science, engineering or architecture. As higher education was free, enabling everyone to study irrespective of financial background, there were rigorous application requirements and procedures to select the best prospective students (Hatos, 2013): apart from having excellent marks in 5-6 core subjects and a foreign language from high school, students needed to sit both written and oral exams to get university admission. For some popular occupations such as doctor, engineer, psychologist, economist, or architect, the exams were so hard that only students who participated in extensive exam-preparation programmes or took private lessons prior to their applications managed to succeed. Knowing about these procedures and the role education plays in Eastern Europe enables an understanding of why research participants were so proud to talk about their educational achievements and multilingual abilities, and how they felt when these were not acknowledged by the New Zealand Qualification Authority or employers (see more under Chapter 6).

Mila grew up in a Hungarian minority town in Serbia, close to the Hungarian border. Although her parents were Serbian, she attended a Hungarian minority primary school in Serbia and could speak, read, and write Hungarian. She also learnt German at high school and went on studying to become an architect. Paula completed a five year master's level degree in political science. She explained that in Poland (similarly to other Eastern European countries) getting a bachelor's level degree after studying for only three years was not possible. To get a university qualification in all main professional areas, everyone needed to complete four years of full-time study loaded with written and oral exams and a thesis in the fifth year. Unless one successfully submitted and defended the thesis, no qualification was awarded. Hence, according to Paula, a university degree from Poland would equal a master's level degree in New Zealand. She learnt Russian and German as well.

Having a good qualification with extra-curricular activities is also highly regarded in Romania: "Coming from a middle-class family, I had all the advantages that come with a high quality education", remembered Anca. In her formal education from kindergarten to university, music played an important part. She regularly attended church with her parents, played in the church orchestra and sang in the choirs of every education institution she attended. Additionally, she also studied music for four years in an arts college. However, Anca acknowledged that she often had to get up at 6.00am to take lessons before school started and did not arrive home before 6.00pm due to after school activities, which was especially hard during the very cold Romanian winters. While she spoke Romanian at school, she spoke Hungarian with her family at home and she also learnt English and Russian. Before coming to New Zealand, she graduated with a Bachelor Degree in Psychology which was not acknowledged here.

Like other Eastern European students, Angela also learnt Russian in Germany. While she wanted to study art, in which she was very gifted, according to German regulations at that time her achievement in other subjects was not high enough to be accepted at a university to study art, so she signed up for an apprenticeship to become an offset-printer instead. Her goal was to study art later as an adult through another training provider. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, however, everything changed and she finally ended up studying management and book-keeping, and she further specialised in trades management and accounting. Albéna completed a college degree in electronics and, due to a change in her career, she acquired an undergraduate degree in teaching sport in Bulgaria. Her foreign languages were German and Russian. Finally, both Brigi from Hungary and Sofia from Slovakia hold university degrees in teaching English. Apart from being fluent in English, Slovakian, and Hungarian, Sofia speaks Dutch and Spanish as well.

Although travelling to non-socialist countries was, to different degrees, restricted in the Eastern European countries during the Cold War (legal and/or monetary restrictions), through learning languages and travelling abroad people had the chance to develop a more cosmopolitan worldview and open-mindedness (Hanhimäki, 2006). Through interaction with people in a foreign country, one becomes not just aware of their food, language, architecture, and folklore, but also of their different ways of thinking and living their everyday lives. Such overseas experiences allow the individual to make reflections about their own culture, values, and practices, and to adapt some new ways of thinking and doing when returning home. People who have lived abroad as foreigners themselves, once returned home, tend to accept and interact with people from other countries more easily. (Waters & Brooks, 2011). All seven women stated that when they interact with locals who were educated in New Zealand only and never lived abroad, they often miss the open-mindedness and understanding described above. Research participants also expressed their concerns about distorted media presentation and public image about their countries in New Zealand:

> Unlike in New Zealand, people are so educated about the world in Romania. Even though the rest of the world sees Eastern Europe as a black hole where nothing happens, many things are done there at a much higher standard. All they knew in New Zealand about this region is gypsies, communism, and orphans. (Anca from Romania)

While being well educated was and still is a desirable status symbol in Eastern Europe, people with higher education are also expected to have a corresponding career. Although countries in the former Eastern Bloc strived to develop a society of strong middle-class citizens where no one is too poor or too rich in accordance with socialist and communist values, within this ideology and

structure competition was very much encouraged and rewarded (Ilič & Miklóssy, 2014). While students competed in sport and different subjects, employers were also often expected to contest either in teams (e.g. who produces better and more in the manufacturing industries) or as individual professionals (Csóti, 2003; Ilič & Miklóssy, 2014). Studying and acquiring new degrees and qualifications while working was also encouraged and expected before one could progress to higher managerial levels. Those who stand out due to their achievements were publicly celebrated and were regarded as inspiring examples for others. For example, engineers, managers, and others in non-academic professions with a PhD degree are still expected to display their 'Dr' title in front of their names and introduce themselves accordingly. Holding a PhD is acknowledged in all industries as a significant achievement and it would be regarded as abnormal if someone who had a PhD chose not display it or downplayed it. Thus, research participants regarded the 'tall poppy syndrome' in New Zealand, where academic achievements and degrees shouldn't be displayed and talked about outside academia, and people are expected to blend into their workplaces without permitting anyone to become 'shining stars', as a very strange phenomenon (see more under Chapter 6.)

After finishing their studies, all research participants were keen to enter fulfilling and well-paid employment. Mila can look back to a successful career as an architect in Serbia where her expertise was acknowledged and she had a lot of freedom to use her creativity in designing buildings. On the contrary, Paula experienced more difficulties initially. Based on her qualification, she wanted to become a journalist with a focus on socio-political issues. While she was hired by a newspaper, they did not allow her to cover important and interesting stories. After a short period there she moved on to a governmental institution to contribute to policy making for thirteen years. Shortly after Paula married, her husband acquired

a research position for a two-year term in Germany and they decided to relocate. On their first day in Germany, when they went to check out her husband's future workplace, Paula was offered a job as a research assistant in her husband's project. While due to the lack of experience the job was initially not easy and Paula also had language difficulties, in hindsight she thinks she benefited a lot from being a part of a work group straight after moving to a foreign country: it helped her to improve her language skills, not to feel isolated, and to contribute to important research projects.

Albéna started working as a researcher in electronics at a university in Sofia. However, according to her "…sitting behind a desk was not what I wanted on a long-term." After the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989), like other Eastern European countries, travelling abroad and launching a private business became easier in Bulgaria. As one of her hobbies was art, she launched an art school where she taught children. Within a year she became so successful that she managed to buy her first apartment. This was celebrated as a big achievement by her friends, colleagues, and family. Being acknowledged and respected for accomplishments was regarded by the research participants as an important contributor to their self-esteem and wellbeing. While Albéna evaluated this period of her life as very successful and professionally fulfilling, during these years her second and third son were born and she realised that she needed more time with her children, so she closed the school. Besides her savings from the art school, she received a small amount of children's benefit from the state and she started sewing dance costumes for performance dancers in her home. This provided her both with flexibility in managing her everyday life and financial security.

After Angela finished her training in trades-management and book-keeping, her goal was to launch their own business with her partner, who was a carpenter.

As German regulations to set up a business are quite complicated and require a significant amount of financial investment before registration, they needed to save first to make it happen. So she kept working as a financial manager for real-estate cooperatives. Even though it was not a fulfilling job for her, it contributed enough to their savings, so she did mind doing it for a while.

While both Brigi and Sophia were qualified English language teachers, due to financial reasons, neither of them remained in their original profession: teachers were very much underpaid both in Hungary and Slovakia. Brigi worked as an English language teacher for over ten years. Due to financial reasons she decided to switch to office work in different companies and later worked part-time as a teacher and part-time as an office assistant. She did, however, not really enjoy this lifestyle: "These jobs were not my goal."

While Sophie gave some private lessons in English as a student, she decided to move straight into the business sector after obtaining her degree. She worked among others for a credit card company as a team coordinator but after two years she felt the need to move. During the global financial crisis in 2008-2009, it was very difficult to find a job that was fulfilling and well paid, especially in weaker economies such as countries in Eastern Europe (Rangelova, 2014). Subsequently, Sophie worked for some other multinational financial companies but she quickly realised that the lucrative promises from employers about interesting work quickly turned into monotonous routines.

Excluding Anca, who was still a student in Romania, Mila was the only one who stayed and found fulfilment in her original profession as an architect. While Albéna enjoyed her work as an art school owner and teacher, she gave it up for the sake of her children. As part-time employment was not widespread in Bulgaria, she used her talents and networks in the art and dance scene to become a successful

costume-maker. This change allowed her independence, regular income, and fulfilment by staying in touch with the art scene and getting acknowledgement for her beautiful dresses. The option to run one's own independent business appeared to be lucrative for many people in Eastern Europe after the fall of the Iron Curtain, as during the area of socialism private enterprises were very restricted (Wilczynski, 2008).

While aspirations can be present across all domains of the 3-D model and the PERMA model, in the narratives of research participants they especially appeared in material and perceptual contexts (3-D model) and as examples of positive emotions, engagement, meaning, and achievement (PERMA model). Each woman found it important to have a well-paid and fulfilling occupation. This aspiration is one of the key elements of the 3-D model of the Human Wellbeing theory due to its impact on standard of living, housing, and freedom and options in other life domains such as recreation. Additionally, at a perceptual level, women felt better about themselves through enjoying positive feedback and reinforcement from their social environment. Finally, at a relational level, being employed or being a student allows interactions with people which counteracts isolation. Looking at the women's study and work related aspirations from the dimensions of the PERMA model, it was not enough for women to study 'anything' or to hold down a job just for the sake of a secure income. It was important for them that they could engage in meaningful activities where they could experience achievements and success. Those women who experienced a job as not meaningful or stimulating for them (e.g. Paula, Sophie and Brigi) reported on how this had a negative impact on their mood and self-satisfaction and took away energy from their everyday functioning in other life domains. For example, both Brigi and Sophie started using

compensatory strategies such as yoga to lift their negative mood caused by dissatisfaction with their jobs (see more in Chapter 5).

The narratives of research participants about their aspirations also showed that self-determination played an important role in choosing their areas of study and professional pathways. This aspect falls under the principles of self-determination in the Kaupapa Māori framework. If a job was not fulfilling, women held to it only for financial reasons and kept looking for more worthwhile opportunities. They remained open minded and flexible about acquiring new skills and working in areas they were not trained for or they did not envision initially. Research participants also talked about what strategies they used to bring more enjoyment and satisfaction in to their everyday lives, especially if their jobs or relationships were less satisfactory for them. These narratives will be discussed next.

4.4 Everyday Life in Hindsight

According to Csíkszentmihályi (1997, p. 13): "Everyday life is defined not only by what we do, but also by who we are with. Our actions and feelings are always influenced by other people, whether they are present or not." Thus, everyday life is about developing, negotiating, and maintaining relationships and routines and playing different roles in different spatial and social settings. Learning about the previous everyday lives of research participants in their home countries provides a point of reference in comparison to their present lives in New Zealand. Without this it would not be possible to understand the extent of change these women faced and the strategies and skills they developed to create a new home in a different geographical and socio-cultural environment. Talking about their past everyday lives allowed participants to appreciate or re-evaluate their memories and experiences and make new relevance of them in their present lives. It also reminded

them of skills and abilities they forgot or they were not aware of at the time and circumstances they experienced.

How these lived experiences are interpreted by an individual in a certain socio-spatial environment influences the picture one holds about oneself and as such keeps forming one's identity: "Identity formation is the result of complex interplay among individuals, decisions and choices, particular life events, community recognition and expectation, and social categorisation, classification, and socialisation. It is an ongoing process." (Kirk & Okazawa-Rey, 2001, p. 49). It is often expected that migrants let go of what they used to do in the past and make efforts to live according to the rules and routines of the dominant culture of their host countries. They face such requirements especially in occupational and educational settings (Harris, 2013; Lewis, 2005; Mace, 2012;). Migrants can experience this demand as a request to deny or hide an important part of their identity and this can negatively impact their mental and physical wellbeing (Lewis, 2005). Hence, talking about past everyday lives allows narrators to revive experiences, re-interpret them, and establish a sense of continuity and connection between their past and present lives (Nuttman-Shwartz, 2008).

For Anca, her daily routines were very much influenced by her studies and hobbies in Romania. She lived with her parents and siblings until they moved to New Zealand. Subsequently, she moved to her aunt and cousin's home where she enjoyed more personal liberty for nearly three years before following her family to New Zealand. Holding a scholarship allowed her financial independence and the ability to concentrate on her studies and hobbies, such as participating in numerous cultural programmes and fashion shows. Summing up, she described her life before coming to New Zealand as "totally awesome." At the same time, she acknowledged that there is quite a lot of pressure on young women to look pretty and keeping up

with the expectations of others can be mentally very demanding. As Hodgetts et al. (2010, p. 73) explain: "Bodily adornment and performance are central to expressions of community where the body becomes a site for, and display of the acquisition, articulation and negotiation of identity and unity." For Anca, coming from a culture where bodily representation is especially important, it provided some challenges to interpret people's bodily representation in New Zealand where a significant proportion of people are obese and dressing casually at home, in public, and in workplaces is accepted (see more in Chapter 7). Looking well-groomed and dressing smartly at work and in public places (even in a shopping mall) is also important in the other post-communist Eastern European countries (Ibroscheva, 2013). According to a study conducted with women in Romania:

> being in shape and being recognized as beautiful not just by means of one's genetic predisposition for beauty, but also, by one's deliberate and purposive cultivation of a beautiful body, is a sign of independence and control that situates female agency in an empowered position…" (Svendsen, 1996, p. 14).

Thus, as Anca, Albéna, and Paula put it, dressing neatly for them is not about being obsessed with fashion, rather about giving a signal to other people that one cares about oneself and respects the location or space one enters. Even on very hot summer days it would be regarded as very impolite to walk in public places or entering shops barefoot. Being overdressed in comparison to New Zealand standards caused misunderstandings for some research participants (see Chapter 7).

Brigi spent her weekdays at work, first as a language teacher and later due to financial reasons as an office administrator. She lived in Budapest in an apartment with her best friend whom she called her sister. She used to spend her afternoons shopping, doing house work, and going to one of her courses such as

massage, meditation or dance. They did not have a television for quite a long time and when they bought one they used it for watching DVDs only. She enjoyed spending her summer holidays in the Bükk, a forest region in the North Hungarian Mountains. She needed, however, to save for a whole year to allow herself one or two weeks of holiday. Although on a tight budget, she managed to visit Croatia and Greece.

Although Mila's ethnicity is Serb, instead of talking about Serbia, she referred to her home throughout the interviews as Yugoslavia:

> Before the war, and even now, it has never been important to us what nationality one has. We were and are all from Yugoslavia, and the only thing that is important to us is whether we can relate to each other or not. (Mila from Serbia)

She had very positive memories about the pre-war period in Yugoslavia: "I think we had everything. Life was getting better in the 80s. Even as students we could afford the best hotels in off-seasons and enjoy great holidays whether it was about skiing or going to the Adriatic coast." When she started working as an architect, an average workday lasted from 6.00am to 2.00pm in summer and from 7.00am to 3.00pm during the winter time, thus the afternoons were free. She used to take the children to kindergarten or sometimes her mother in-law or father, who lived close by, looked after them: "It is very common that grandparents help with the children and it was also common for them to retire earlier. When they retired, they were probably the same age as I am now and I am still working."

Children start school in Serbia at the age of seven and they gradually take on more and more subjects. According to Mila, they were more independent and self-reliant in that they could go home from school on their own and it was all right for them to be at home alone for several hours until their parents arrived from work:

"I never had to panic what would happen to them at home. The country was also very safe before the war. During my childhood people did not even lock their homes when they went shopping or somewhere else." Saturday used to be the day for cleaning and washing. The shopping routine in Serbia was also different: instead of going once or twice a week to shop, people used to pick up groceries from smaller shops each day on their way home from work.

Although, when thinking back, Paula liked her life in Poland, due to the bad economic conditions she had to hold various jobs to support herself as a student. Unlike Mila, Paula never really had a holiday as a student because she was always working. After she started working at a government agency, her financial situation improved and she used to go with her friends to shops, cafés, various cultural exhibitions, and programmes. She also enjoyed reading and kept travelling to her parents each second or third weekend.

Sophie grew up in a Hungarian minority town in Slovakia. She went to the UK to work as an au pair for two years to improve her English language skills. Upon returning she worked as an English tutor and as a translator. Then she decided to travel and work for another year throughout Europe (Spain, Holland) before commencing her university studies in English in Budapest. She enjoyed her student life very much, both the papers she was taking (she is very fond of reading and books) and her social life with other students. She had dreamed about working in America since the age of 15 and it was an extraordinary experience for her when she arrived there ten years later with a student working holiday visa. Sophie went back to work in the USA five times during her student summer holidays. Although she received a scholarship during her studies in Hungary, she also taught English alongside her studies. Her goal was to save a good amount of money for the future,

although at that time she was not sure yet what she would use it for. Upon completing university in 2007 she decided to start working in the Czech Republic:

> Strangely, while I enjoyed my student life I did not like Budapest. I did not really feel myself at home. Initially I wanted to study in Hungary because, through my nationality, I thought this would be my home and the country would embrace me. However, even after five years, I did not feel that I belonged there. (Sophie from Slovakia)

Although she was a qualified English tutor, she decided to work, as described before, in the business sector due to the low level of payment teachers received. During this less happy and rather difficult period in her life, Sophie started going to yoga classes: "It is not by chance that things that will matter to you will find you when you are in a crisis. Yoga provided me with a great balance and also with a kind of escape after my everyday work." In her spare time, she used to be very active engaging in sports and other physical activities such as swimming, running, walking, hiking and, of course, later yoga – to provide her with the necessary balance. She also liked exploring the city, going to the cinema and hanging out with friends in cafes and restaurants. She liked living in Eastern Europe due to the close proximity of her family to Prague and Budapest. She also enjoyed the cultural, historical, and employment opportunities both cities offered at the time, not to mention the well-developed public transportation system that allowed people to commute and travel easily.

Angela appreciated that in Germany, after a hard week of work, they could travel to different historical and cultural places and events. She also enjoyed a busy social life with friends and family. Reliability in interaction with people provided peace of mind and was important both in private and professional relationships. The weekdays started with bringing her daughter to school and then going to work.

Children had daily regular homework for each subject and they needed to memorise a lot, which meant for Angela a lot of study with her daughter in the afternoons and a lot of pressure for the children to comply with school expectations. In hindsight, she was of the opinion that the regular headaches she and her daughter suffered from, and which diminished after relocating to New Zealand, were caused by the extreme demands at school. While they used to shop in smaller shops and in the market, after the fall of the Berlin Wall bigger supermarkets emerged and took the place of small local shop owners. Buying their bread from a locally owned bakery in the mornings is still something many Germans prefer instead of shopping at a supermarket.

Albéna was amused by the question around her weekdays in Bulgaria: "I did what mother's do: shopping, cooking, and cleaning" and later picking up her children from school. In Bulgaria a lot of things were free for children: medical care, medicines, education, afterschool care, children books, and breakfast in school was provided free of charge by the state. School lunch which included three courses (cooked meal), bread and drink, was provided in the school, for only NZ$0.80. Albéna remembered the times she spent with her children as beautiful, though she felt very tired sometimes. Parks and the mountains were very close so it did not matter that they lived in an apartment instead of a house. She did not need a car, as both public transport and taxis were cheap and she often called one to travel with her children into the mountains. For example, if they wanted to go skiing in the winter, she looked at the top of the mountains from her window, and if she saw there was enough snow, she just called a taxi and they were there within twenty minutes. It took another twenty minutes to reach the top by the ski lift.

She also took her children to various afterschool programmes such as tennis classes, ski school, dancing, English classes, and chess classes. All these activities

were very affordably priced. On the weekends they visited parks, playgrounds, or did some sports in stadiums which are venues for all kinds of sporting activities such as tennis, swimming, football, volley-ball, gymnastics, ice-skating, or hockey. Over the summer holidays they often travelled to the beach for one or two weeks by train. What she liked most about Bulgaria was the warm climate and the wide range of tasty and healthy fruits and vegetables.

Research participants also mentioned an extensive array of cultural opportunities and events they enjoyed before coming to New Zealand: Angela used to go regularly to historical/medieval festivals and various exhibitions and concerts. Brigi reported missing "the large number of spiritual groups, dance clubs, cultural opportunities, and theatres" she used to go to in Budapest. Anca also talked about the rich cultural life she enjoyed in Romania, such as going to the opera, theatre, gallery openings, fashion shows, and exhibitions. According to her, apart from the mainstream culture, there are a wide range of subcultures with well-established facilities and clubs that people can join in Romania: "And no matter what sub-culture you belong to, people are educated, look after themselves, and while they dress themselves according to their culture or subculture, they are clean, tidy, and generally highly educated".

After allowing time for research participants to talk about the positive aspects of their lives in their countries of origin, I asked them to reflect upon some aspects they did not like. Paula told me I should have asked this question while she was still living in Poland: "Now, that I am away from it, I love everything about my country." This statement signals the awareness of migrants that talking about their pasts can evoke nostalgia and let aspects of their lives appear more positively than how they were experienced. Despite such nostalgic feelings, women were open to talking about facets of their lives they did not like or found difficult to cope with.

Creating trust and a safe space for research participants to express criticism and dissatisfaction with certain aspects of their past lives provided a valuable foundation for understanding their hopes and expectations concerning their future lives in New Zealand (Chapter 5). Thinking more critically about life in Poland, the country's economic problems and its health care system concerned Paula the most: long waiting times, not very friendly customer service, lack of trust of official institutions, and bureaucracy were very characteristic.

As for Albéna, things that she did not like in her home country were mostly the result of urbanism. Growing up as a child in the capital of Bulgaria, Albéna remembered the easy access to parks, rivers, and nearby mountains. Since 1989, however, Sofia became a big city of two million inhabitants, full of concrete buildings, shopping centres, and hotels: "Similar to how people tell how many sheep there are in New Zealand for each citizen, I can tell them we have two hotels for every citizen!" Negative aspects of life in Romania, for Anca, focussed on the extent of corrupt practices. While Brigi appreciated the cultural and spiritual opportunities the Hungarian capital offered, she did not like its large population (ca. two million people), the dirty street, and crowds of people. According to her, she used to walk bending her head down "… both to avoid eye contact with unkind people and not to see the huge number of soulless advertising billboards everywhere". While she lived there, the economic situation was also difficult in Hungary. According to Sophia, bureaucracy was a huge issue both in Slovakia and in Hungary. When it came to communicating with the public health care system, Inland Revenue or other state institutions, they all failed on the same level: it took ages to get paper work administered and applications processed due to the lack of interconnectedness within the state sector. Bureaucracy seemed to be an issue for Angela as well:

You needed to fill in various applications just to be able to fill in the application that mattered to you and then you needed to collect your stamps from various agencies. Also, people in Germany are more under pressure in their everyday lives and accordingly they tend to react more rudely if something disturbs them. For example, they are less polite in traffic situations and faster with showing your 'fingers', than in New Zealand. (Angela from Germany)

As the above examples demonstrate, bureaucracy was the most frequently mentioned issue research participants complained about. Filling in a number of forms, asking for appointments at various agencies, and waiting for decisions concerning requests can take away considerable time both from work and leisure. Additionally, people often cannot progress with their goals before receiving answers from agencies, which can contribute to considerable stress due to uncertainties endured over a long period. While women were able to undertake different steps to counterbalance stress in their everyday lives through hobbies such as travelling or yoga, or by meeting friends and family, very little can be done to speed the pace of the bureaucracy, contributing to ongoing stress and frustration of otherwise successful people. Thus, it is understandable that these women experienced bureaucracy as one of the most negative impacts on their everyday lives. Finally, stress in different spatial settings in their countries of origin such as at work, school or in road traffic was also mentioned by most research participants. It was also acknowledged that being well-groomed at all times when someone leaves a house can mean considerable pressure for some women. Additionally, poor economic conditions and the undesirable side effects of urbanisation such as being amongst a lot of people, noise, lack of fresh air and green spaces were pointed out as having affected these women's everyday lives negatively.

From a Human Wellbeing theory perspective, the women's narratives of their everyday routines provided examples of how the *material, perceptual*, and *relational* dimensions of everyday life are intertwined which each other. Women who had the financial means to look after their families and to engage in recreational activities and hobbies reported about the significance of these recreational activities in their quality of lives. Those who had scarce resources as students or young adults such as Brigi and Paula reported about how this limited their abilities to travel. Feeling good about accomplishing mundane activities was as important as not giving up hope and maintaining resilience when dealing with difficulties such as bureaucratic agencies. In this regard, although to a different degree, women experienced most aspects of the PERMA model in their everyday lives such as optimism; full absorption in fulfilling jobs or hobbies; authentic relationships with friends; having purpose; and experiencing achievements.

The women's stories also highlighted how the quality of space they lived in affected their decisions about where to study, work, shop or spend their leisure time. Mundane activities such as cleaning and shopping were also carried out according to certain individual time and space preferences signalling the importance of self-determination for these women in these areas as well. Finally, they talked about both positive and negative aspects in their lives, the former being more related to a wide variety of cultural opportunities, the latter to the level of economic and environmental problems, and bureaucracy in their respective countries.

4.5 Summary

The goal of this chapter was to acquaint the reader with the socio-cultural backgrounds of research participants and allow a glimpse into their everyday lives. I decided against undertaking detailed country-specific comparisons of aspects for

which information is easily accessible for the interested reader on the internet. Here, I am referring to ethnic food and celebrations or economic and political indicators or respective countries that participants originate from. Instead, the chapter focused on the main themes that mattered the most for the research participants: family, culture and education, employment, as well as routines, and positive and negative aspects of everyday life. In general, all the women were highly educated and enjoyed a lively social and cultural life. Although not always in their original professions, they were able to secure for themselves an independent life with leisure activities, and those with families contributed significantly to their families' budget. They acknowledged that looking back they do have some sentimental feelings with a tendency to remember the good times only. They also offered insights into societal and economic problems in their countries of origin that affected their everyday lives negatively, such as bureaucracy, stress due to high demands at school and work, negative side effects of living in big cities, and societal pressure concerning bodily presentation.

From a theoretical perspective, it was highlighted that both the dimensions of the 3-D model (material, perceptual, and relational) and the PERMA model (positive emotions, engagement in activities, relationships, purposeful existence, and achievement) played an active part in the research participants' everyday lives and influenced their wellbeing. If they experienced shortcomings in one dimension (e.g material or occupational), its negative effects on other life domains were traceable. On the other hand, women were not satisfied with a status quo and actively sought positive reinforcements in other domains (e.g. recreation) and tried to look for alterative opportunities such as new employment or area of study. The key principles of Kaupapa Māori philosophy were also echoed in the women's stories: They enjoyed a relative autonomy to pursue academic interests, hobbies,

careers and make decisions about the number of children they wished for their prospective families. At the same time, these women maintained close relationships with their friends and extended families. They also had opportunities to use their languages, keep their traditions, and celebrate their cultural heritage. The ability to exercise such rights is an important contributor to human wellbeing which has been long denied or hindered for Māori and other ethnic minorities in the world.

Summing up, the narratives of these women suggest that despite some shortcomings (mostly in the material dimension), they regraded in hindsight that they led a satisfying life in their homes of origin. If so, the question arises why these women left their countries to relocate to New Zealand, one of the furthest countries away from Europe. What were their perceptions about New Zealand and how did they envision their future lives here? The next chapter seeks to answer these questions through their narratives.

CHAPTER 5: MY JOURNEY TO AN IMAGINED SOCIETY

Tabor and Milfont (2011) differentiate between macro and micro factors that affect people's lives and which may generate their desire to move away from their home countries. Although the most often cited macro factors are political and economic, the issue of safety—both in regard to crime and extreme climate or environmental hazards—plays an increasingly important role in people's decision to migrate. Concerning micro factors, according to a recent study on reasons for migration, the motives are more and more multifold in comparison to 30 years ago: "Social processes, neighbourhood characteristics, and lifestyle are important forces in the migration process and are, in combination with employment opportunities, the underpinning of changing places." (Clark & Maas, 2015, p. 65).

Referring back to the research by Bürgelt, Morgan, and Pernice (2008); Maydell-Stevens, Masgoret, and Ward (2007); and Tabor and Milfont (2011), as discussed earlier in Chapter 2.1, there are a number of factors prior to the arrival of migrants into their host countries that impact the process and success of their acculturation. Such aspects can be certain personality traits (e.g. adventurous, novelty seeking, optimistic); the individual's role in decision-making about the migration (leader, follower or, in the case of refugees, forced migration for safety reasons); preconceptions about future life in the host country (positive or negative outlook); and the attitude of those remaining in the home country towards the departure of their friend or family member (Sussman, 2000). These aspects can also be identified through the different dimension of the Human Wellbeing theory (material, perceptual, and relational). Additionally, this theory suggests that it is not enough to investigate these factors separately but attention should be paid to how they are intertwined with each other (McGregor, 2007).

With these notions in mind, after learning about the socio-cultural backgrounds, everyday lives, and aspirations of research participants in their countries, I was keen to explore the reasons and motives that led these women to leave their homelands: How did they pick such a remote country as New Zealand to migrate to? How did they imagine their future lives? Learning the answers to these questions allowed, in subsequent chapters, a comparison with how their lives turned out to be in New Zealand. In the sections that follow, I present what women said about their motivations to leave their homes; what preconceptions they had about life in New Zealand; and finally, how they prepared for their departures from their friends and families.

5.1 Contemplations about Leaving Home

After the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989) the opportunity to travel or live abroad for a certain period of time was eagerly welcomed by many people in Eastern Europe whose mobility was politically and financially restricted during the Cold War period (Hanhimäki, 2006). This historical event was directly or indirectly significant for each research participant in the present study as many of their fellow citizens who had attempted to relocate to the West before 1989 were considered dissidents in their homelands or refugees in their countries of destination (Krzysztof & Tornquist-Plewa, 2011). This had a significant impact on how participants approached and experienced their own relocation. As they had all moved to New Zealand after 1989, they did not have to fear negative consequences in the event that they decided to visit or to return home.

While most Bulgarians were keen to explore Western Europe, England, Canada, and the USA, Albéna felt that these countries were not for her. There was a new television show called "Another Bulgaria" that showed interviews with

Bulgarian emigrants from all over the world. One couple was from Auckland and upon seeing the report and the pictures in the show Albéna felt that New Zealand might be what she was looking for. Although her interest in New Zealand was raised quite accidentally by a TV show, the idea of living somewhere else was in her mind for some time since 1989. While she was contemplating New Zealand as a destination, she received a phone call from a stranger who wanted to take private art lessons from her. As it turned out, he was a Bulgarian who relocated from Auckland to Sofia, Bulgaria, to spend more time with his elderly mother: "It often happened in my life this way: I am thinking on something and it will just come to me." The man provided her with a lot information about life in New Zealand and also showed her videos about other countries he visited. She liked the video about New Zealand the most because it was the only one where she could not hear any high-pitched background noise so characteristic, especially at night, of big cities and their surroundings. Through the lens of the 3-D model, Albéna's preference for a quieter natural environment seems to indicate that her wellbeing in Bulgaria was rather affected in the perceptual dimension: as she elaborated in the previous chapter, she was satisfied with her standard of living and her social interactions. On the other hand, she did not like the rapid urbanisation and, although she had friends and family around her, she had not managed to find a partner, which she was looking for. This refers to her dissatisfaction in the relationship dimension of the PERMA model as well ('being authentically connected'). The issue of dissatisfaction with some of her life domains will return in a subsequent section in which Albéna talks about how she envisioned her future life in New Zealand.

Angela also felt some restlessness at home in Germany after the fall of the Iron Curtain (1989) and, like Albéna, she heard about New Zealand by chance. Initially, she thought about spending a year somewhere abroad, preferably in the

USA. Her interest in New Zealand was raised when she accidently bumped into an old friend in a shopping centre in Germany who told her that she was living with her local partner in New Zealand. When they showed her some photos from Abel Tasman National Park she became fascinated: "I did not hear much about New Zealand before but when I saw those photos which looked like paradise I became totally inspired." She quickly decided with her partner that, instead of putting aside money to launch their own business, they would rather save it for a one-year journey across New Zealand. Her intention to leave her home differed significantly from most of the other research participants in that she intended to stay for just a year in New Zealand as a tourist, and then to return to her home country. According to research on travel and tourism, people with such intention are described as long-term travellers (Williams & Hall, 2002) and as such, they show some characteristics different from temporary or long-term migrants since they do not intend to find a new home but to become enrich their lives through exciting cultural experiences.

While working in the Czech Republic, Sophie heard about an international training programme to become a yoga instructor. Despite the expense of the programme she felt this was the path she should take and invest some of her savings in. She quit her job and moved to Los Angeles in 2012 to attend the three month long programme after which she would decide which country to start a new life in as a yoga instructor. After graduating from the programme, she knew that she could go anywhere in the world and only needed to decide which country should mark the beginning of her new life. During her training she became good friends with a woman from New Zealand, who told her about a teaching vacancy in a newly opened yoga studio in Hamilton. As much as she was open-minded and enthusiastic about where to move, picking New Zealand was not an easy decision:

Although I already had a secure job offer from Hamilton, I did not really want to go so far away, to become isolated from everything. What I really wanted was to stay somewhere in Europe, also closer to my parents. (Sophie from Slovakia)

New Zealand did not look like an ideal choice initially and her decision was not influenced by New Zealand's reputation for beautiful geographical features. Rather, it took her considerable time to accept the job offer and she decided to spend no more than a year in New Zealand. Travellers with such intentions are described as temporary migrants (Williams & Hall, 2002). In common with long-term travellers, like Angela and her family that they do not intend to stay in a foreign country permanently. Thus, when they say farewell to their significant others, usually there is a shared understanding about when they would see each other again. Summing it up, neither Angela nor Sophie thought about themselves as prospective long-term migrants when making their plans to relocate to New Zealand. Applying the 3-D wellbeing model for temporary migrants, it seems that while material, perceptual, and relational dimensions are important aspects of their wellbeing, shortcomings or negative experiences in these areas are more likely to be considered as temporary and less significance is probably attributed to them knowing that one has a home to return to at the end of the journey. Also, looking through the lens of the PERMA model, while positive emotions, engagement in fulfilling activities, the feeling of connectedness to others, and achieving one's goals make the experience of temporary migrants more rewarding and positive, when plans do not turn out as envisioned, the reasons are more likely to be sought in external circumstances than in personal shortcomings. Such external circumstances can be legal restrictions, cultural differences, and other, mostly work-related negative experiences. Also, depending on the length of their time abroad, temporary migrants can experience

culture shock once returned (Sussman, 2000). Since all research participants in this study became New Zealand residents or citizens, a deeper analysis of temporary migrants' experiences will not be undertaken in this thesis.

While chance also played a role in Brigi's decision-making when hearing about New Zealand, she had never really thought about living abroad before. Also, her interest in the country was not raised by potential job opportunities or New Zealand's reputation for being environmentally clean or a Westernised country in the Pacific, as the country is marketed in Europe. She was the only research participant who provided a solely spiritual reason for her interest in the country, raised and sustained by the indigenous Māori culture. She enrolled in a massage course in Hungary in 2006 which was run by a Māori man living in Denmark. The programme was a mix of ancient and modern Māori massage elements, embedded in Māori cultural values. It included Powhiri, Poroporoaki, Karakia, and Waiata, and learning about Māori mythology and spiritual teachings (see section on terms under Chapter 1.4 for detailed interpretations). During her interview with me, Brigi articulated how extraordinary it was that the first time she heard these Māori expressions was in the centre of an Eastern European capital of 2 million inhabitants with no historical or cultural connection to New Zealand. While she also learnt about the shared Pakeha–Māori history, the Treaty of Waitangi was never discussed as a controversial issue or in much detail during her training. She enjoyed this course very much and advanced to a level for which training was available in New Zealand only. While at first it seemed impossible for her to attend due to financial reasons, she was encouraged to put her name on the participant list: "It was an extraordinary thing I did not dare to believe in first. But then Heaven helped and I became completely spellbound." It was a month-long massage training programme combined with spiritual and emotional learning modules while living together and

catering for themselves at a marae in Waikare. Brigi's experiences and spiritual journey evoked strong feelings in her: "This is where I want to live." After the training she went back to Hungary and although she wanted to return to New Zealand, she did not really know how this could be done. There is ample literature on economic, employment, educational, safety or family reasons for migration (Clark & Maas, 2015), and there are also many people who move temporarily for religious purposes (Hagan & Ebaugh, 2003). It would be interesting to explore how Māori perceive migrants who feel the desire to follow a spiritual call to Māori culture to relocate to Aotearoa, New Zealand.

Whereas the idea to relocate to New Zealand was their own for Albéna, Angela, Brigi, and Sophie, the other three research participants were following their partners or their family. Despite initial difficulties and loneliness as a Polish woman with a baby in Germany, Paula gradually learnt the language and as her child became a toddler, she managed to establish friendships with other mothers and started enjoying her life in Germany. With her husband's job contract coming to an end, instead of moving back to Poland, her partner wanted to work in an English speaking country where he could use more sophisticated research equipment than in Poland. Like their first move from Poland to Germany, this meant that Paula had to give up her home and friends again and to relocate to another country, the language of which she did not speak. Initially she did not have too much input into which country to move to. Her partner sent job applications to various Anglo-Saxon countries and when he received a job offer from New Zealand, the decision to move there was made (2010). She followed her husband since, according to Cooke (2007), women are often socialized to prioritize their family needs over their own personal goals when it comes to critical household matters. Family migration decisions are therefore made based on the human capital and career needs of the

husband. The wife's human capital (e.g. educational qualifications, occupational credentials, earnings and career achievements) and career prospects are rarely taken into account (Cooke, 2001; Spitze, 1984). As such, women/wives are often the 'tied migrants' or 'trailing spouses' (Boyle et al., 2001; Bruegel, 1996) regardless of their level of human capital, income, and personal needs.

When her husband suggested leaving the country with their daughters due to concern for safety during the Yugoslavian war in 1993, Mila from Yugoslavia agreed. While her husband had dreamed about living abroad since his student years and she never wanted to leave Yugoslavia, but for safety reasons she quickly made the idea her own and participated actively in deciding where to move. Thus, although she was a follower like Paula, the final decision was made jointly with her husband. They were looking for a country that would grant them residency status as soon as possible because this would provide more freedom and security than working on temporary work visas. After having reviewed the visa regulations of English speaking countries—because her husband spoke English fluently—getting residency seemed to be easiest in New Zealand in 1994. There was no question of staying in Europe as during the war Serbian people were being treated with prejudice throughout Europe (Judah, 2008). They did not want to expose their children to that. New Zealand, on the other hand, was far enough from the turbulences and people did not know much about Serbians.

The seventh research participant, Anca, was in her last year at a high school in Romania when her parents decided to move with her two siblings to New Zealand. Her father came up with the idea as a result of a desire to secure a more financially stable life for his family. They agreed that she would stay back and complete her three years of tertiary education in psychology before joining them in New Zealand. However, student life was ideal for Anca: she studied well, had a

boyfriend, and enjoyed the vibrant cultural opportunities of the city and the times spent with her friends and relatives. Finally, as a young woman of 22 years, she made the decision not to follow her family to New Zealand. At the same time, her parents had put their New Zealand residency application on hold while they waited for her to join them. The ongoing discussions with her parents provided emotional pressure for Anca and, knowing about the legal and financial burden her family faced by holding back their residency application, finally she agreed to move to New Zealand in 2010:

> Things did not turn out for me how they were meant to be: I had to leave the love of my life and my country for New Zealand, which messed up everything for me. I lost everything I had there. (Anca from Romania)

Comparing Anca's narratives with those of other women who had followed their husbands, it seems that she had the most difficulty accepting a move to New Zealand. Although she was already an independent woman with a qualification, she did not want to disappoint her parents and felt it was her responsibility to join them. To what extent her attitude towards living in New Zealand changed will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

This section has explained how the research participants' ideas emerged about migrating to New Zealand. Summing their stories up through the lens of the 3-D wellbeing model, dissatisfaction with the material dimension in their countries of origin played a significant role in the decisions of Sophia, Paula's husband, and Anca's father. Wanting something different that would enrich and satisfy their self-perceptions and experiences in a new environment was a motivation for Angela, Brigi, and Albéna, and safety concerns for Mila. Dissatisfaction at a relational level

were somewhat present in Albéna's and Brigi's decision as well (more details on this in the following section).

While migration literature discusses various stress factors migrants experience during their preparations to leave their homes (e.g. Bhugra D., 2004; (Bhugra & Becker, 2005; Tabor & Milfont, 2011; Tsang-Feign, 2013), little is said about positive emotions they can experience during this period. Looking at these women's sense of wellbeing as they prepared for their journeys, through the PERMA model, in addition to stress factors the dimensions of optimism, engagement, meaning, and achievements seem to become more prominent. Once decisions have been made, all women, even the reluctant ones, felt some sense of optimism about their new life in New Zealand. They were engaged in the information gathering and planning process of their relocation and they experienced mastery when they successfully organised the official and technical parts of their journey such as selling or depositing certain belongings, obtaining visas, or buying flight tickets. Relocating to a new country gave their lives a new meaning with new aspirations worth pursuing. Only the relational dimension in the context of their extended families and friends moved somewhat into the background since, despite the loss of frequent direct contact, they decided to carry out their plans. Paying attention to these positive feelings and experiences is important since they provided women with additional energy and courage when facing difficulties later on in the migration process. Women were keen to learn as much as possible about New Zealand before their arrival here. They used various sources of information in the pre-internet period such as travel books, DVDs, talking with returning expatriates. Based on this information, their narratives will tell how they imagined their future life after the decision to move was finalised.

5.2 Presumptions about Life in New Zealand

As soon as their interest in living abroad has been raised, research participants started developing ideas and desires about how their new life should be, based upon the information they gathered from different resources (see more on stages of migration in Chapter 2.1 of the Literature Review, e.g. Bürgelt, Morgan, & Pernice, 2008; Kley, 2011; Tabor & Milfont, 2011). As the following narratives will reveal, during this phase, the women tended to focus on positive aspects of their future lives to strengthen their own determination to move and to generate enough energy and enthusiasm to face difficulties they might encounter during their relocation and first months of stay ('positive emotions'), as described by the PERMA model. According to the narratives, once a decision to move had been finalised and accepted, even those women who had been more reluctant to move initially (such as Paula or Anca), came on board with the wish to make the best of the situation by supporting their significant others. They also started making assumptions and forming expectations about how their future life would be. This section provides insights into the seven women's hopes and dreams before their departure.

Upon watching the documentary about the Bulgarian couple, Albéna pictured a life in New Zealand that would allow her to enjoy living closer to nature, with more freedom, and in a child-friendly environment: "In Bulgaria it was common to have one child only and I was a solo Mum with 3 children!" According to her, Bulgarian men she encountered felt less responsible for family; thus she was happy to hear that families with more than one child were common in New Zealand and one of her hopes was to find a clean and safe place and a partner to raise her boys. While she did not hear about the Treaty of Waitangi, her informant described Māori as "very friendly, smiling, and quiet people". As discussed under the section

on Māori and migrant interactions in the Literature Review (Chapter 2.6), migrants' perception of the indigenous population is usually influenced by a romanticised portrayal by the tourism industry and, upon arrival, by frequent negative media depictions (Olsen, 2008; Ward & Masgoret, 2008). While it was not possible to ascertain the nature of the interaction Albéna's acquaintance had with the indigenous population, his description of Māori suggests a superficial level of encounter.

Based on her German friend's photos, which were mainly holiday pictures from New Zealand, and hearing about the great life of their friends, Angela and her partner pictured a highly developed country with negligible economic or social problems, and a high standard of education and environmental protection. As, however, their main goal was to travel, and having secured enough financial means with plans to eventually take on casual work, they looked forward to their stay in New Zealand as a great adventure that would interrupt their everyday life in Germany for a year.

In contrast to research participants who expected to find Western European standards and customs in various domains of life in New Zealand, Brigi from Hungary was the only research participant who anticipated the widespread and prosperous practice of indigenous values and traditions in everyday life in New Zealand. As she spent a month among Māori spiritual teachers learning about and practicing indigenous customs with minimal interruption from outside the marae context, this experience nurtured her desire to return to New Zealand. When thinking about her prospective home, she dreamed of establishing a life interwoven with spirituality, nature, and indigenous culture. She saw herself successfully self-employed, running her massage business and having a family with a child.

As for Sophie, she did not have any special preconceptions about New Zealand. Having lived in the USA she assumed some similarities mainly due to the language and New Zealand being an immigration destination as well. She also expected a mix of Western and other cultures; however, she had not much information about the country's history and indigenous population. She envisioned herself working at the yoga studio which secured her a job prior to her arrival and, like Angela and her partner, she wanted to return to Europe after one year.

After her husband's job offer, Paula from Poland became very engaged in looking for more information about life in New Zealand. She extensively studied internet sites about housing, driver licence regulations, labour market, and lifestyle opportunities. She also read about Māori as an exotic culture and knew about colonisation from a European settler perspective. As the decision to move was made, she wanted to make the best of it, especially due the deterioration of her relationship with her husband during their last years in Germany: "What I really wanted was some change in my life. I hoped for a new start, a new life, and its positive impacts on us as a family." She envisioned New Zealand as similar to a Western European country with some exotic features due to the indigenous population, warm climate, and beautiful nature she saw on the internet.

Once Anca agreed to leave Romania, in addition to the information she received from her parents and siblings about life in New Zealand, she spent hours looking at many websites and photos on the internet:

> Based on how New Zealand is depicted on the internet, I thought that it was a futuristic, modern, educated, and civilised country. When my mother complained to me, I did not want to hear it and I put it down to the fact that she does not like living here because she did not want to come here." (Anca from Romania)

She also hoped that after she successfully completed her Bachelor's Degree in Psychology in Romania, she could enrol in a master's degree in New Zealand to become a psychologist.

Coming from a war situation in Yugoslavia meant that Mila and her husband had different perspectives and expectations to those migrants who came from peaceful environments:

> Our attitude was that this is a great country with great people and we have a chance to start a new life here, so although we were different, we decided that we would accept their ways of doing things here. (Mila from Serbia)

Despite the fact that, like many refugees, Mila and her family decided to leave their home due to worries about safety, they did not qualify as refugees at the time of their decision making and departure. According to her, where they lived there were no safety issues at the time. Nevertheless, their expectations and attitudes towards their country of destination show close similarities with those who qualify as refugees since they based their decision to relocate on safety.

With regard to their professional background, as Mila's husband spoke English fluently and had a degree and years of work experience in engineering, they hoped that he would find a job quickly. They also decided that they would move anywhere that a job offer came up, be it Invercargill, Auckland or a place in between. Being a successful architect herself, she also hoped to start working in her area of expertise but she was also realistic about improving her English skills first.

Summing up, the narratives of the women in this section revealed that whether they planned to stay temporarily or long-term in New Zealand, and whether they were initiators or followers of the decision to migrate, they mainly had positive expectations for their new lives. On the other hand, as was the case for Angela, Anca, and Albéna, their expectations were partially based on one-sided, overly

positive reports from expatriates or family members, who tended to prefer to picture their lives positively to avoid being seen as a failure or as having made a wrong decision when moving to New Zealand. This behaviour is quite characteristic of migrants who leave their significant others without their approval and support (Bürgelt, Morgan, & Pernice, 2008; Wright, 2011).Those women, such as Anca and Paula, who used the internet as their main source of information, were also probably more drawn to the pictures of beautiful landscapes than reading reports about economic or social problems which suggests the psychological strength of images in conveying messages (Crouch, Perdue, Timmermans, & Uysal, 2004). Although Brigi had first-hand experience spending a month in New Zealand at a marae, she arrived as a student without intending to collect information about everyday life in New Zealand. Thus, her assumptions were based on a single source of personal experience. Mila and Sophie, on the other hand, approached their future life in New Zealand from a pragmatic point of view: Mila wanted to live with her family in a secure environment while Sophie wanted to gain practical experience with her newly earned yoga degree.

These women also hoped to be able to maintain a similar or better standard of living to what they were used to at home, which refers to the importance of material dimension as suggested by the Human Wellbeing theory. As discussed in reference to the relationship dimension of the PERMA model above, the personal and social interactions along the 3-D model also changed: women became more focused on those family members who moved with them (e.g. Angela, Albéna and Mila) or how had already been in New Zealand (Anca). Their thoughts were more focused on how to secure the necessary material aspects of their new lives such as housing and employment. As their relationships to those friends and family members who stayed at home began to change, so did the perceptual dimension of

their wellbeing: new assumptions arose concerning who they were and whom they could become in the new lives. While dreams, hopes, and aspirations are important fundamentals of any changes, a number of tasks and arrangements needed to be carried out to make them happen. These preparations and farewells will be presented next.

5.3 Preparations and Farewells

According to Tabor & Milfont's *Migration Change Model* (2011), as soon as a decision to move to a certain country is made, people enter the phase of active planning and actions to realise their goals (see previously Chapter 2.1 under the Literature Review). Most of their activities in this phase are focused on making financial means available for their departure and on the acquisition of further information about visa requirements, jobs, and prospective accommodation. This phase of migration is emotionally experienced by most people as a mix of stress, last minute doubts, hopes and excitement (Tabor & Milfont, 2011). Making a decision about what personal belongings to keep and to sell is not easy, especially for those with an established home or house filled with personal objects and memorabilia. The practical organisation of temporary storage, shipping, prospective first accommodation, financial and legal matters, quitting jobs, dealing with mixed reactions, and thousand questions from friends, colleagues, and family members all contribute to high stress levels and doubts during the months leading to the actual departure (Bhugra & Becker, 2005; Bürgelt, Morgan, & Pernice, 2008; Tabor & Milfont, 2011; Tsang-Feign, 2013). This section reports about how the women I interviewed perceived these last months in hindsight.

Albéna did not hesitate long after talking to the Bulgarian expatriate: in 2006 she took just her younger son with her and stayed in Cambridge, New Zealand

for two months. Her first experience was very positive: "I was looking for a small, but well organised town with good schools. It was also a very safe place." She appreciated the green environment with lots of trees and gardens, and the good climate. Then, in 2007 she flew home, ordered a shipping container, and arrived in New Zealand with her two sons who were, at that time, seven and twelve years old. Her move was regarded by friends and family to be in line with her personality and previous achievements, as courageous and adventurous. Their positive attitude and support towards her decision made her last months in Bulgaria less stressful. This corresponds with the experiences of some German migrants whose decision was backed by their friends and family in the study of Bürgelt, Morgan, & Pernice (2008).

In preparation of their one year stay in New Zealand, according to that time's tourist visa regulations, Angela and her partner needed to save NZ$1,000/person for each moth they intended to stay in New Zealand to receive the tourist visa. Thus, being a three-person family, NZ$ 3,000 per month was a considerable amount, especially when multiplied with 12 to allow them a year-long stay. Although they had a very nice home, they sold a lot of their belongings and left the rest of their furniture at her parents' house: "They all, friends and family, declared us as crazy. No one had been so far away from our people before." The plan was to travel to New Zealand with the German-New Zealander couple who praised New Zealand to them and offered to assist them with initial accommodation and orientation. Next, Angela and her partner organised visas, flight tickets, and school arrangements for their son, which was quite a tedious process from Germany. When everything seemed to be prepared for their departure, the couple contacted Angela from New Zealand to tell her that that they had decided to move to Australia, thus they would not be in New Zealand by the time she and her family

would arrive there. This was a shock for her and her partner and confused the message about a great life in New Zealand: "If life was so great, why did they decide so quickly to move to Australia that they could not wait for our arrival?" Additionally, Angela and her partner did not speak English since Russian was the first compulsory foreign language at schools in Eastern Germany. In the last weeks prior to their departure, she hastily took some private English lessons and, due to lack of internet availability at that time (1999), they tried to look at some movies about New Zealand before their flight. The only movie they found was *Once Were Warriors* and a documentary about farming and sheep keeping, which were in sharp contrast to the photos about the Abel Tasman National Park and the idyllic image conveyed by them:

> I thought everything in New Zealand is like Abel Tasman… We were really shocked what might await us there but we decided that we wouldn't retreat and wouldn't tell anyone in our families and friend circles about our huge worries and problems. We were determined to give it a go. (Angela from Germany)

From a cultural point of view, proper planning to avoid uncertainties and potential negative consequences is considered an important skill in everyday life in Germany (Eidam & Partner, 2015). In line with this value, Angela and her partner made many plans and back-up plans in the year leading up to their departure to reassure themselves about their decision. However, the unexpected mixed messages received from New Zealand by the movies and the sudden move of their friends to Australia were something they were not prepared for. As they did not want to lose face and to feed the negative attitudes of their friends and family towards their plans, they decided to pretend that everything was proceeding as planned, which

contributed further to their emotional stress, as being honest and straightforward were important values Angela and her partner were raised with.

Six months after Brigi returned to Hungary from her one-month Māori cultural experience, she was made redundant, and led by her spiritual outlook, she interpreted this as a sign to turn her dreams into reality. According to the immigration information she found on the internet, it was nearly impossible to obtain a job from a distance, so she decided to secure her first accommodation through an international volunteer-jobs organisation which would provide her with free food and accommodation in return for her help on a farm. Being from a capital city with a population of about two million people, she looked forward to her very first experience of living on a farm. Brigi and her flatmate, whom she called her sister during the interviews, quit their apartment and sold all their belongings, which according to her was not too much anyway. While her friend headed to different countries in Europe, Brigi left one piece of luggage with her aunt and took the other on her flight to Auckland. Although on hearing about her plans her parents were not enthusiastic, they did not try to hold her back and wished her all the best. Her friends found her decision exciting and a great adventure which further reassured Brigi about heading to the country of her dreams.

While Sophie from Slovakia had a secure job offer from New Zealand, she also received job offers from Germany, Mexico, France, and other countries, thus making a final decision was not easy for her. What lent the most weight towards moving to New Zealand was the personal reference of her friend from the yoga school concerning her future employer. Sophie's father found the idea of moving to the other end of the world interesting and exciting; her mother, however, had some concerns due to the enormous distance. Her friends were not surprised about her decision as they had got used to Sophie's living in different countries; in

addition, most of her friends were scattered around Europe anyway. Thus, she bought her ticket to New Zealand in January 2013:

> Although I used to travel to far distances before, which always made me feel rather excited at airports, this time I experienced tension and anxiety after my parents dropped me off at the airport: I even broke out in tears. While I initially planned to spend one year in New Zealand, in order to comfort and calm myself down, I kept telling myself I would stay only for three months - until my first visa expired. (Sophie from Slovakia)

By the time she arrived in Auckland she felt really sick:

> I know that, on a psychological level, if you experience stomach issues and abdominal discomfort to the level of feeling sick, it can well mean your own disability to accept something. I felt I could not accept the fact that my life was leading me to the end of the world. On the other hand, however, deep down I knew I had to go. There seemed to be a path for me there that I needed to step on, and, whether I liked it or not, I had to go into that direction. (Sophie from Slovakia)

According to Tsang-Feign (2013), although seldom reported, such last minute worries and doubts are quite common among migrants once everything is organised and packed. According to Angela's narrative, they must have felt similarly to Sophie but, unlike her, Angela had the advantage of talking through her worries with her partner.

The technical part of moving to New Zealand from Poland was not difficult for Paula and her husband: the new workplace paid for their move, their accommodation was secured, and her partner had a well-paid job upon arrival. Her family and friends back in Poland and also in Germany were somewhat upset about

the great distance and that, unlike previously, visiting each other would not be as easy as it used to be within Europe. However, they were understanding and remained available via Skype and personally when it became necessary later to fly to New Zealand to support Paula through hard times.

As flight tickets and accommodation were secured by her parents in New Zealand, Anca could focus on packing her luggage and saying farewell to friends and extended family in Romania. She took with her many photos both on CDs and on paper, as well as her favourite clothes and many books, especially classic literature from Romania: "Books are very important in Romania and for my whole family. We cannot go anywhere without our books, we read a lot." On the other hand, making a decision about what to take and what to leave behind from her items of sentimental value was not an easy process for her.

Mila and her husband from Serbia collected a lot of information about New Zealand as far as it was possible in the pre-internet period. After approximately a year of preparation they sold their apartment and divided up their furniture between friends and family members. Mila also had a piece of furniture made by her father and she was keen to keep it in the family. While her parents have passed away since then, their house with the furniture is still there for her and her extended family to use when they are in Serbia. Apart from clothing, photos, some books, and toys they took a Greek-Orthodox icon painting in their luggage with them as a special souvenir from home. This is an example for how important it is for migrants to take with them objects that become reference points to their identity embedded in cultural, religious or spiritual heritage in their new homes (Li, Hodgetts, & Ho, 2010; Wen Li, 2011). While Mila's friends and family members knew about their plans and most of them understood their reasons, their parents found it especially hard to accept that they were taking away their grandchildren: "Even years later,

when my mother visited us here, she still did not understand why it was better for us here than at home in Serbia. She could never really accept our decision." According to Mila, this non-acceptance haunted her even years after her mother passed away and often made her doubt whether she made the right decision to move. Such 'survivor guilt' is often experienced by migrants who leave close friends and family members behind and is especially felt by parents who, through the relocation, significantly limit the participation of grandparents in their children's life (Bürgelt, Morgan, & Pernice, 2008; Organista, Marín, & Chun, 2009).

Summing up, the narratives in this section reported about the last months leading up to the research participants' departure which were spent with preparations and saying farewells to friends and family members – all of which provided both excitement and stress of different intensities for the research participants. Whether those left behind held a positive or negative attitude to the women's relocation to New Zealand remained significant memories for these women even many years after their arrival (e.g. Mila). These memories are often reflected upon when migrants face hard times in their host countries and can give rise to feelings of failure. Those participants who felt supported, and not criticised by the family and significant friends, were more reassured that they made the right decision despite passing difficulties. They felt more at ease asking for help and support from those in their homelands than those who left with disapproval. These experiences were in line with the study undertaken by Bürgelt, Morgan, and Pernice (2008) with German migrants in New Zealand, as reported above and under the literature review in more detail. Analysing these women's narratives along the 3-D model of the Human Wellbeing theory suggested that the material and perceptual dimensions were devoted more importance during the planning phase, and the relational dimension concerning family members and friends left behind has

become temporarily less significant. On the other hand, the internal cohesions of those individuals who moved together became stronger: for example, Angela reported how she decided with her partner and child not to tell their friends and relatives about initial difficulties. Rather, they decided to hold together and make the best of the situation. The narratives in this section also provided examples along the PERMA model such as mastery and achievement, positive emotions in form of optimism and a sense of meaning concerning their future lives, and full engagement with preparations.

5.4 Summary

The narratives in this chapter related to the differences and similarities in how the idea of leaving their homes emerged for the participating women. Some of these women, such as Angela, Albéna, and Sophie, had adventurous minds and had dreamed about living abroad before. Others, such as Mila, Paula, and Anca followed their family members. Brigi was the only one who had never thought about living abroad before but who embraced the idea of leaving home the first time an opportunity arose. As discussed earlier, due to her spiritual reasons to migrate, she did not belong to any 'typical' migration category (e.g. family reunion, safety or material reasons to migrate).

The nature of these women's hopes and preconceptions about New Zealand was influenced by the information they received from expatriates and on the internet. Photos and videos had long-lasting impacts on those research participants who used them as source of information and they often generated the image of an exotic Western paradise in the Pacific, for example for Albéna, Angela, Paula, and Anca. In contrast, based on her own experience, Brigi expected a country founded

on indigenous values, while Mila and Sophia were more rational in their decision-making, their main reasons being safety and/or employment opportunities.

Participant preconceptions also contributed to shaping these women's dreams about their future lives in New Zealand. All of them expected that their qualifications and work experiences would enhance their chance to find stimulating and fulfilling jobs once they mastered the language. Some of them, like Brigi, have seen themselves as entrepreneurs in their areas of their expertise, while others dreamed about employment in the industry in which they were skilled. While some women moved with their partners and family members, such as Mila and Angela, others like Brigi and Albéna hoped to find their future partners in New Zealand. Looking at these aspirations through the 3-D model, research participants indeed envisioned their future lives as a combination of material, perceptual, and relational wellbeing: they wished for a nice home, a well-paid job in their area of expertise, new acquaintances, and even finding partners to share their lives with (e.g. Brigi and Albéna).

Finally, this section shed light on how the women spent their last months leading up to their departures. While all went through a certain degree of stress and excitement normally expected when going on a lengthy exotic holiday, this period was experienced as especially stressful and controversial for Angela due to unexpected events and lack of support from home, and for Anca and Sophie who both had doubts and some reluctance about relocating to the other end of the world. Thus, along the PERMA model, the psychological wellbeing of these women was negatively affected by leaving behind significant relationships such as older parents, grandparents, friends they knew from their childhood (e.g. Mila, Anca), and places and geographical regions that used to be important for them (e.g. Anca, Sophie). On the other hand, despite some fears and uncertainties, they stayed

optimistic, showed strong engagement in preparing for their journeys, their lives had a purpose, and they experienced a sense of achievement when sitting on the airplanes. Finally, it is time to follow research participants on their first year in New Zealand.

CHAPTER 6: MY FIRST YEAR IN NEW ZEALAND

The literature of acculturation compares the first year in a new country to a honeymoon period when people are filled with positive expectations and optimism. During this time, they are keen to see their preconceptions about their future lives validated, and tend to neglect deviant information in their surroundings (Friedman, Dyke, & Murphy, 2009; Oberg, 1960). As set out in greater detail in the Literature Review under Chapter 2.1, migrants are depicted as quite naive people in the first year of their arrival. However, although full of hope, the women in this research did not imagine that their settlement would be smooth: all expected some difficulties either in finding a suitable job, a home or a school. They also reported that they knew they would need to adjust some of their routines to local circumstances. On the other hand, they all pictured themselves as capable of successfully overcoming such initial challenges with persistence and positive attitude. Berry's Acculturation Attitudes model (1997), discussed in Chapter 2.1, suggests that migrants make a decision on the extent to which they wish to acculturate or integrate into the new culture. Accordingly, they can become integrated, assimilated, separated or marginalised. As argued in the literature review, and in line with the suggestions of the Human Wellbeing theory (Wright, 2012), it is quite a complex interaction of material, perceptional, and relational experiences that influences the positive or negative outcome of migrants' settlement.

According to Henderson (2004), what constitutes successful acculturation or settlement seems to be viewed and measured partially differently by governments in comparison to migrants (Henderson, 2004): The first group often refers to employment and financial independence (irrespective of the type of job the migrant is involved with); language proficiency; acquisition of citizenship; secure

accommodation; and psychosocial factors such as social involvement. Migrants, on the other hand, consider their settlement successful if they manage to secure a job that is close to the expectations they had before migrating or where they can use their education and work experiences; can access educational, health care, and other services; are actively involved in the community and society; and are accepted as equal members of the host society (Henderson, 2004). Additionally, as will be elaborated in the following section, creating a home where migrants feel safe, welcomed, and in line with their notions and values about how a home should be, plays a significant role in their evaluation of a successful settlement (Pocock, 2011; Wen Li, 2011).

The goal of this chapter is to describe the settlement experiences of the seven research participants during their first year in New Zealand. Three main themes emerged from their narratives: establishing homes in a new environment; impressions about first connections with people; and reflections on challenges in their everyday lives.

6.1 Creating Home in a New Environment

Homes and Getting Around

The Human Wellbeing theory lists housing as one of the fundamental material determinants of human wellbeing (Mee & Wright, 2009). Having a shelter that people can define as their own place, where they can feel safe and use it as a place of physical and mental recreation, where they can be themselves without the need to adjust to the external environment, and where they can welcome or look after significant others in their lives, has always been an important goal of people across time and space (Dusi, Messetti, & Gonzá, 2015). In the lives of first generation migrants, homes also serve a crucial role in maintaining their identity

and connection to their homes of origin (Liu, 2013). To allow this to happen, migrants seek to create homes to which they can experience a sense of belonging, a feeling of 'being home' away from 'home' since, according to Liu:

> Especially first-generation migrants, never completely leave their original home behind, or totally arrive at a new one. Many previous studies have found that migrants employ the word 'home' to refer both to their immigration destination and to their place of birth or origin (Christou & King, 2006; Lewin, 2001; Muggeridge & Dona, 2006). (2013, p. 2)

When Sophie arrived in Hamilton in January 2013, despite the warm and supporting welcome by her employer and colleagues, she still felt the distance from home and isolation. She also attributed her prolonged feeling of sadness to her first flat which did not allow her to create a home she would be happy to return to after work. The flat was in strong contrast to all the accommodation she was used to during her numerous stays abroad: it was dark, cold, lacked any insulation, and was far away from her work. While living at a distance from work was never a problem for her as she was used to travelling by public transport, this did not seem to be a good option in Hamilton as it would have taken her too long to get to work and places to shop. Since she could not afford to buy a car she bought a bicycle to ride to the PAK n SAVE supermarket for her groceries and carried the food back on her bike to her home, which, in rainy weather, was "quite challenging and not fun at all". As her initial impressions concerning the first winter in New Zealand were quite negative, they strengthened her determination to return to Europe after one year. A couple of months later, she managed to find her current apartment closer to her job and shops. While this is a brighter, newly built flat, she still referred to it as a "shoe box" during the interviews due to its small size and poor quality of building materials. Sophie's story is a good example on how the quality of housing and

difficulties with getting to places can have a negative impact on migrants' everyday lives, despite belonging to those few lucky migrants who managed to secure a job in their area of expertise upon their arrival. The importance of accessing quality housing and services through proper infrastructure in the settlement experience was also emphasised in other international and New Zealand studies (e.g. Anthias, Kontos, & Morokvasic-Müller, 2013; Department of Labour, 2008; Ho, Au, Bedford, & Cooper, 2003; Spoonley, Peace, Butcher, and O'Neill, 2005).

Albéna reported that it was not easy to find a "nice, clean, and tidy" rental property for her because she did not speak the language well and people were suspicious of a Bulgarian woman with sons. According to the study of Henderson (2004), the difficulty for migrants to find quality accommodation is not merely due to their financial constrains upon their arrival but because landlords prefer tenants who speak accents they are familiar with such as British or South African English. Thus, Albéna's first home was rather run down but she did not feel depressed about it. She turned it into a clean home, decorated it with memorabilia from Bulgaria, and tended to the neglected garden. After this first house it was easier for her to find a nice, modern home in Hamilton due to the very good reference from her previous landlord: "When the routine property inspection came, the owner could not believe his eyes to what a nice home I turned his shabby house." Describing her experience from the perspective of the PERMA model it seems that she kept her optimism and managed to find a sense of achievement and accomplishment by turning the run-down house into a welcoming one. At the same time, she earned positive feedback from her new social environment since the landlord had previously been suspicious of migrants. This positive experience further boosted her self-confidence. The importance of such experiences for the individual's wellbeing is also postulated in the 3-D model of the Human Wellbeing theory: the positive development in the

material sphere (improved housing) had a positive impact both on the perceptual dimension (feeling good about herself and her abilities) and relational dimension (initially reluctant landlord's appreciation of Albéna's achievement).

Although, like Sophie, Angela and her family also planned to return to their home country after a year of travelling around in New Zealand, this did not decrease her desire to feel at home in their temporary accommodations comprised of both rental houses and accommodation at camping sites. According to her, even low quality rental properties were unrealistically overpriced and although they did not want to save on quality, their initial accommodation was far from satisfactory: it lacked proper insulation and heating. In comparison to German standards, the lower level of hygiene at camping places also caused her some stress initially:

> Whenever we stopped the car during our journey, before we moved in, I did a throughout cleaning, which became quite exhausting after a while. But you know how it is when you let the Germans out of the country: a German is a German – there is drama if something goes not 100% according to plan, is not 100% clean or working. (Angela from Germany)

However, she and her family felt that the beautiful scenery and friendly people exceeded all their expectations and compensated for the inconveniences experienced with accommodation.

The technical part of moving to New Zealand was not difficult for Paula and her husband as his workplace paid for their relocation. Due to her husband's well-paid job they could afford to rent a house of better quality, thus she did not experience much difficulty creating a home. She enjoyed the process of unpacking, decorating, and finding a place for everything. Also, establishing the first routines with school, shopping, and daily activities kept her busy. Thus, the period of

arriving and creating a first home was a positive experience for her and she hoped this would have a positive effect on their marital problems as well.

Brigi's first home was in Northland, where she lived on a farm and received free food and accommodation in return for her help. While she spent a beautiful time there and she enjoyed the exotic nature and quietness after the noise of the Hungarian capital, as weeks went by she realised that there was no real progress to be made staying on the farm. She started feeling isolated. Her priority was not to find a quality home but to get a job in her profession, either as a language teacher or as a masseur, as without income she could not secure any type of accommodation at all. As she could not afford to rent a flat without a job, she moved temporarily from the farm and in with a Hungarian couple she had met before, in the Waikato, until she could find a job. This shared accommodation arrangement was very positive initially, since she had a safe and friendly home where she could talk in Hungarian and also learn a lot from her hosts about life in New Zealand. However, facing more difficulties in finding a job than she anticipated made her stay with her friends longer than planned. Once more, she started feeling isolated as she didn't meet people, other than some Hungarian friends. She also worried that she might be a burden for her friends, although they remained understanding and supportive. Brigi's example shows that, while such temporary arrangements are helpful and experienced positively by both hosts and guests, it can put extra pressure on both parties if the temporary status extends to becoming more permanent. Due to difficulties in finding a job, she could not afford to live independently or at least make financial contributions to her friends' household costs. Such an experience is especially hard for migrants who have never been reliant on other people's or the government's, financial support and can significantly undermine their self-esteem and mental wellbeing (Maydell-Stevens, Masgoret, & Ward, 2007). According to

Krzystek (2013, p. 125), "access to employment and therefore financial independence is crucial to building the feeling of belonging to the host society and creation of one's own network". This position supports the suggestions of the Human Wellbeing theory concerning the interconnectedness among the material, relational, and perceptual dimensions.

Mila and her husband from Yugoslavia were also quite pragmatic about their first accommodation: they decided to move where her husband would find employment, which brought them to Hamilton. Although, as an architect, she was used to solid residential buildings made of brick and stone, she did not allow herself to feel too shocked about the low quality housing. She knew she had the skills to upgrade any house to a standard they would feel comfortable living in and for her it was just a matter of time and financial resources. Moreover, coming from a war-situation made a big difference to the expectations about accommodation: not knowing whether and when they could return to Serbia strengthened their determination to make New Zealand their home. Such an attitude and determination is often characteristic of people who are refugees or forced migrants (Simich & Andermann, 2014).

Anca was initially less worried about her accommodation as she was to move in with her family upon her arrival from Romania. Therefore, her anticipation concerned more the space and buildings of her new hometown, Hamilton. After her parents picked her up from the airport, her illusions about arriving from the historical Romania to a young, vibrant, and futuristic country with beautiful modern buildings quickly disappeared:

When they drove me from the Auckland airport to Hamilton, the only thing I saw on our way were cows, sheep, and sheds… I was really shocked about

where I landed: where are the people, the streets, and the beautiful buildings? (Anca from Romania)

Since her preconceptions about New Zealand were to a great extent based on how New Zealand is officially marketed in Europe and on the internet, her initial disappointment made her critical about other things New Zealand markets as 'world class', such as education. Although she was happy about being reunited with her family, having lived more independently for the last three years before her arrival, she did not find it easy to live with them again and be so close day and night. She missed her quiet times, privacy, and independence. Such ambivalent feelings are common when family members unite after being apart from each other for a longer period of time (Rousseau, Rufagari, Bagilishya, & Measham, 2004). Due to the different experiences they go through over the years it is not easy to understand and come to terms with changes in values and lifestyle preferences. This was also highlighted in a study about a Chinese family reunification where grandparents followed their children to New Zealand and needed to re-negotiate and accept new roles within their families (Wen Li, 2011). In the case of Anca, a solution was found after the first six months when she decided to move into a flat just one street away from her parents' place. This arrangement allowed them to be close to each other without always being together.

Although she too reported having been surprised about the poor quality of rental properties, she thought practically: she visited second hand and two dollars shops for art and craft material and decorated her flat with lots of self-made artwork in line with her eclectic style.

In conclusion, the narratives of the women showed that establishing a home where they could not only feel safe but 'at home' as well was an important aspiration for them. Since the realisation of this goal requires significant financial

resources, it is closely linked with employment opportunities either for themselves and/or their partner. Thinking along the dimensions of the 3-D model, for those women who had the means to rent a property (material dimension), the perceptual dimension also became important: they reported how they cleaned, decorated and shaped their homes according to their traditional conceptions and standards about how their home should look. Having a home also allowed women to start inviting new acquaintances (relationship dimension) as will be described in more detail under section 6.3. For Brigi, since she was without regular employment for close to 6 months, moving away from her friends was not possible. Her wellbeing was undermined by not having the financial means to live independently and her perceptions about her own identity, abilities and skills were also shaken. The relational aspects of her wellbeing also suffered since she felt not comfortable living with her friends for so long and she could not meet other people and develop new connections. Seeing her case from the perspective of the PERMA model, unlike the other women, as months passed by, she could no longer feel a sense of achievement or accomplishment since she was not engaged in activities which she felt were meaningful, thus staying optimistic became more and more difficult. Anca also experienced that moving in with her family members after having led a relatively independent life was not feasible in the long-term. As keeping up an authentic, positive relationship with her family remained important, they agreed that moving out would give them the space to feel good about spending time together. Again, this plan could only be implemented because she had enough income to maintain a separate rental property. From a Kaupapa Māori perspective, the difficulties some women experienced accessing quality rental properties (e.g. Albéna, Sophie) due to the reservations of the landlords towards migrants were examples of power inequalities. The expectation that migrants need to prove themselves as being

worthy enough of good housing suggests that their skills, knowledge, and way of living are not accepted as good enough unless they can prove it. This is to disregard other people's epistemologies and ways of being according to the Kaupapa Māori framework.

The research participants' desire for self-expression when decorating their new homes corresponds with the need of migrants to exhibit certain objects in their homes that provide them with a sense of ownership and to symbolise continuity (Dietz, 2011). Next, women report on the objects they decided to carry with them from their homelands to New Zealand.

Objects from Home

Albéna's shipping container arrived in time packed with "kitchen stuff, photos, music, and videos for dancing, books, and cooking books" and even her crystal glasses arrived intact. She reassured me laughing heartedly: "My crystal glasses are important and go with me everywhere." According to Turkle (2007, as cited in Lahey, 2009), depending on the everyday context our relationship to objects can be perceived as a bridge to history and exchange, transition and passage, mourning and memory, mediation and new vision, design and play or discipline and desire. Thus, for Albéna, displaying and using her crystal glasses on special occasions can fulfil all or some of these multiple functions.

In her luggage, Anca took with her many photos both on CDs and on paper as well as her favourite clothes which, according to her, she cannot wear in New Zealand due to lack of social acceptability. Additionally, many books found a place in her luggage, especially classic literature from Romania: "Books are very important in Romania and for my whole family. We cannot go anywhere without our books, we read a lot." Paula also brought many books from Poland, including

cookbooks, and toys for her son. Apart from clothing, Mila and her husband also took photos, books, toys, and a Greek-Orthodox painted icon as a special souvenir from Yugoslavia. While books are also important for Brigi, she arrived with only one piece of luggage which mainly contained necessary clothing and some books. Carrying only one suitcase allowed her flexibility when moving to different accommodations. Furthermore, due to her strong wish to start a new life and to embrace a new culture, she did not consider it necessary to carry more souvenirs from Hungary. Sophie was also more practical than sentimental when she packed her luggage as she had lived abroad and did not plan to stay longer than a year in New Zealand. This was similar to Angela and her family, who planned to stay for a year, although they also brought school books for their child to keep up with the German curriculum.

Summing up the role of souvenirs in the wellbeing of migrants from the perspective of the 3-D model, it can be said that objects from homelands seem to extend their influence to the perceptual dimension of wellbeing: they remind people of where they come from, of their values, traditions, and of people they interacted with. Taking them in hand or talking about them to others can generate positive emotions in their owner:

> Sometimes seen as clutter or tacky, souvenirs are actually often interwoven with the geography, history, customs and life experiences of their migrant owner, helping to preserve their complex fabric of nostalgia. They become a significant possession due to what they represent and the gateway they provide to the past. (Dryburgh, Munday, & Gray, 2015, p. 54)

Souvenirs displayed in homes often serve the role of bridges between people who do not know each other well: they can be used as ice breakers to start conversations, thus they have a positive impact on the relational dimension of

people's wellbeing as well. They also serve to maintain a sense of continuity for their owner (e.g. Albéna took her crystal glasses, Mila the Greek-Orthodox icon to New Zealand). Besides bringing certain objects from home, first generation migrants often find it important to keep using their mother tongue and cooking their dishes in their new homes. The next section discusses how food and language shaped the everyday lives of the seven Eastern European women during their first year in New Zealand.

Language and Food

Research on successful migrant integration emphasises the necessity of mastering the language of the host culture to be able to establish social and employment connections, to understand the legal and institutional functioning of the state, and to secure access to a wide range of services such that are crucial to successfully establish a new life (e.g. Berry, 2005; Henderson, 2004; Spoonley, Peace, Butcher, & O'Neill, 2005). All women in this research regarded the mastery of New Zealand's dominant language, English, as important for achieving their settlement goals. Anca, Sophie, and Brigi were already fluent in English before their arrival, the other four participants were between beginner and intermediate level. At the same time, to maintain their ethnic identity and wellbeing, keeping their mother tongue while interacting with their family members and ethnic friends remains equally important for most first generation migrants (Mojca & Bajt, 2013; Spoonley, Peace, Butcher, & O'Neill, 2005). Also, for many migrants, cooking their traditional dishes whenever possible remains a vital manifestation of their identities (Adelowo, 2012; Liu, 2013; Wen Li, 2011).

Albéna kept practising her orthodox Christian religion, continued speaking in Bulgarian with her sons, and kept cooking traditionally. She talked about how

these customs contributed to her feeling of continuity and strengthened her sense of being at home in her rental property. Similarly to her, feeling at home meant also for Mila the practicing of Serbian customs and culture as far as possible within their home: depending on the availability of certain ingredients, she kept cooking dishes from Yugoslavia, they joined the local Serb community, kept practising their religion of orthodox Christianity, and at home they continued speaking Serbian among each other. Thus maintaining their languages and values in raising their children remained very important:

> I think you cannot express your feelings and you cannot connect with your children the same way in a foreign language as you do in your mother tongue. On the other hand, while our daughters still speak Serbian with us, they usually speak English with each other. (Mila from Serbia)

While speaking Polish with her husband and their child remained an important aspect for Paula, her husband felt more relaxed about it and he often talked in English with their son. She also kept cooking traditional Polish food for her family and was very proud earning appreciation with her dishes among non-Polish friends as well. However, during weekdays, she needed to change their eating routines: in Poland people traditionally start the day with a big breakfast (bread, cheese, salami, vegetables) and have a second, smaller breakfast at work around 11.00am, which is usually a sandwich. When they arrive home, they have the main meal of the day: a cooked dinner around 4.00pm. Finally, they have supper at 7.00pm which is similar to their breakfast.

Being a Hungarian minority family from Romania, Anca's family also kept talking in Hungarian among each other. However, by the time Anca arrived, her two siblings preferred to talk in English with each other. Cooking traditionally also

remained an important aspect both for her and her family, and although she moved out after the first six months, she kept going home on weekends to shop, cook, and eat with her parents and siblings.

Sophie used to eat a wide variety of ethnic foods due to her extensive travelling. Thus, while she liked cooking dishes from home, she did not mind cooking something else. When she moved in with her Hungarian partner, cooking something Hungarian occurred more often and they kept talking in Hungarian with each other. On the contrary, for Angela and her family, speaking German was less important as all of them were very keen to learn as much English as possible within a year. Although they missed some traditional German food such as bread, with time they were also open to experience local cuisine for a year: "We even got used to eating mashed potatoes with their skin on them!" - reported Angela proudly.

Brigi's language use depended on the nationalities she lived with. With her Hungarian friends they kept talking in Hungarian and when she moved in with her Māori partner, they conversed in English. On the other hand, it was important for her to maintain connections to other Hungarians in Hamilton as well as talking regularly over the phone to her 'sister' in Hungary. She introduced some Hungarian food to her Māori partner and learned some traditional recipes from him. Additionally, they both like eating a wide variety of ethnic food without preferring one above the other.

The seven women's stories showed that cooking their dishes and using their mother tongue was very important for some (Mila, Albéna, Anca, and Paula) to maintain their identities while others felt more relaxed about it, such as Angela, Brigi, and Sophie. From a theoretical perspective, the Kaupapa Māori framework especially emphasises people's rights to maintain their own languages, customs, and culture in their own rights. Successful maintenance and development can

strengthen minorities' self-confidence and their sense of belonging to their culture, and make relationships amongst members of the same cultural group stronger. As such, minority groups can have a stronger voice in exercising their rights or in opposing oppression. In line with the PERMA model, most women also reported how they can be totally absorbed in preparing their traditional dishes and how proud they are upon their successful completion. Apart from a sense of mastery, women also see a validation of their being as the providers of delicious food for their loved ones. This generates positive emotions, sustains the relationships with their friends and family members, and supports the establishment of new ones (for example when attending 'shared lunch' events at workplaces and elsewhere). Traditional cooking and sharing of food can also be described by the three dimensions of the Human Wellbeing theory: material means are necessary to acquire the necessary ingredients in a quantity that would allow women to share their food. Through the social interaction among guests and family members while eating, women can feel their person and culture validated.

After having gained insights about how women set up and organised their lives in their new homes, the next section elaborates on their first experiences in establishing new connections and relationships in a foreign environment.

6.2 First Connections

Both the Human Wellbeing theory and the PERMA model propose that wellbeing is not possible without personal and social interactions among people, and that the quality and authenticity of these interactions has spill-over effects on other life domains such as on the perceptual dimension in the form of self-build, self-confidence, and mental health (Consedine, Chentsova-Dutton, & Krivoshekova, 2014; McGregor, 2007; Seligman, 2011). Similarly, at the very core

of the Kaupapa Māori philosophy are people and the importance of nurturing and fostering positive relationships among them. The extent of personal connections can also serve as gate openers towards employment and educational opportunities which are the manifestations of the material dimension in the Human Wellbeing theory (Wright, 2010).

Establishing first connections to local population as soon as possible is important not just to avoid isolation but also to enhance the learning process about the local culture (Henderson, 2004; New Zealand Government, 2014; Ward & Masgoret, 2008). Migrants make initial observations while shopping, taking children to childcare centres or schools, and at community places such as churches, markets, and playgrounds. Securing a job is very much connected to language skills, thus those migrants who speak English upon their arrival have a greater chance of joining the workforce and observing and interacting with the local population through work (Henderson, 2004; Spoonley, Peace, Butcher, & O'Neill, 2005; Ward & Masgoret, 2008). That even fluent language skills and acknowledged qualifications are not always enough to secure the first employment, will be demonstrated on Brigi's case under Section 6.3. Migrants with no or limited language skills usually prefer to establish first relationships with other migrants from their own ethnicity (e.g. Anthias, Cederberg, Barber, & Ayres, 2013; Draganović, 2011; Johnston & Longhurst, 2012). Speaking the same language and having the same understanding provides them temporarily with a feeling of continuity and acknowledgement of their previous lives. Those who wish to enter the workforce often join a language course where their first acquaintances are other migrants since 'being in the same boat' allows the development of solidarity and the provision of mutual support (Ho, Au, Bedford, & Cooper, 2003; Man, 2004; Strategic Social Policy Group, 2008). On the other hand, it can also contribute to

the preference for the company of other migrants and restrict the interaction with the domestic population to the absolute necessities such as shopping or using medical services (Henderson, 2004; Maydell-Stevens, Masgoret, & Ward, 2007; Ward & Masgoret, 2008). This section investigates the ways through which and channels research participants established their first relationships.

As Mila did not speak English, she was keen to join a language course. She also made her first interactions with the domestic population through shopping and bringing her daughters to school. Although they joined the Serb community, she found it important that these connections did not hinder her in learning the language and her ultimate goal was to secure a job as an architect. Despite attending a language course for a year she quickly realised that the course was neither intensive enough nor did it provide a good opportunity to use the language:

> If the only people you can talk to are other migrants at the same level as you, how could you improve your English? This system makes learning a language even more difficult. Migration authorities should provide more opportunities for migrants to learn the language in working environments with Kiwis. (Mila from Serbia)

While her children felt good about moving to New Zealand, as they did not speak English, it was especially hard for their eight-year-old daughter to find new friends at her school. Although keen to keep their traditional food, language, and religion, Mila and her husband decided to adjust to local customs and norms when interacting with the mainstream population to facilitate their integration. As they accepted differences, according to her they did not experience much culture shock in their first year: "Our attitude was that this is a great country with great people and we have a chance to start a new life here, so although we were different, we accepted their ways of doing things here." On the other hand, she also pointed out

that now, twenty years later, they are more aware of the societal, economic and environmental problems here than in their first years. As the study by Bürgelt, Morgan, and Pernice (2008) reported under Section 2.1 in the literature review in more detail, such open-minded initial attitude can positively influence the settlement experience of migrants.

Although Angela's friends moved to Australia by the time they arrived in New Zealand, their local relatives were happy to pick them up at the airport and help them to buy a car, arrange the enrolment in a school for their son, and help them to rent a flat. Angela and her partner were very positively surprised by the help and support they received as foreigners from the family and also by the friendliness of people while their toured the country. When they were not travelling, she attended a language school where she developed first friendships with other migrant women. She had, however, also actively sought the company of local people through the school of her son.

Anca's first connection was her family. As she spoke English fluently, she approached the university to continue with her studies and also started working part-time in a restaurant and as a language teacher. This way she met lots of people from all walks of life and cultures, and she did not find herself isolated. However, while she enjoyed the rich ethnic diversity in New Zealand, which is not present to the same extent in Romania, she reported that even after five years she still felt as "if the mainstream population would be from a different planet." Despite having found a local partner and having her family in her proximity, she did not manage to feel herself at home in New Zealand and she used her subsequent years as a preparation to return to Romania and Europe.

Brigi's first connection was the friendly farmer family she stayed with initially and the Hungarian couple who provided her temporary accommodation.

Through them she met other Hungarians who lived in and around Hamilton. One of them had a divorced Māori acquaintance and, knowing her interest in Māori culture, she introduced them to each other. They soon became a couple and within a month she moved into her Māori partners' home. Reflecting on her first three months in New Zealand she found that a lot of significant events occurred within a relatively short time but at that time it rather felt as if nothing was happening to her. This was mainly because she only had a tourist visa without a work permit and while all of her new friends were working, she was at home on her own. With time she started feeling bored and lonely with no foreseeable prospects. She kept in contact mainly with her 'adopted' sister in Europe and they spent a long time talking on the phone or over the internet to encourage each other. Brigi's example shows how restrictions in the material domain (e.g. employment difficulties) have a spill-over effect on the perceptional (e.g. feeling bored and without prospects) and relational domain (e.g. feeling isolated, moving in with a man she barely knew). Being a foreign female without a work visa and offer of employment (which could lead to obtaining a work visa) can put women into a potentially vulnerable position when they see no other way out but moving in with a local man they barely know. It is then up to the man to support the migrant woman's application for a work visa or residency which can be granted on the grounds of being in a long-term relationship. Such arrangements can provide men with additional power over their migrant partners which is often misused in the form of domestic violence and other coercions (Shetty & Kaguyutan, 2002). Applying the principles of Kaupapa Māori philosophy in this context shows how difficulties obtaining a work visa and overt or covert obstacles in the employment market restrict migrant women's basic rights to self-determination and contribute to social injustice. According to Brigi, she was lucky that her new partner was genuinely supportive towards her goal and did not misuse his position. On the

other hand, in periods when they experienced relationship difficulties she felt her vulnerable position and that she had no other options (see more under Section 6.3.).

Paula developed first connections through meeting a Polish woman in the childcare centre of her son and another when she attended an English language course. Through them she was introduced to the Polish Heritage Community:

> When you are so far away from home, you tend to keep more together with those of your culture. But back in Germany, I did not want to be just with Poles as some do when they are abroad. But here, in New Zealand, I felt better about having contacts to Poles and the Polish society. (Paula from Poland)

Sophie did not meet anyone from her country of origin, Slovakia, but she was also not actively searching for people from her region. A couple of weeks into work she met a Hungarian woman at her yoga class who put her into contact with the Hungarian community. There she met her partner for the first time. She reflected on how interesting it was that, while she was studying for five years in Hungary, she never had a Hungarian partner. Her boyfriends always came from different cultures: "I really did not expect to find a partner in New Zealand within six months and especially not a Hungarian one." Shortly after they met, both of them needed to leave their rental properties and they were lucky to find their present flat quite soon, close to her workplace and the city:

> Everything turns out how it should be, so we decided to move in together into a new flat instead of renting separately. While moving in together after two months might seem to be early, when you are close to your forties, your perspective is different and you do not spend months with dating, which would have been also difficult due to our different working hours. (Sophie from Slovakia)

Having an outgoing personality, Albéna actively looked for connections to locals through joining a local church, escorting her children to school, and walking a lot in her neighbourhood. She also attended some language courses which allowed her to get in touch with other Bulgarians and migrants.

Summing up, the narratives of the seven women suggest that meeting people from their own culture was not only important for those who had language difficulties but for those who spoke English fluently as well. All seven women were keen to establish relationships with the domestic population. However, having a number of connections and speaking English fluently did not always lead to acculturation in the classical sense of the word (as in Anca's case she longs to return to Romania). As set out under the section *Acculturation* in Chapter 2.1 in more detail, the host country's immigration policy, its populations' attitude and practices towards migrants, and the migrants' individual needs all affect each other and contribute to the course of settlement (Bourhis, Moise, Senecal, & Perreault, 1997; Rudmin, 2006; Van Oudenhoven, Ward, & Masgoret, 2006). The narratives in this section supported the applied theories' suggestions concerning the pivotal role of authentic and supportive relationships in peoples' wellbeing. This is especially significant for migrants since they usually need to develop these professional and social networks from zero upon their arrival.

While women prepared themselves for facing some difficulties in their first year, both the nature and extent of their challenges turned out to be often different from what they envisioned. The next section presents how the women talked about positive and negative experiences they had during their first year in New Zealand.

6.3 Challenges in the First Year

Mila experienced lots of difficulties and disadvantages in getting her qualifications and work-experience acknowledged. Her experiences echo that of many other highly qualified and experienced migrant women as it was reported in various studies in Chapter 2.3 (e.g. Creese & Wiebe, 2012; Iredale, 2005; Man, 2004; Shan, 2009). She started volunteering for an architecture company and she worked without pay for a couple of months before she was hired. She considered herself lucky because getting a volunteer job in someone's profession can also be very difficult:

> I offered to work for them for one year as a volunteer because I have seen the advantages I would get in return: I would learn the language and how their system works and would get to know the people in the profession. It was much better than sitting at home and just going to a language course. (Mila from Serbia)

While such voluntary work is actively encouraged in New Zealand's immigration policy heralding it as a 'win-win' situation for both parties (New Zealand Government, 2014), there is a fine line between volunteering on the one hand and exploitation of qualified migrants in desperate need of income and a 'Kiwi' work experience on the other hand, since such unpaid work does not necessarily lead to a paid employment (Immigration New Zealand, 2015). From a Kaupapa Māori research perspective this practice also raises questions around social justice, the right to self-determination, and recognising different epistemologies: How is it just to put migrants in a position to enter volunteer positions for which locals receive payment? How many locals would opt to volunteer rather than to earn money when in desperate need of an income? In such arrangements migrants are at the mercy of the employers to obtain a paid job offer

later or at least to receive a positive reference that could support future employment applications. Mila was in the lucky position that her husband earned enough money for their family and she could reconceptualise her volunteering for the architect bureau as a 'free language course' with additional bonuses such as networking and cultural exposure.

After six months in New Zealand on a tourist visa, with the support of her Māori partner, Brigi applied for a work visa:

> Although my partner never indicated that he would expect me to work, it was important to me to contribute to our life financially as I used to live independently and suddenly I was living in the home of a man whom I barely knew. I also wanted to use my skills. (Brigi from Hungary)

So she embarked on her journey to find a job. Initially she was looking for English teaching jobs. Although her Hungarian teaching degree was acknowledged after an expensive and lengthy procedure by NZQA, and she became entitled to teach at high schools and adult language schools, during her close-to-six years stay in New Zealand, Brigi has not been hired by any employer as a language teacher. She also lost her confidence concerning her dream to work as a massage therapist as neither Māori nor Pākehā knew and appreciated this form of massage: it was regarded by all as not traditional enough. Her Māori partner even expressed resentment at times as, according to him, this massage regime was "something fake".

Realising that she could not obtain work in her area of professional expertise was very disappointing for her and it further undermined her diminishing self-confidence. However, as she expected that her first year in a new country would not be without obstacles, she decided to take on any job she would be capable of doing such as cleaning or doing the dishes. As time went by and she was not hired for

these jobs either, she became more and more desperate. She lost her self-confidence and self-esteem, felt misunderstood or unappreciated and, despite being in a relationship, she felt isolated and lonely:

> It was a very difficult period in my life… It was such a big change in comparison to how I lived at home… My partner worked fulltime and he did not really understand me as we moved together shortly after we have met. I felt like I was living off him. My Hungarian friends worked as well or spent their time with their families. And I did not have a driver licence so I sat all these days at home alone. (Brigi from Hungary)

Brigi's example shows that, contrary to the suggestions of classical acculturation theories such as Berry's Acculturation Attitudes model (1997), despite fulfilling the required criteria of language knowledge and openness towards the new culture, these attributes did not bring her closer to employment, neither in her area of expertise nor as a cleaner. As the Human Wellbeing theory suggests, the inability to secure employment (material dimension) affected negatively her self-perception and prevented her from establishing personal and social interactions with the domestic population. Despite these negative experiences, as the following example shows, Brigi tried to carve herself another niche which shows how determined she was to establish a life in New Zealand. She was also an artistically talented woman who led a very culturally and spiritually creative life in Hungary: she used to draw and be involved in various art projects. She felt proud and appreciated when a deck of the first Hungarian oracle cards (cards which claim to support spiritual insights for their users) was published with her illustrations in Hungary. In order to occupy herself in her new home, she researched the local library and the Internet about the Māori calendar, mythologies, and stories in relation to certain months and seasons. She could connect her findings well with

her spiritual insights and values from home. Subsequently, she drew pictures to these stories, to the Māori *Wheel of the Year*, printed them as postcards and brought them into a spiritual bookshop in the city. According to her, unfortunately, the postcards did not sell and they are still in the shop. As her partner did not encourage her, she did not feel confident enough to approach Māori organisations with her research and drawings. Considering Brigi's experiences in the light of the PERMA wellbeing model, her story is indeed a sad one: Her positive emotions, her ability to remain optimistic gradually dissolved as the year went by. She managed to find engagement and a sense of fulfilment only temporarily while doing her artwork which, however, did not bring her financial results. She did not feel authentically connected to her partner due to not knowing or misunderstanding each other's culture and values. She talked about how she had doubts about her life purpose due to the lack of experiencing any sense of achievement for a long period.

Angela remembered the first weeks and months as full of surprises both good and bad. After some weeks of travelling across the country, she and her family had the feeling that it was worth the effort they put into getting to New Zealand: the nature was breath-taking and the people friendly and supportive. On the other hand, driving on the left side caused some stress initially as well as the lower level of cleanliness of their accommodations in comparison to German standards. According to her, however, initially the biggest stress factor was to understand the New Zealand school system. They quickly realised that the level of requirements, particularly in mathematics, is years below what their son studied in Germany. Since they planned to return to Germany after a year, they did not want their son to fall behind. They showed a German mathematics school book to the local school principal and asked for help or any advice how their son could progress while in New Zealand. "The principal looked at the book and said: What's this? This is high

school; I couldn't do it myself." So Angela learnt at home with their son to keep up with the German requirements. It was also strange that their son did not bring home homework, especially not the amount they used to have regularly at home. However, as months went by, she also realised that, although students do not need to learn as much, they are, unlike in Germany, not stressed and seemed to feel good about going to school. Both she and her son had for years suffered from school stress, headaches, and asthma which simply disappeared for both of them after a couple of months in New Zealand. According to her, she realised just in hindsight what a big difference it makes living in a stress-free environment.

> Anca described her first year in New Zealand as
>
> …the worst time of my life. The NZQA did not acknowledge my qualification. I had no idea what to do with my life. I decided to try out studying New Zealand history, which turned out to be a big mistake. I was not long enough in New Zealand to learn just about land issues, colonisation, and indigenous politics. As they blamed everything bad on white people, it was as if they had attacked me although I did not do them anything wrong here. I quickly realised that this whole colonisation issue is not relevant for me the way it was presented. (Anca from Romania)

While she did not feel comfortable with the content of her papers, she had some Māori and half-Māori friends and she did not encounter any problems when interacting with Māori. Her experience when attending the New Zealand history lectures raises questions about whether her experience was unique or similar to that of other migrant students. Since within the scope of this study it was not possible to learn about it more, future research could look at how the material is presented to and perceived by migrant students who do not associate themselves either with

Māori or with Pakeha. This question should also be extended to how New Zealand's history is presented to migrants in general and to migrant students in mainstream primary and secondary schools in particular.

Another challenge Anca and the other women addressed, during a focus group session, was their surprise and disappointment in relation to New Zealand's 'Tall-Poppy-Syndrome':

> The Tall Poppy Syndrome (TPS) of knocking high achievers is often described as being ingrained in New Zealand's culture. The New Zealand Oxford Dictionary defines a tall poppy as 'a person who is conspicuously successful and whose distinctions frequently attracts envious notice or hostility' and TPS as 'the New Zealand habit of denigrating or "cutting down" those who are successful or who are high achievers' (Kirkwood, 2007, p. 366)

The women in this study were of the opinion that this practice partially explains why their qualifications and work experiences were not acknowledged in New Zealand by institutions and prospective employers. According to Albéna, "They are afraid that migrants are better than them and that their well-hidden shortcomings and lack of skills would be revealed by a highly skilled migrant." (Albéna) These assumptions correspond with a Bank of New Zealand study by Alexander (2012, p.1) who investigated why it is difficult for expatriates to find jobs in New Zealand. He found that employers were "conservative, inwardly focussed, fearful of change, and wary of out-performers, (…) fearful of failure, (…) and distrust book-learning and experts". Thus, if English speaking expatriates have difficulty finding jobs, migrants experience it even more challenging due to their foreign accents (Henderson, 2004). As Anca's and Brigi's examples showed, unlike the suggestions of the classical acculturation theory (Oberg, 1960), not all migrants

experience a honeymoon period in the first year of their settlement. In their cases it had been a culture shock ever since their arrival.

Paula experienced most difficulties around communication with locals. While other ethnicities seemed to understand her well, she realised that locals had more difficulty and it seemed occasionally as if they would not put any effort into trying to understand her. Concerning communication, another difficulty she encountered was the local habit of saying compliments when one does not really mean it:

> For example, if someone looks ugly, I certainly would not say in Polish 'you look ugly', but I also would not say that 'oh, you look so wonderful'. I rather do not say anything as I cannot say it if it is not true. (Paula from Poland)

It took her several years to figure out when a 'yes' means a real 'yes' for locals. She also found it was not easy to communicate with Māori people:

> Māori culture was first shocking to me. I have nothing against them and I have no issues with people of any ethnicities, but I could not connect with them. I watched the movie *Boy*, but as I am in Hamilton I did not know any Māori who are like the people in the film. (Paula from Poland)

This experience made her realise that she needed to learn more about what really happened during colonisation. She had another personal encounter with a female Māori student which had, however, negative consequences for her marriage as her husband entered into a relationship with her. Undeniably this experience made Paula more reserved towards Māori.

Sophie appreciated the fact the she had a secure workplace upon her arrival and she did not encounter any special difficulties when communicating and interacting with colleagues and clients, irrespective of whether they were Pakeha, Māori or of other ethnicities. The biggest challenge for her was to put up with the

low quality rental accommodation and, in comparison to her previous experiences, the less developed public transport.

Albéna was positively surprised to receive a good family assistance benefit from Work & Income, which allowed her to concentrate on her sons and her language course: "Thank you New Zealand for helping me to raise my sons." Despite her efforts, however, she was not successful in developing relationships with locals, either at church or at various community events she was actively involved in. She attributed this failure to her own language difficulties in the first year and did not allow this to cloud her initially positive impressions of the country, especially as she felt so much gratitude for the financial support she received from the government:

> I did not experience any culture shock in my first year as I was busy settling in, learning English and about life in New Zealand. Feelings of cultural shock set in towards the second year when I understood and spoke the language much better. (Albéna from Bulgaria)

As the seven women's experiences suggest, challenges migrants face can be as different as they are: despite speaking English fluently and having an NZQA approved teacher qualification Brigi did not manage to secure any jobs. On the other hand, much to her disappointment, Mila's qualification was not acknowledged at the same level as in Serbia. Despite this and her considerable language difficulties, she successfully managed to become involved in her profession through volunteering for an architect bureau. Angela was stressed about the level of education at primary schools and Anca about her rejected psychology degree and narrow-mindedness of people she interacted with. Paula missed the lack of straightforwardness in communication with locals while Albéna was upset about not being able to establish friendships with locals. Finally, Sophie was disappointed

about the low quality rental accommodation and the poorly developed public transport system.

The women's narratives in this section especially addressed issues in the perceptual and relational dimension of the Human Wellbeing theory. Their experiences while interacting and communicating with other people (Māori, Pakeha, and other migrants) as well as agencies shaped not only their perceptions about themselves but about these groups and their own positioning in relation to them as well. According to the PERMA model an important condition for wellbeing is the ability to feel oneself authentically connected to others. Due to the different communication styles in Eastern Europe and in New Zealand, however, these women felt that the straightforwardness they were used to in their home countries was interpreted as bad manners here. Not understanding in the first year when a 'yes' meant 'yes' hindered the establishment of authentic connections as well. From a Kaupapa Māori research perspective issues of social justice and power inequalities were also addressed by the narratives: the reluctance of employers to hire people (even expatriates) with oversees experience is an example of how they close ranks to hold tight on their power, and how they resist other sources of knowledge and change.

6.4 Summary

The goal of this chapter was to study the settlement experiences of seven Eastern-European women in the first year of their residence in New Zealand. Three main themes built the focus of their narratives: establishing homes, first connections, and everyday challenges. As set out in the introduction to this chapter, migrants might define what contributes to their successful settlement differently from those devising migration policies. How long it takes to feel 'settled' can also

vary from person to person (Rudmin, 2006; Van Oudenhoven, Ward, & Masgoret, 2006).

For most of the participating women, their measure of success depended upon the quality of home they could establish for themselves and their family members, their ability to join the workforce (or study programme) in line with their qualifications and work experiences, and the relationships they managed to establish not just with other migrants but especially with the local population. When talking about their first homes, the low quality of building materials and insulation was often mentioned as a surprise these women did not expect to find here since New Zealand is massively marketed as 'world-class' in various domains overseas. Women overcame their disappointments by cleaning, upgrading, and re-decorating their homes as far as their limited finances allowed in the first year. Objects they brought with them from home, especially photos, books and cooking books, an icon, a clock, and other small souvenirs enhanced their feeling of belonging to the new place.

Reaching out and establishing first relationships to locals was important for all research participants and none of them preferred to limit their interactions to people of their own ethnicities. On the other hand, opportunities to meet locals were limited for some of the women: those who needed to improve their English skills had to attend language courses where they could converse with other migrants only. Another woman, although fluent in English, did not manage to get work and although she secured some voluntary jobs, most volunteers were new settlers themselves. The third group of women managed to join the workforce in differing capacities during the first year which allowed them first interactions with local colleagues. However, despite speaking the language, it often came to

misunderstandings about the intentions and face-value of statements during conversations.

Although research participants knew that Māori are the indigenous population of New Zealand, they did not have a clear picture about the special status of Māori in comparison to other nationalities. Brigi had the most cultural information through her initial one month stay at a marae which made her assume that all Māori share and live according to the spiritual values she encountered there. Her strong wish to belong to a Māori community was partly the reason why she moved in so hastily with a Māori man she barely knew. The other women in this research met members of the indigenous population by chance only, such as when shopping, at the work place, and while travelling in the country. As Anca perceived the way colonisation was presented to her as accusatory, she gave up her history studies despite initial interest. Paula had difficulty making sense of Māori culture as she thought indigenous people were more homogenous and the people she met in Hamilton were very different from those depicted in movies. Angela had a similar experience although her assumptions were based on a different movie (*Once Were Warriors*). These examples show how both academic and movie representations of indigenous history and everyday life can be perceived very differently by migrants in comparison to the targeted mainstream population.

Despite these initial difficulties, most research participants remained optimistic and expected positive turns in their future lives in New Zealand. How far they managed to realise their dreams and how they encountered new chances and challenges will be the focus of the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER 7: MY EVERYDAY LIFE IN NEW ZEALAND

After having received insight into the experiences of research participants during their first year in New Zealand, this chapter reveals how women reported and felt about their everyday lives in New Zealand at the time of the interviews. For some it was more than 20 years, for others just one or two years to reflect on. Thus, when comparing the narratives of the research participants it is important to bear in mind that they are at different stages, not just in their lives but in their immigrant experiences as well. Although the themes women considered significant enough to talk about were the same or similar—such as family and work—comparable experiences were often interpreted differently. This phenomenon corresponds with the findings of Osland, Bird and Gundersen (2008, p. 27) who consider "culture learning as an organic emergent process, grounded in personal experience" and influenced by both cognition and emotion. Accordingly, these different interpretations and sense making led women to develop different coping strategies.

As in the previous chapters, themes identified in the narratives are interconnected and some of the narratives would fit under more than one theme. The themes partially follow the storylines from Chapter 6: the first section is devoted to the exploration of everyday life in general; the second to relationships women developed or maintained; and the third reports on challenges and coping strategies women used to get on with their lives.

7.1 Developing New Routines

This section discusses the everyday routines women developed around family commitments, household duties, work, and recreation. While such information might appear quite mundane and not interesting enough at first sight, in fact these daily routines tell a lot about women's relationships to time, space,

objects, and people, as well as about their skills and creativity to manage complex connections among them (Pachucki, Lena, & Tepper, 2010; Vaiou & Lykogianni, 2006). Also, they provide the necessary contextual background to understand subsequent sections about relationships, challenges, coping strategies, and how these women envisioned their future.

When discussing routines, instead of giving a detailed account of daily activities of each research participant, this section focuses on the new routines women needed to establish in their daily lives in comparison to what they were used to. Sophie, from Slovakia, usually got up around 5.00am on weekdays in order to start work at the yoga studio at 6.00am. She used her first break to talk to her family members in Slovakia over Skype and she finished her first shift around 12.00pm. She was usually free until 5.00pm when she went back to teach an evening class. She also often had to work on Saturdays. This work-life routine was quite different from what she used to lead in Europe where her working hours were usually between 8.00am and 4.30pm and she could arrange and enjoy her afternoons, evenings, and weekends freely, without the interruption by work commitments. While Sophie showed much flexibility and resilience in adjusting to her new lifestyle, this was not entirely voluntary since, similarly to other migrants with a work visa, her visa bound her to her employer and, until she got her residency, she was not permitted to apply for other jobs. Seeing this regulation through the Kaupapa Māori framework it is clear that it restricts the self-determination and relative autonomy of migrants which can have a negative spill-over effect on their families and relationships as well. The power of the employers is further strengthened since it is on their discretion whether the migrants can stay in the country with a work visa or not. This legal arrangement puts migrants into a vulnerable position and makes their exploitation in many ways easier. It also

hinders them to make long-term plans since they need to reapply for a work visa yearly or after the ceasing of each employment (Anthias, Kontos, & Morokvasic-Müller, 2013). Sophie's routine also meant that, on three days a week, she would not arrive home before 8.00pm, which negatively impacted the time she could spend with her partner (see more under last section on challenges). Her dissatisfaction with the negative impacts of her working hours on her relationship also corresponds with the findings of Torgler's study about the *Work values in Western and Eastern Europe* (2012, p. 54), according to which "women care more about good hours than about generous holidays, holding the marital status constant" and being able to take care of their families. Despite a positive advancement in the material dimension (holding down a job in her profession) the perceptual and relational dimensions of her wellbeing were negatively impacted by her work-time arrangement (Wright, 2011).

Mila, from Serbia, was an early riser as well, getting up at 5.30am during weekdays despite the fact that her work at the architect bureau did not start until 8.00am:

> I love starting the day early, when everything is still quiet and all you can hear is the birds' tweeting. I also enjoy using my mornings productively: I do the shopping when still no one is on the streets, the air is fresh, and the shops quite empty. By the time others get up, I have already done a lot. (Mila from Serbia)

Saturday used to be the day for cleaning and washing while she had her children at home but since they have grown up and left home, it was rather done whenever she thought something needed to be done. Similarly, while they had their children at home, they used to have a bigger shopping day once a week but now, as they do not need to spend as much, she prefers to go whenever she needs some food

for a meal and buy it fresh. This is also how they used to do shopping in Serbia: instead of going once a week into a big shopping mall, they used to pop into the smaller shops daily on their way home from work. Thus, despite having been in New Zealand for twenty years, she preferred to return to a routine she practised in Serbia and this routine provided her with a sense of connectedness to her home of origin. Such temporal adaptation and changing back to old routines as soon as the new ones do not seem to be beneficial any more was also highlighted in the research by Van Oudenhoven, Ward, and Masgoret (2006), as set out under Chapter 2.1 in more detail.

According to her tradition, she cooked fresh everyday dishes, mostly based on Yugoslav cuisine. She also passed on the cooking tradition to her daughters who now live overseas. Mila described herself as someone who has certain routines concerning how she spends her days which provide her with a good feeling about herself and her accomplishments. She likes reading, especially historical books. On the other hand, she regretted that, especially after she moved to New Zealand with the children and started working, she dropped some of her hobbies such as playing the keyboard, painting or bike riding due to lack of time. Sacrifice for the sake of children is often made by migrant women who especially tend to feel that they need to compensate their children for re-rooting them. As parents cannot rely on grandparents and relatives for help, it is usually the mothers who decide to cut back on their career, hobbies or free time (Cooke, 2007; Man, 2004). Mila's family kept the Orthodox Christian religion and celebrated their special days as they used to do in Yugoslavia. Her example showed how important it is for the wellbeing of, especially first generation, migrants to be able to sustain and pass on values and customs to future generations (Bhugra & Becker, 2005).

Since Anca moved out from her parents' house and had a local partner, she negotiated her time and daily routines in a way that accommodated her part-time job as a language teacher, her studies, and time with her partner and her parents. For example, she usually went grocery shopping with her partner twice a week, but she also occasionally went shopping with her father. Similarly, the weekends were often divided up between her home and visiting her parents. According to her, they still cook Romanian food and live in a Romanian way at home: "The ways we celebrate or spend the weekends or go on holiday is still very Romanian which I really like." In her free time she very much liked reading, listening to music, and studying her country of origin, Romania:

> I am completely connected with what is going on at home politically, economically and socially. My Romanian friends are still very close to me and I keep an eye on all sorts of developments in my country. I went also to the Romanian Embassy in Auckland to vote at the Romanian elections.

While she could switch easily between languages, interact successfully with various ethnicities, and she had a local partner, according to her, it was rather her partner who has adjusted to Anca's Romanian values concerning how to run their joint household rather than the other way around. Thus, she kept very much her Romanian identity and she also did not consider becoming a 'Kiwi', yet she felt well settled in her present life. This example supports theories that propose that the successful settlement or wellbeing of migrants does not necessarily require cultural absorption into the dominant culture. It is rather a freedom of choice and cultural openness, and adjustment can be expected from members of the host society as well (Groseth, 2013; Rudmin, 2006; Wright, 2011).

After the regular working hours in Germany and the initial years of supporting her husband's business in New Zealand, Angela enjoyed the freedom of

making her own appointments with clients and travelling frequently to Auckland and around the Waikato. Although she often arrived home late, around 8.00-9.00pm, this arrangement worked for her and her partner since their son had grown up. Shopping was not something she was very keen on, whether for food or clothing:

> I do only if it really must be, so our fridge can look rather empty. It is my partner who does the big shopping, usually at PAK n SAVE. I prefer just to jump down quickly to the nearby diary or to the Countdown or the grocery for milk and bread. Shopping takes so much time and I try to avoid it.

She usually bought some clothes only if necessary, and she still preferred shopping in Germany because she found both the quality and the style of garments to be better there than in New Zealand. Therefore, when she visits Germany, she buys clothes for future use. Thus, while for most migrants ethnic food is most frequently reported as an embodiment of the continuation of their ethnic identity (e.g. for Mila, Anca, and Paula, and as reported by Johnston & Longhurst, 2012; and Wen Li, 2011), for Angela it is buying most of her clothes in Germany.

Separating from her Polish husband in New Zealand and living as a patch-work family with her local partner and his children (who is divorced as well) required much adjustment and the development of very different routines from what Paula was used to in Poland. As her partner worked night shifts, she used these nights to Skype with her friends and family in Poland. Apart from negotiating the time with both ex-partners concerning which times children were with which family, she also needed to change her traditional Polish cooking habits. For her child she still cooked according to Polish tradition: first they eat soup before the second course is served. According to her, Kiwi children have fussy eating habits and they are allowed to refuse quite a large number of foods, as she experienced

with the children of her local partner, so for them she cooked differently. Similarly to other Eastern European countries, it is also a custom in Poland to 'feed people':

> When we have visitors, we put immediately food on the table and we insist that they eat. My Kiwi partner put on some weight after we moved together and he told me that he knew how Polish women keep their husbands: They feed them until they get so fat that other women do not want to look at them. (Paula from Poland)

While Paula became a welcomed member of her partner's family and social circle, at the time of the interview she still had not managed to find full-time employment that would secure her regular income. This cast a shadow on her everyday wellbeing and satisfaction with her life (see Section 7.3 on challenges).

As Brigi reported in the previous chapter, from an independent woman who used to hold jobs in her profession and expertise, she became the housewife of a Māori man she barely knew and a mother in the first year of her stay in New Zealand. As her husband worked full-time, she needed to develop routines around her part-time cleaning jobs, yoga studies, and evening fitness-dance classes she solely created for women: "A tiny step to perhaps going into business one day. Till then it is at least one way to express and enjoy my creativity." She did most of the house chores such as shopping, washing, cleaning, gardening, looking after the chickens which took a significant amount of time in a day: "You really can say doing the household is a second shift." Sometimes she went out to participate in a yoga session during a free morning but, as she said "My typical thinking is that so many chores could be done in the time I'm trying to allow for myself". Weekends were usually spent doing housework and choosing activities and programmes which were interesting for their daughter. Brigi took on the role of a housewife based on very traditional gender roles (looking after the household and the child and doing

some part-time jobs in her free time), an arrangement she did not find fulfilling.

Dividing up responsibilities and house chores this way was only partially due to the

values of her husband who was previously married to a Māori woman. As she

admitted, even if she had the time for herself, she would feel guilty about not doing

something for the household. Such guilt often develops in migrant women who used

to be independent and acknowledged in their professional lives and who cannot

enter employment according to their skills as expertise (see Section 2.3 in the

Literature Review on the deskilling of migrant women, e.g. Creese & Wiebe, 2012;

Man, 2004; Mojab, 1999). Such women desperately want to find an avenue where

they can prove that they are good enough but house chores and child rearing are the

areas which are mostly taken as the women's 'natural duties' for which appreciation

is rare (Chorvát, 2007; Vaiou & Lykogianni, 2006).

As a single migrant mother with two boys from Bulgaria, Albéna was used

to running her household on her own. This, however, did not mean that she was not

tired and exhausted at the end of the day. Besides, she was in her final year of her

university accounting studies at the time of our interviews and she also volunteered

for a community organisation once a week. As mentioned previously, she was very

thankful for the New Zealand government for the financial assistance that allowed

her to raise her sons and complete her studies. As the money was not much, she was

proud of her budgeting skills: "I am very good with numbers and have a good

memory, so I know how much things cost at different places. I also save money by

looking out for special offers and buying bulk of the reduced items." However, as

a keen reader, she missed the wide range of books available in Bulgaria:

> Here people just know Shakespeare… but even in Cambridge they spelled
>
> it wrong on a street sign. Three years later someone put it into the

newspaper, but it wasn't corrected up today… Even small things are important, I want my sons to understand this. (Albéna from Bulgaria)

The narratives of women about their weekly routine showed both adaptation skills to comply with work and school requirements and an ability to fit various household chores and recreational activities around these time frames. Women reported not just about how they changed old routines but also how they returned to some old habits years after the new routines became less essential (e.g. Mila returned from a weekly to a daily shopping habit after her children left home). Thus, becoming assimilated into a dominant culture does not necessarily mean that migrants do not return to some traditional habits years later (Van Oudenhoven, Ward, & Masgoret, 2006). Keeping as far as possible a traditional cuisine appeared to be important for most participants, although for Angela, Brigi, and Sophie to a lesser extent. Cooking, eating, and sharing traditional food played a significant role in evoking and maintaining memories from home (Duruz, 2010). As such, they build a bridge to the homeland and strengthen ethnic identity in a new environment (Pető, 2007). Shopping habits changed for some women, such as for Anca who went at times with her partner, at times with her father to shop for both households. None of the women was into shopping sprees and some of them, such as Angela, even regretted the time spent with necessary shopping. Most women also kept tight budgets saving the money for special purposes such as travelling back to Europe, supporting their children, or saving for a house. Apart from Angela and Paula, women found little time for socializing with others (e.g. Brigi and Sophie) or found that their friends were too busy to meet more regularly (e.g. Albéna). How they developed and maintained relationships will be discussed next.

7.2 Maintaining and Developing Relationships

For migrants who arrive in a linguistically different country to their own, it is inevitable that they acquire the dominant language to participate in the society (Henderson, 2004; Ho, Au, Bedford, & Cooper, 2003). On the other hand, preserving their mother tongue is a question of identity for most migrants (Berry, 2005) and is also used to stay in touch with significant others whom they left behind. This chapter investigates the role of mother tongue in the research participants' everyday lives and how they maintained old relationships and developed new ones in New Zealand.

Language Use

Concerning language use, Sophie was keen to keep her Hungarian language and if she had children in the future, she would like them to speak Hungarian, too. Although she grew up in Slovakia and lived in the Czech Republic as well, despite being fluent in these languages, emotionally, she felt less connected to these cultures.

Mila also emphasised how important it was both to her and her husband to talk in Serbian with each other and with their children. According to her, feelings and meanings cannot be communicated as authentically in a second language as in someone's mother tongue.

As Anca's parents came from a Hungarian ethnic minority area in Romania, they can speak Hungarian too. However, since they and their children went through the Romanian education system, most of the time they spoke Romanian with each other. Anca's siblings, on the other hand, preferred speaking English and they were keen to follow a local lifestyle and were less interested in keeping up Romanian cultural traditions such as cooking.

Concerning her language, both Angela and her partner tended to mix in English words, a practice called code-switching, when they talked to each other. This is quite a common way of communication among migrants, especially among bilingual children and adults (Dailey-O'Cain & Liebscher, 2011). Their son talks English most of the time with them, only occasionally German, but he can still converse in his mother tongue when back in Germany. Although Angela felt that her German has slightly deteriorated during the 15 years in New Zealand, even rarely used expressions come back within a couple of days when back in Germany.

Paula was very keen to continue speaking in Polish within her family after they moved to New Zealand. However, after she and her husband divorced, practising Polish with their son became more difficult since both she and her ex-husband had partners who only spoke English.

Brigi's ethnic identity was still Hungarian while her daughter (aged 3) answered, when asked, that she was half Hungarian and half Māori. Brigi desired to keep her mother tongue and also to pass it on to her daughter, but the language itself did not play a significant role in her everyday life as she talked English with her husband. She made a conscious effort to use her own language with her daughter; however, sometimes she switched automatically to English with her as well. "I was so happy yesterday at dinner when my little girl told me in clear Hungarian 'Köszönöm szépen.'" (Thank you very much.) When she was contemplating about something, she could shift unconsciously between Hungarian and English 'mode' in her thoughts. Brigi's husband (between 50-60 years old) belonged to the generation of Māori for whom learning and practising their language was discouraged at school:

By the 1980s less than 20% of Māori knew enough te reo to be regarded as native speakers. Even for those people, Māori was ceasing to be the

everyday language in the home. Some urbanised Māori people became alienated from their language and culture. (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2015, p. 2)

While he could understand and speak a little, he was rather shy to use it and preferred to speak English. With his daughter, he also spoke in English and only seldom taught her some Māori expressions or songs. Albéna still talked to her sons in Bulgarian and, although they mostly answered her in Bulgarian, they preferred to converse with each other in English.

One of the fundamental principles of the Kaupapa Māori research framework is the freedom to use one's own mother tongue, to live in accordance with one's cultural values, and to maintain cultural practices. Practising and passing on their mother tongue was important to all the research participants. They could all still read and write in their mother tongue. This shows strong ethnic and cultural identity among first generation migrants since language for them is not only a medium to verbalise thoughts but is also used to express and pass on values and traditions to the next generations. (Alzayed, 2015). Depending on how old their children were at the time of their arrival in New Zealand, some of the children could still also write in their mother tongue, others used their first language only to talk with their parents and when visiting friends and relatives at home.

Overseas Friends and Family

The main medium to keep in touch with oversees friends and family was, for all participants, Skype followed by Facebook, email, and phone conversations. A study about migrant's social network site usage (SNS) concluded that Skype was more frequently used to maintain ties with closer family members and friends, while Facebook was used to put on photos about experiences and exchange short

feedback-type conversations with people of the wider social network (Damian & Van Ingen, 2014). According to this study, migrants found that the quality of their relationships with those at home became better by using the electronic media for staying in touch. This was reported by the participants in my research as well. Most women stressed that they were so used to keeping in touch over the Internet that it was hard for them to imagine how migrants managed their homesickness before these technologies. Knowing that contacting loved ones or seeing them is just a 'click' away helps migrants to deintensify their feelings of longing and mentally normalise or decrease the significant geographic distances (King-O'Riain, 2015). Depending on the season, the time difference is 10, 11, or 12 hours between New Zealand and countries in Eastern Europe. With parents and relatives who were retired, research participants usually arranged Skype session in the evenings in New Zealand, which is the morning on the same day in Eastern Europe. With oversees friends who are busy during the days, women often negotiated time to 'meet' over Skype during the weekends. Sophie, on the other hand, had a break between her morning yoga sessions at her workplace and she used this free hour to catch up with her parents before they went to bed. Paula reported that she used Skype to catch up with her friends on evenings when her partner had a night shift and was not home. This way she did not feel lonely in the house and it was also not boring for her partner listening to Polish conversation he could not understand.

While Sophie lived a busy life, she still missed her family, closer friends, and her cultural environment; thus keeping in touch with them remained important for her. As reported earlier, initially she did not intend to stay longer than a year in New Zealand when she said farewell to her friends and family. Now, holding a residency visa and having a partner, New Zealand has become her permanent home and this was not easy to come to terms with, especially for her mother.

Mila and her family managed to go home every third year, and their family members also came to visit quite frequently. Although she was not fond of shopping, she developed a routine with one of her daughters who lived in a big city in Europe and, due to a busy lifestyle, had not much time for shopping. When her daughter needed some clothes they discussed it over Skype and she bought them in Hamilton and sent them over by post:

> I know this might sound strange to others, but as Hamilton is much smaller I know the couple of shops I can go to and it takes me less time than it would take my daughter to buy something she would like. This is also a special way of keeping in touch and it provides me with much pleasure to select items for her. And for my daughter it is great to receive a parcel. (Mila from Serbia)

Their practice is quite in contrast to Angela's who still preferred buying her clothes in Germany. Her daughters regularly contact her for Serbian dish recipes as well because they want to make meals exactly the same way as their mother. These conversations were very happy moments for Mila as they maintained the bridge across time, different cultural environments, and physical distance with her daughters.

Like Mila, Angela and Brigi tried to visit their countries of origin each second or third year which meant that they needed to put away a certain amount from their savings to be able to afford these trips. Because Anca was still a student with a low income, she needed to be especially inventive about how to fulfil her wish to visit Romania: she chose a research topic about Romania and successfully won a scholarship to spend time doing research in her country of origin. For Albéna, visiting Bulgaria was still not affordable financially, however, she hoped to be able to make a trip when she started earning with her accounting degree. But before that,

as will be reported in the next section, she wished to see her social networks more established in New Zealand.

Relationships in New Zealand

An active interaction between migrants and host society, and the development of social networks with the domestic population is inevitable for successful settlement (Berry, 2008; Spoonley, Peace, Butcher, & O'Neill, 2005; Ward, 2008). This section reviews experiences and insights these women developed during their interaction with members of the host society and other migrants.

Sophie regretted not really having the time and opportunity to socialise with others due to her work schedule. On the other hand, she acknowledged that, as she spent a lot of time teaching others, she often preferred some quiet time doing yoga, watching a movie or reading a book instead of looking for new acquaintances. She reported that she felt accepted and appreciated at her current workplace both by her colleagues and clients: "On days, when I feel a little down, it can be very up-lifting to hear a positive feedback from a client."

Apart from her work colleagues, Sophie's and her partner's friends came mostly from the local Hungarian community. This is similar to Mila's, Brigi's, and Albéna's social networks with their own ethnicities. According to a study conducted with female migrants in Europe, ethnic networks can empower, support, and enhance the personal wellbeing of migrants especially in the initial stage of their settlement. They can, however, also hinder them from engaging with local or other ethnic populations (Mojca & Bajt, 2013). Ethnic networks can be experienced as negative when they don't leave enough time for their members to do other activities; when they are too strict with their demands to uphold traditional values; and when they propose a division between 'we' (the ethnic group) and 'others'

(Mojca & Bajt, 2013). According to these authors some migrants choose to maintain only random connections with people from their culture to be able to spend more time with the locals, to learn their language and customs, and to establish professional and social networks. Others put personal characteristics other than ethnicity in the foreground when they make decisions about whom to spend their time with (e.g. based on shared hobbies and interests).

Most of Mila's friends in New Zealand were from Yugoslavia and came to New Zealand about the same time as she did, so they had common experiences to share. While they had good relationships with locals, they did not develop close friendships with them. For her, her best friends were from her childhood and they were people whom she had known for a very long time. She was of the opinion that developing real friendships is more difficult for adults than for children. As they spent a lot of time working and raising their children, they did not really have the time to develop new relationships.

On the contrary, Angela had lots of local friends and lived a very active social life. She liked going with her friends and family tramping, camping, and enjoyed organising barbeques and various themed parties. Such fancy-dress get-togethers were especially important to her as, unlike in Germany, there were no *Fasching Carnival* events in New Zealand, where people could dress up in all sorts of costumes and celebrate together. Most of their friends were locals, but they had friends from other cultures as well. However, when she organised a party with a certain focus or theme, she invited those friends who were more interested in it: for example for her dress-up parties these were mostly locals and Germans. She preferred the more spontaneous barbeque style parties in New Zealand as these need less organisation and preparation than parties in Germany.

Paula also had lots of friends from various ethnicities through her local partner and she liked inviting her Polish friends together with her local friends and people from other cultures. They had a very busy social life thus she did not feel isolated from society. A couple of times a year she went to meetings of the Polish Society to practice her language and exchange experiences with other people from Poland.

Anca also had lots of contacts, both through her parents' involvement in the Romanian community, through her work, studies, and her local partner. While she could interact easily with people, she found more common interests and cultural understanding with other migrants than with locals.

Brigi often worked with Indian women and, although they were friendly towards her, they rather formed a tighter circle among themselves and she did not have much of a chance to get really close to them. On the other hand, she had a new colleague from the Czech Republic, and another from Ukraine, with whom they understood each other perfectly:

> It is like a gift. And I am sure that it has a lot to do with the fact that we are from similar cultures. When I am working with them, I experience the whole atmosphere differently in comparison to days when I am working with my Kiwi colleagues, although they are really friendly. (Brigi from Hungary)

She emphasised, however, that when she thought about what people she would like to be surrounded by, it was not important where they came from: "What counts is that they should be good people and likeminded people."

Albéna had a couple of Bulgarian friends and she met up with some people from other ethnicities, although less frequently than she would like to. She also developed a friendship with a New Zealand couple who had spent some years

overseas. She made a conscious effort to make new friends by joining different social clubs and events; however, she felt sometimes lonely due to not having a partner. Her biggest challenge was, apart from finding a job in her profession, to establish relationships with the local population (see the next chapter).

Looking at the relationships these women had established in New Zealand it seems that, while they all found it important to build and maintain contact with people outside of their ethnic communities, for most of them such connections were still limited to work places or study environments. Angela, Paula, and to a lesser extent Anca are the only ones who reported having local friends beyond loose acquaintances or colleagues. Although Anca lived with a local partner, she perceived that the cultural differences were significant and her longing for Europe was too strong to establish deeper relationships here. While Sophie, Brigi, Mila, and Albéna described themselves as being open to establishing friendships with anyone, they were all of the opinion that they felt better understood by other migrants. Brigi and Albéna further narrowed down this group to migrants from Eastern Europe, and Mila to people from ex-Yugoslavia. While Mila felt satisfied with the number and intensity of relationships she maintained with people outside of her ethnic group, Brigi and Albéna wished to be more included in mainstream society. They reported many difficulties in this regard (see Section 7.3 on challenges and coping strategies).

Connections with Māori

As the literature review revealed, there is only sporadic research on contemporary Māori–migrant interactions and how migrants perceive Māori before and after entering New Zealand (Ip, 2009; Liu, 2013; Olsen, 2008; Ward & Masgoret, 2008). Concerning Māori–Eastern European relationships, most research

was written about early settler experiences such as the development of relationships between Dalmatian and Māori gum diggers in Northland in the early 20th century (e.g. Walrond, 2012). The following narratives contribute to this under-researched field to shed some light on how women from Eastern Europe engaged with the indigenous population.

Sophie had not really heard about Māori people nor the Treaty of Waitangi before she came to New Zealand. Although they frequently have Māori customers at the yoga studio she works for (approximately 40% of all clients), she did not receive any information or instructions concerning bicultural practice. In her opinion, it may be due to the way they teach yoga: they do not touch students and only do hands-on adjustments very rarely. So, she is not aware of which body parts might be tapu (prohibited) to touch or of any other specific cultural requirements. Besides her Māori yoga students, she did not really have any other interactions with Māori. However, when they visited Northland she looked up on the internet whether there was something historically or otherwise significant to learn about the region. Similarly, if there was a public holiday, Sophie was keen to make enquires in her workplace or read on the internet about what event or celebration is connected with the public holiday.

While she did not have much connection with people from other nationalities or Māori, Mila detected many similarities between Māori and Serbian culture:

> I can see similarities especially concerning family relationships and how they treat their family connections. They are also very welcoming people and generally Serbian people are very welcoming as well. Guests are very important and food plays a significant part in hospitality. Other similarities are the importance of our legends: similarly to Serbians, Māori are also very

much into history. For a long time, our history was kept alive and developed
through story telling. Although there were written representations as well, a
lot of information from our history is coming from orally transmitted stories.
(Mila from Serbia)

Mila, like Sophie, had not heard about the Treaty of Waitangi before coming
to New Zealand and she did not feel that it had any impact on her or her family's
life. However, she had a professionally, somewhat challenging, experience with
Māori customs. She was hired by a Māori organisation to design and build a
building for them and, as usual, she wanted to visit the building site regularly to
keep an eye on progress. However, this time she was told by her clients that they
declared the building site as tapu (prohibited) for women until the building was
completed and she was not granted access to it. This was quite a challenging
experience for her as normally she would have visited the site once a week to meet
with the builders. On the other hand, she has also worked for Māori who had no
problem with having her on the building site and this experience made her aware of
differences between customs and rituals among Māori.

Angela's neighbours were a Māori family, before she and her family moved
to their current home. The man was an alcoholic and died later of a heart attack at
a bar. They also had contact with another Māori family through their son, who had
a very good Māori friend from the school. The parents of the Māori student were
unemployed so Angela and her partner took the friend of their son occasionally with
them on holidays. Knowing these families was an eye-opening experience for them
as they did not know how underprivileged Māori were in New Zealand. On the
other hand, they also had a client who was one of the richest Māori in the country:

He was very kind and helpful, and working for him was a very positive experience. I also met several Māori at my art studio. What I appreciate very much is that they are family and community oriented, and as such they have similar values to ours from Eastern Europe. I have seen in my studio that whānau support each other very much, for example they learn together. However, I also realised that Māori who study belong to a different part of the society than those who do not. They are rightly proud of those family members who manage to get out from very disadvantaged backgrounds and study or have a degree. Also, I like that their attitude to life and society is different. I find that I can build rapport with Māori easily. (Angela from Germany)

While Brigi became very fascinated with the Māori culture back in Hungary and during her first visit as a massage student in New Zealand, since she has settled here, she did not really make contact with other Māori, apart from her partner. His whānau, however, had difficulties accepting her. She acknowledged that her negative experiences might have contributed to the fact that she has become rather reserved towards Māori, even if she knew that her reaction was a form of generalisation based on some negative events.

Albéna especially appreciated Māori values concerning living in harmony with nature. She reported about a Māori student with whom she often engaged in conversation and she felt sorry for the young woman who gave up studying due to pressure from her whānau to work in a department store.

Concerning relationships with Māori, the women were of different opinions and attitudes: Anca and Paula perceived Māori culture to be too different from theirs to establish friendship-like relationships but also admitted that their own knowledge

about Māori people was very limited. Sophie reported not knowing much about Māori culture but being open minded about learning more. Angela, Albéna, Mila, and Brigi thought that there were more similarities between Eastern European and Māori cultures, such as the role of food in establishing and maintaining connections, the importance of extended family, a collective sense of wellbeing, the importance of folklore and oral narrative traditions, and a drive to live in harmony with nature. Despite these commonalities, apart from some loose acquaintances, these women did not report having Māori friends.

Among the research participants, Brigi found herself in a paradoxical situation having had the most exposure to Māori culture—before and after her migration, being married to a Māori man—and yet, not feeling able to establish relationships with other Māori people, which was her main motivation and purpose when relocating to New Zealand. According to a study by Leong and Ward (2011), due to the negative consequences of colonisation and marginalisation (both historical and current), Māori tend to feel a greater threat to their culture and resources (employment, financial opportunities, housing) from the increase in the number of migrants than Pakeha do. Thus, they might be more reserved about entering into friendship-like connections with other migrants and accepting them into their social circles. On the other hand, due to Pakeha dominance in most political and economic domains affecting everyday life, it seems that migrants are keener to start developing connections with the more powerful group, in order to secure access to resources such as employment or education, than with the indigenous population. Thus, despite some support these women provided to Māori in need (e.g. Angela and Albéna) and some similarities and interest in their culture, research participants' priority remained focussed on improving their own positions within the dominant white society. As Albéna put it, women from Eastern Europe

are neither "Western" nor "white" enough to belong to the dominant group, nor "ethnic" or "brown" enough to be included in the solidarity and support groups of non-white ethnic people (e.g. Indian, Chinese or African). Similarly to other migrant groups, these women (e.g. Anca) had little understanding of the Māori view on biculturalism versus multiculturalism as most non-British migrants do not associate themselves or their culture with anything British. Consequently, they do not perceive themselves to be part of the colonisation debate between Māori and the Government, and rather define themselves as a third group: migrants who want to live in and contribute to shaping New Zealand as a society (Ward & Liu, 2012). According to the study of Omura (2014), since migrants do not hear and learn about the Treaty of Waitangi during their official settlement process, they cannot develop an interest and understanding of how it can be relevant to them. Omura (2014) suggested that, under the slogan of multiculturalism, the Pakeha political interest lies in the strengthening of the opposition to biculturalism and weakening the Māori aspirations for equality and self-determination. According to this theory, while multiculturalism promises certain rights to ethnic minorities (such as celebrating their cultural events; access to ethnic food), the government's final goal is a gradual assimilation of second and third generation migrants into the Pakeha culture. If, according to Omura's study (2014), migrants would be educated early on about how the Treaty of Waitangi protects their interests, they could have a stronger voice against assimilation and discrimination. Asian research participants in his study who learnt about the Treaty of Waitangi during the research process reported an eye-opening experience and a deeper understanding of both their roles and rights in their host country and Māori aspirations.

Summing up, this chapter looked at how research participants established relationships with members of their own ethnic groups, other migrants, Māori and

Pakeha. Most women developed friendships with people from their own ethnic groups and with other migrants. While some of them managed to enter into collegial contact with Pakeha through their workplaces or studies, only two women reported having Pakeha friends and, besides Brigi whose partner is Māori, none of them reported having a Māori friend. As the relationship dimension of the 3-D model and the PERMA model suggest, how and with whom people interact has an impact on other areas of their lives as well. As migrants generally arrive with limited resources and start out with a disadvantages in the employment market, it is crucial for them to develop supportive networks. As Pakeha hold the access to most skilled and well-paid employment, migrants are keen to establish relationships with them. This, however, from a Kaupapa Māori point of view, can lead to a 'second class' Pakeha group made of white migrants that can make Māori access to the same resources even more difficult. It is, therefore, paramount that the principles of social justice and relative autonomy are granted to Māori for their own rights. While there is no doubt that migrants with white skin are privileged over migrants with another skin colour, in many instances in New Zealand (Revell, Papoutsaki, & Kolesova, 2014) research participants from Eastern Europe reported many challenges they felt unjust as well. These experiences and how the women responded to them will be discussed next.

7.3 Challenges and Coping Strategies

Concerning mental health and wellbeing, migrants are often considered as an "at risk population especially when they migrate with low or no prior knowledge about the country they are migrating to" (Draganović, 2011, p. 196). Draganović defined coping strategies as "the immigrant's efforts, mainly psychological and behavioural, which the immigrants use to tolerate, decrease or minimize stressful

events." (2011, p. 196) Learning about the main challenges migrants face, how these affect their perceived wellbeing, and what coping strategies they use can provide useful information for immigration, qualification, employment and mental health policies and practices.

Sophie identified, as a main challenge in her life that she can spend only very little quality time with her partner due to their different work schedules. Due to financial reasons, her partner often works on weekends and, during weekdays when she has evening classes, they see each other just for a couple of hours before going to bed. Due to her work visa regulations she was tied to her first employer for nearly two years. She received her residency visa at the time of our last interview, and thus she became entitled to look for other job opportunities.

Her main coping strategy was doing some yoga as well as doing programmes with her partner away from their tiny "shoe box" home, as she called her flat in Chapter 6.1: they often go to different markets or visit other places in the Waikato. Being regularly in the outdoors helped them to put up with the restrains of the tiny space they share. Actively looking for new and fun activities together also allowed them to experience each other in a more positive mood and mind-set. Sophie described herself as quite adventurous and she likes challenging herself: one example is having done bungee jumping which she was very proud of. Her case shows that restrictive work visa regulation can cause significant stress for the employee due to being dependent and at the mercy of the employer (Yuan, Cain, & Spoonley, 2014), and a lifestyle adjusted to the employer's needs can have a negative impact on the family life of the employee.

When facing challenges in her life or when feeling down, Mila used to turn to a Serbian friend who was somewhat older and had already gone through similar issues in her life. Learning about her friend's way of coping, such as talking to

friends, focusing on her family and her goals, was very helpful for her. After her friend moved abroad, the best people to talk to became her adult daughters. Although she still had friends and family members both in Serbia and in New Zealand, their perspectives are often different from hers. Accordingly, she preferred to have fun with them instead of discussing problems. She also realised generational differences when talking about problems. If she had negative feelings about something, friends of her generation tended to sustain these feelings with their examples, while her daughters and younger people tended to see things more clearly, optimistically, and as straightforward. This helped her to stay in the present instead of lamenting about the past. She also found help and resilience in her job and in her religion during difficult times, and she has never felt the need to turn to a professional mental health provider.

While Anca experienced considerable adjustment difficulties in her first year in New Zealand, she reported feeling content with her life in our last interview. She switched her studies to another area which she enjoyed very much and successfully applied for a scholarship and a PhD candidate place:

> That was brilliant. It was like I finally found my place. It does not mean, however, that I do not miss my country, my life, and being happy. I am quite content now – funny enough, I found my niche in academia. I will study an area that allows me to go home for a year and do research in Romania. (Anca from Romania)

In stressful periods her main sources of comfort were books, and talking to her friends and relatives back in Romania by using Skype.

When Angela and her family returned to New Zealand from Germany after their first year, it turned out that the builder who promised to provide them with jobs could not help. This was very disappointing and a first experience of not being

able to rely on people's promises in the same way that she felt they could in Germany. As their savings were at the end, they needed to decide whether to return or to stay. Angela bought a cheap computer, designed and printed flyers, and together with her husband and son they distributed them in new property development areas. They offered cheaper prices than the usual market price to get into the market and make themselves known. They worked very quickly and to a high standard that people were not used to getting, and through word of mouth the number of their clients grew quickly:

> When we agreed with a client that we would come to an appointment at 6.00 am, we made sure to be on time which often surprised the clients as they were not used to that from trades people. We realised that German virtues such as reliability and fast but high quality work could be our competitive advantage. (Angela from Germany)

While they were successful with private homes and housing companies, they did not manage to secure business from paint shops easily. Angela and her husband believed that they weren't trusted because of their poor English language skills: "Throughout the years we made often the experience that if your English is not good enough or you have an accent, you are regarded stupid". She heard about Business Mentors New Zealand from her accountant who encouraged her to apply for their business to become a mentee. Despite delivering all sorts of evidence of their knowledge and experience, their application was returned as the organisation did not believe they would be successful. However, today she is one of their business mentors. With time, they hired some employees and after years in the business she felt it was time for her to turn her long-term dream of running a fast food business into reality in 2007. However, hiring an appropriate manager with experience turned out to be rather challenging:

I have never heard as many lies before in my entire life: The applicants always stated 'Yes, I can do it', and soon it turned out that they have never done something like that before, and it was not just one candidate. They had a great self-esteem and self-confidence built on air bubbles but paired with a low work ethic. (Angela from Germany)

This was a real culture shock for her as the practice of "fake it until you make it" is not appreciated in Germany. Finally, she had to close her fast food business due to problems that arose in the management team. This was a very difficult period in her life: "Now, thinking back, I do not know how I managed on my own all those legal, financial, and personal matters besides taking care of my family. With closing the business I felt I lost my dream."

As she used to paint and be involved in art projects in Germany, she turned to art again to cope with her problems: "I started painting again during this hard period, this was a kind of therapy for me." She entered one of her paintings into a competition and "You know the saying, when one door closes, another opens: I became a finalist!" Subsequently, she also started teaching art both for children and adults and had several exhibitions. On the other hand, she also wanted to utilise her business skills and after reading the book *"Frommer's 500 Places Where You Can Make a Difference'* (Mersmann, 2009) and meeting a man with an MBA, she decided to enrol in an MBA degree which she has already completed. Studying new things was both a hobby and a coping strategy for her: if she encountered a new task she wasn't familiar with, she felt very inspired to learn about it and to master it. For example, she enrolled in graphic design and web-site design when she wanted to learn how to make flyers and a website for her company; before building their family home she enrolled in an architect course to learn as much as possible about building houses. And now she is on a journey to bring inspiring art workshops

to companies where teams and staff lack motivation. Angela's example of coping to lift her mood and regain her hope is in line with the PERMA model in that she was seeking activities in which she felt completely absorbed and that gave her a sense of accomplishment. Her successes generated hope, provided a new purpose to her life, and allowed her to establish new relationships with like-minded people. She also reported that she experienced personal growth through the difficult periods and she became more resilient and self-confident. According to the theory of Positive Psychology, such experience is often reported by people who go through considerable life stresses (Joseph & Wood, 2010).

Paula's main challenges were in her relationship with her Polish husband, which have further deteriorated since their arrival in New Zealand:

> When you have kids, you forget about your problems and you are more occupied with them, and all those feelings and problems are hiding until they explode. My relationship didn't last and it was very hard for me. I don't know how I managed to exist in the first month of our separation. (Paula from Poland)

Kley (2011) suggests that people with relationship problems often decide to migrate with the hope of either improving their relationship in a new setting or finding a new partner elsewhere after separation. Those who migrate while having relationship problems are even more vulnerable to the usual stress factors migrants have to cope with. While a divorce process is always stressful, additionally it put Paula into further uncertainty concerning her legal stay in New Zealand: she was unemployed and without the consent of her ex-husband she could not return to Poland with their child. Her main coping strategy during this difficult time was to speak about her problems: since she had difficulty sleeping, she used the nights to talk to her European friends over Skype and her father also visited her during the

period of her divorce. She felt more and more depressed and asked her medical general practitioner (GP) for an antidepressant medication:

> You know, in Poland, when you go somewhere, you do not want to look too messy, so I put on make-up and dressed nicely to look the best I can. When the doctor looked at me, however, he was the opinion that I did not look like a depressed person and he suggested to buy a ticket and fly back to Poland due to homesickness. (Paula from Poland)

The doctor did also not offer counselling as an option instead of the medication. This demonstrates how the unfamiliarity of health providers with the cultural norms of their clients can lead to under or misdiagnosis of symptoms and leave migrants without proper treatment (Bhugra D., 2004; Henderson, 2004; Ho, Au, Bedford, & Cooper, 2003; Te Pou o Te Whakaaro Nui, 2010). Another of her coping strategies was cooking: "I love cooking. It is a kind of therapy for me. But if I start eating, it is hard for me to stop, so I need to pay attention." From her experiences she knew that physical exercise such as walking and jogging was good for her and she felt much better emotionally after them. Although she did not find it not easy to motivate herself to give it a go, she reported that she has just played tennis again after a long time: "I am very proud that we have such good, famous tennis players in Poland and this motivates me as well to give it a go."

While the separation and the time after was a very difficult period in Paula's life, she had arrived at a point where she could laugh and feel herself happy again. This is partially due to her new Pakeha partner and his family that have welcomed her as a family member and helped her to feel a sense of belonging to them. She still worried from time to time that instead of having one stable home, as it was accepted as normal in Poland, her child had two:

In my culture you have a home where you can always come back to. It is like a nest. You do not have birds living in two nests or three nests. So I often wonder, is my child really happy? But I have to convince myself that I cannot really change the situation and a bad relationship would also not be good for him. So I try to make the best of it. And I also know that things are changing now and there are lots of broken families. Our patchwork family will be a more common form of living together than a traditional family. (Paula from Poland)

Paula's narrative shows how she found it important to explain her new way of living as a patchwork family, which is very different from her Polish values. Although blended families are more and more common, "second marriages are known to be more fragile than first marriages" and "stepchildren are a prime factor in remarriage failure" due to difficulties that both children and the step-parents have understanding each other and adjusting to their new roles and family structure (Zeleznikow & Zeleznikow, 2015, p. 323). According to the literature review conducted by Zeleznikow & Zeleznikow (2015), contrary to earlier assumptions, the children's wellbeing in well-functioning blended family systems is not significantly worse than of those in traditional families. The difficulty lies, however, in achieving and maintaining this well-functioning: "The blended families' level of solidarity and satisfaction is connected to their ability to negotiate and communicate about role identification, boundary management, conflicts, and expectations" Portrie and Hill (2005, p. 446). In high-conflict blended families, however, children's wellbeing—measured by psychosocial functioning, academic achievement, and behaviour management—was below those in traditional families with everyday difficulties (Howell, Weers, & Kleist, 1998). Thinking along the 3-D wellbeing model, although she managed to establish a new family and friendships

around her (relational dimension), she also needed to perceive her new way of life positively in order to be able to enjoy it. This required a considerable shift from her traditional values which seemed to be continue to be an ongoing process for her. Talking about it allowed her to develop and accept a new sense of being and living.

After having spent a year in New Zealand without work, Brigi got her first job offer as a cleaner. While she was happy about finally getting an opportunity to work, she realised in the same month that she was pregnant. As she did not plan this pregnancy (she had known her partner just for a couple of months), it filled her with uncertainty and anxiety concerning her future. She was still pregnant when her mother passed away in Hungary and this sad event made her to feel even lonelier, without any help or understanding. After giving birth and struggling to find a way of looking after a seemingly always crying new-born (later diagnosed with reflux), she was diagnosed with post-natal depression. Although she did not agree that it was post-natal depression, she took the position that "I do not care what we call it, I only wish someone helps me." Brigi received counselling from Hauora Waikato for close to half a year, going there once a week. She liked these sessions, not just because of the Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) that was offered and which she was familiar with from her pedagogy studies, but also because staff members cared for her baby while she had her appointments: "This was the only time I could spend without my baby and finally I could talk to someone who understood me and who could give me some advice." After a while her Māori partner was included in subsequent sessions with a male psychologist. They found this form of couple therapy beneficial for their relationship, the difficulties of which were identified as one of the reasons for her depression.

While initially she came to New Zealand very optimistic and open-minded, in hindsight she thinks that she also had high expectations from locals:

I expected them to acknowledge and accept me the way I am. I wanted so much to become part of the society, both Māori and Pakeha. So much that I even felt sorry about the fact that even if they would accept me, especially the Māori, I would never be as fully integrated in their culture as I would like to be and this is really sad. So, while I came here with openness and great hopes, suddenly I run into a wall which hit me really badly. (Brigi from Hungary)

Thus, while she started out on the positive path concerning her initial attitudes, her experiences pushed her to the other end of the spectrum which included suspicion, fear, and criticism: "In the beginning it was really bad: it felt as if someone pulled the rug from under my feet. Things that are absolutely normal at home seemed not to exist here." An example she provided was doing the dishes: she observed how people put dishes still covered with dishwasher liquid foam on the drying track, without washing away the foam with fresh water. Another issue she raised was how children are barefoot and under-dressed, even in harsh weather conditions. A further cultural phenomenon which she found difficult to get used to and to learn was doing small talk: "I still hate it, and I resisted it in the beginning, but now I am getting better in it." She understood and found it positive to make some small talk with a shop assistant or with the postman, but in a private relationship she still found it difficult to justify. "With my partner I would prefer quality time." she says. Also, not brushing teeth before going to bed in the evening is something she could not accept, thus she needed to negotiate some hygiene related customs and practices with her partner, especially since teaching them to their child now:

And how I or we have been coping with it? Well, my partner still only occasionally rinses the dishes so I either do it myself or ignore it. But he got into the habit of saying "Bon Appetite" before eating, as we do in Hungary...

You see, adjustments are possible. What was really, really hard was that I faced the expectation to adjust and accept everything and do that immediately and without making issues out of them. No time, no understanding, no support given, not even from those closest to me. And that made it really hard. (Brigi from Hungary)

As she lived in a bicultural relationship, she also talked about how difficult it sometimes was to decide whether a certain behaviour of her partner was culturally determined, which he could not be held accountable for, or whether it was part of his personality or how he used to do things, and had nothing to do with being a Māori:

I devoted lots of thoughts to this topic and to what extent it is ideal to accept the other person as it is, without wanting to change anything in him or her. I came to the conclusion that an overall acceptance can be harmful for your own wellbeing. I have tried it: If you give up everything in yourself, you just disappear, which is hard, not completely possible, and it won't do anything good for the relationship long-term. (Brigi from Hungary)

Since Brigi's daughter started going to child care, and especially since she turned three, she started feeling better. She described the period she suffered from depression or rather, with her own words, "surviving an emotional turmoil without much support", as very long and her recovery had started in the last six months only. Although not without problems, at the time of her interview, she felt good about her life and was able to perceive some positive things as well:

My goals, both the little and every day ones as well as the bigger ones concerning relationships and financial matters, for which I have been working for my whole life, seem now not out of reach and finally this apparent progress lifts me up. (Brigi from Hungary)

According to her, most migrants go through a shorter or longer period of criticism and withdrawal when they are not accepted and an improvement sets in only after observing, listening, and inquiring have occurred from those of the dominant culture. While she felt alienated and isolated for a long period after her disappointments, now she saw herself in the position where she could build rapport and understanding, not just with migrants, but with locals as well.

In Bulgaria, Albéna never went to counselling. According to her, although people get upset or angry from time to time, it seldom develops into depression in her country, thus the concept of depression or mental illness is less present in people's lives: "I was so surprised how many people are depressed in New Zealand. I thought that in a country that looks like a paradise, people should be healthy and happy."

The first time she felt low was while living in Cambridge. Apart from the difficulties establishing relationships with people, the winter months in a relatively small and dark house affected her mood as well. She approached a community house in Cambridge to receive counselling but she did not feel understood there:

> I went there for 3-4 months every week or fortnight, and they just sat there and listened. They did not really want to engage in any conversation, what I would have needed the most. When I asked questions, they just gave me short, half answers. It might be a cultural difference as New Zealanders do not want to appear pushy. (Albéna from Bulgaria)

The person who helped her most in these early years was her English teacher at the Migrant Centre in Hamilton. She provided her with information about agencies and gave her phone numbers when she felt lost. She had a counsellor from Turkey who seemed to be understanding and gave her the number of a community organisation for single parents. Albéna met there a very helpful Māori man but

unfortunately the weekly group she wanted to join was not operating due to a lack of interest. Next, she approached Shama, an ethnic women's trust. There, she got an appointment "…with a young volunteer girl from an Arab country. She was so shocked about my experiences that she had tears in her eyes and was so inexperienced that she could not provide me with any counselling". So Albéna asked Shama to refer her to an experienced counsellor. She was put in contact with another Arab counsellor who worked for a government agency. She was very skilled but also very busy and, although finally Albéna felt understood, it was difficult to get appointments as frequently as she would have liked it. In the meantime, she developed her own coping strategies: when she felt low, she went dancing or to the Hamilton Gardens or watched a comedy on television. She could also rely on her Bulgarian friends to talk through issues. She was interested to hear about the new ethnic counselling trust (New Zealand Diversity Counselling) which offers counselling as far as possible in the language of the migrant client.

Summing up, the narratives of the women re-told various challenges that caused them significant mental stress even after their first years in New Zealand. For Paula it was her relationship problem which ended in divorce; Anca, Albéna, Angela, and Brigi further experienced significant cultural adjustment and acceptance difficulties; while Sophie's and Mila's problems were more work and lifestyle related. From all the women, Brigi seemed to face the most difficulties due to being on her own, then suddenly in a relationship with a Māori man in a foreign country, becoming pregnant, losing her mother, and not finding a fulfilling job.

The most frequently mentioned coping strategy was talking to family members and friends from the same ethnicity over Skype which was supported by activities such as ethnic cooking, reading, studying, painting or various outdoor activities and talking to other migrants. Three women reported that they sought help

from health care providers with differing success. Paula wanted to receive antidepressant medication and a referral to counselling due to her extreme distress around her divorce and uncertainties, however, the doctor interpreted her neat dress as a sign of being "not depressed enough" to receive medication or counselling and that her only problem was homesickness.

Brigi was diagnosed with post-natal depression, a diagnosis she did not agree with as she already felt depressed before becoming pregnant due to not finding work, relationship difficulties, and culture shock problems. However, she agreed to accept the diagnosis for the sake of getting some help. She was lucky that counselling revealed her real problems as well. Albéna had difficulties receiving culturally relevant professional counselling and when she finally felt understood by a Turkish counsellor, the number of subsidised sessions she was entitled to receive were too limited to make real progress. Finally, her example shows that for her, despite being 'white European', neither mainstream counselling nor ethnic counselling based on Asian traditions helped, but a counsellor from Bulgaria's neighbouring country, Turkey, did. Thus, facing 'white' migrants it remains important that health care providers screen for cultural background and needs without making biased assumptions.

7.4 Summary

The goal of this chapter was to provide an insight into the everyday lives of the women after their first year in New Zealand. They showed much determination to develop routines that allowed time both for integration into the mainstream study and work environment as well as keeping up relationships with their homes of origin via Facebook or Skype.

While, according to Berry's Acculturation Attitudes model (1997), most research participants would come into the category of "integrated", since all kept an interest in maintaining their culture and developing ties through study, work or relationships with locals, some of them did not feel integrated, even after years spent in New Zealand (e.g. Albéna, Brigi, Anca), or they felt they fluctuated over the years between feeling integrated and separated (see more in Chapter 2.1 on acculturation). According to the interactive acculturation model however, (Bourhis, Moise, Senecal, & Perreault, 1997), if migrants experience rejection and repeatedly "run into a wall", as Brigi put it, sooner or later they can lose interest in making attempts to interact with the host society. Thus, their separation would not be self-selected but rather forced upon them.

This chapter also provided insight into the research participants' perception of Māori culture and connections, and how some of the women felt many similarities based on family, community, and environmental values while others regarded it a very different culture that is hard to interact with.

Finally, women reported on major challenges and coping strategies to overcome emotionally difficult periods. Family and friends remained the primary source of comfort and understanding supported by study, work, religion, and recreational activities. Three women approached New Zealand mental health providers with different degrees of success. Due to cultural misconceptions, one was not found depressed enough to get entry into the system; one was diagnosed with a disorder she did not believe she had; and it took the third many rounds to receive culturally relevant counselling. The final chapter based on interview summaries will report on how research participants envisioned their future lives in New Zealand, and what insights they developed from their experiences and from discussions amongst each other during the focus group sessions.

CHAPTER 8: MY INSIGHTS AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

This chapter is based both on individual interviews and on narratives from two focus group sessions. The women welcomed the opportunity to get to know each other and to exchange experiences. Chapter 8.1 discusses how women established first connections with each other during the first focus group session. This is followed by narratives about insights women developed during their time in New Zealand, revealing both the positive and negative aspects of their everyday lives (8.2). Finally, in Chapter 8.3, the research participants talk about how they envisioned their future and whether they thought about staying in or leaving New Zealand.

8.1 Meeting Other Research Participants

As reported in Chapter 3, research participants were offered the opportunity to get to know each other and to exchange their migration and life experiences with each other. Although everyone expressed interest in attending the group sessions, Mila, Sophie, and Brigi could not attend the first group session, and Mila and Angela the second due to unexpected events.

During her interviews Albéna, my very first research participant, offered during her interviews to host our first group session, so we came together in her home. We planned to spend 1-1.5 hours together but our host encouraged everyone to stay, and the women had a great time filled with conversations, laughter, and tasty ethnic food from our countries. The evening started with our host's cooking presentation: Albéna prepared a Bulgarian cream-cheese dip for us. While talking about the ingredients she often referred back to Bulgarian cheese, how it is different from what is produced in New Zealand and this generated a discussion with Anca

from Romania, who knew where to buy Bulgarian cheese in Hamilton. According to Johnston and Longhurst,

> the sharing of food and feelings helps establish affective ties between women migrants – across ethnic differences - and to the place of Hamilton. These hopeful intercultural encounters – discussed and digested in kitchens – are moments of reciprocity and mutual recognition between ethnically and culturally 'different' women. (2012, p. 325)

In this sense, when Anca told Albéna where to buy Bulgarian cheese, she not only was helpful but also demonstrated her familiarity with and appreciation of an ethnic food of her host and provided an example of her local knowledge. Talking about streets and shops they were familiar with in Hamilton allowed women to show their local, 'insider' knowledge and to validate a sense of belonging to the city through it.

When everyone arrived we all introduced the foods we brought and while talking about recipes participants expressed genuine interest about whether a certain dish was known and prepared similarly or differently in their countries of origin. Anca explained that she put her dish together using a variety of vegetables and, as it has not an "official" name, she named it "Mediterranean filo pizza". Paula from Poland brought a fish dish in Greek style, in Polish 'ryba po grecku', in which the fish was immersed in carrots. Angela from Germany brought an apple pie, in German 'Apfelstrudel', and I baked some Hungarian sour cherry/poppy-seed muffins, in Hungarian 'meggyes-mákos pite' (Figure 8.1):

Figure 8.1. Dishes from Eastern Europe

Notes: Hungarian 'meggyes-mákos pite'; German 'Apfelstrudel';
Polish 'ryba po grecku' (Source: free source internet blogs)

Interestingly, everyone was keen to know, not just what the name of a dish was in English, but also what the original name was. Women tried to pronounce it, thought about whether they had heard it before and whether it sounded similar in their language. For example, 'pirog' or 'pirogi' is a filled pastry which has the same name in Bulgaria, Poland and Romania, although they use slightly different fillings. 'Pogácsa' from Hungary sounds similar in Bulgaria and Romania.

The process described above was neither planned nor suggested, it evolved spontaneously. As our host was somewhat late with her dish preparations, instead of feeling stressed about it, she decided to share the recipe while preparing it. According to Duruz (2010), preparing and sharing traditional food helps recall of memories from home and establishing connections amongst migrants. Furthermore, it can create a space for mutual appreciation and trust among women, and allow them to feel comfortable to talk about more sensitive issues later on (Johnston & Longhurst, 2012). From the 3-D wellbeing model perspective, food served as the embodiment of the material dimension fostered the development of personal interactions among the research participants (relational dimension), and both food

and pleasant conversation had a positive effect on how women experienced each other and themselves during this gathering (perceptual dimension).

While eating, participants started asking each other about how long they had been in New Zealand. After some discussion two women realised that they met before at an event and another two women also figured out that one had participated in a training session held by the other some years ago. It seemed to be very important to the women to identify commonalities during the first half of our get-together through food, places, events, and people they may know. This need was well supported by the whakawhanaungatanga principle of the Kaupapa Māori framework as well which allowed time and space to make it happen, without rushing the women into answering certain research questions the researcher was interested in. The process also facilitated the development of a sense of togetherness among the research participants and the researcher which allowed us to begin to become a 'whānau' initiated by the research project but reaching beyond it.

From the commonalities, women gradually shifted towards showing each other how much they knew about each other's countries and cultures: Albéna from Bulgaria recounted how she had visited Poland, Germany, Hungary, and Romania on different occasions. Subsequently the other women joined in and talked about their travels and people they knew from each other's countries of origin. For example, although Paula is from Poland, she stressed that one of her best friends is from Germany. Considering past centuries of European history, the countries women came from had often been in conflict and formed various alliances which continue even today at the diplomatic tables of the European Union. Expressing positive things about each other's nations showed how important it was for participants to show mutual acceptance to develop trust and to create a space where they felt safe and comfortable to talk about more sensitive topics. Paula's disclosure

that her best friend was from Germany and how she appreciated German virtues provided an inviting space for Angela from Germany to enter into conversation with her. As Paula put it quite rightly:

> It seems that we can discover so many commonalities among each other and our countries, yet back in Europe, within the boundaries of our nations, we rather tend to focus on differences between our cultures. Probably this is because we are so far away from home and we all are migrants from the same region. (Paula from Poland)

This was acknowledged by the other women as well. As literature suggests, migrants often establish easier relationships with those from their own ethnic origin or with other migrants due to the feeling of 'being in the same boat' (Bürgelt, Morgan, & Pernice, 2008; Johnston & Longhurst, 2012; Labour and Immigration Research Centre, 2012). As the study about cooking sessions with diverse ethnic women in Hamilton showed, the sense of solidarity can be a strong catalyst to mutual understanding and looking for commonalities instead of differences among each other (Johnston & Longhurst, 2012).

After commonalities and mutual trust were established, the second part of the evening was spent discussing problems and controversies that participants had experienced in New Zealand. Towards the end of our get-together research participants exchanged their contact details, extended invitations to each other, decided to attend various events together, and expressed their wishes to have another opportunity to meet the absent research participants. Subsequently, some days later, research participants exchanged emails about how great the evening was and reassured each other about staying in touch. The second focus group session took place two months later, however, as the partner of the hosting research participant unexpectedly joined our group, the conversation was less spontaneous

and the topics discussed were greatly influenced by the male host (see previously in Chapter 3.2 on Methodology). Thus, this chapter is mostly based on narratives from the first focus group and personal interviews.

8.2 Reflections about Life in New Zealand

Women found it especially important to talk about their attempts, successes, and failures to understand the "Kiwi way of doing things". They were curious about how other migrants made sense of certain cultural characteristics of everyday life in New Zealand and whether the challenges they experienced were similar or different. As will be evident in the subsequent sections, women spent more time discussing what did not work out for them in New Zealand than talking about positive aspects: This was because they hoped to hear about new perspectives, explanations, and alternative coping strategies for issues which, after years, still affected their everyday lives and wellbeing in New Zealand.

Challenges in Everyday Life in New Zealand

One of the most discussed themes was the restricted access to the skilled employment market. Hidden barriers make it very difficult for qualified and skilled migrants to enter. Most of the women provided several personal examples of how they did not succeed in securing employment or contracts due to having an accent, being overqualified or too experienced, or not having personal networks. As discussed in Section 2.3 under the literature reviewed in more detail, similar experiences were reported in other Canadian and New Zealand studies (e.g. (Bürgelt, Morgan, & Pernice, 2008; Creese & Wiebe, 2012; Man, 2004; McIntyre, 2014; Shan, 2009). According to the research participants, the practice of getting a job through knowing someone influential is called 'corruption' in their countries,

while the same is called 'networking' in New Zealand and holds no negative connotations. While the women could accept when, out of two applicants with similar educational and work experience, the more familiar would be chosen, they found the New Zealand practice of putting networks above expertise unfair since it is especially difficult for migrants to establish professional networks without getting access to the profession itself. A recent article about ethical dilemmas concerning networking supports these migrant women's view of networking as a corrupt practice: Dobos (2015, p. 1) defined networking as an activity which seeks "to improve one's prospects of prevailing in formal competitive processes for jobs…". According to him, while people in favour of networking call it "socialising for success" (2015, p. 1), those with merit outside the network are disadvantaged on the following grounds:

1. Where a job is the object of competition, candidates should be assessed purely on their relevant qualifications (the principle of meritocracy).

2. Favouritism towards family or friends in competitive selection processes— nepotism/cronyism—is contrary to the principle of meritocracy.

3. Favouritism based on personal fondness or affection (''like-ism'') is morally akin to nepotism/cronyism— it, too, is contrary to meritocracy.

4. Networking is an attempt to cultivate and benefit from like-ism.

5. Therefore, networking constitutes an attempt to bring about an injustice in personnel selection, by the lights of the principle of meritocracy. (Dobos, 2015, p. 2)

Paula talked about how, despite holding a master's degree in policy making, she could not find a job in the corresponding job market. She applied for some jobs at governmental organisations, however, according to her experience, they tended to pick rather lower-qualified local applicants instead. She knew an Indian woman

with a PhD in nuclear physics who could not find any job in any other related field, not even as a tutor in physics, and who now works at a childcare centre. Such down-skilling has undoubtedly a negative effect on people's self-worth, identity, and wellbeing (Man, 2004; Meares, 2010). Despite these negative effects, skilled migrants keep entering occupations significantly below their level of skills and expertise. They do this, not only due to financial pressure (material dimension), but also to have a sense of 'doing something meaningful' and 'belonging somewhere' instead of staying at home unemployed and isolated. As Brigi reported in Chapter 7.3, she could never imagine that she would not be hired even as a cleaner and this experience further contributed to her sense of hopelessness concerning herself and her future.

Albéna heard from one of her friends, who has been in New Zealand for 20 years that people were afraid that skilled migrants would take their jobs. She had to laugh a lot when she told her story: "Of course I could to take their jobs! Because I would be a good teacher! They should improve their teaching skills and not just stay at the same level." She compared her experiences to those made in Europe: "There, if people hear about someone who is especially good, they want to go to learn from them or hire them. Here, people are the opposite: If they know you are good, they run away from you." Surveys and research conducted with migrants and expatriates in New Zealand seem to support Albéna's experience (e.g. Adelowo, 2012; Alexander, 2012; Henderson, 2004; Strategic Social Policy Group, 2008).

Participants reported another culture-specific phenomenon they had difficulties coping with: on many occasions, even if locals acknowledged that something was not good, changing or improving services, products or processes was not viewed as important until they were in some way manifestly broken. Women raised examples from education, trade, and business processes. Albéna

showed one of the diplomas she received at a tertiary institution upon completion of her studies. They provided her with a "Diploma in Science", which she never was enrolled in. When she wanted to exchange it to the diploma she was actually enrolled in, she was sent away and told that there was no such qualification. She talked to other students in her group and they received the correct diploma. So, she went back to get her diploma changed but, although this was more than a year ago, she has not heard back since.

Although some of the participants had been in New Zealand for more than ten years, they still experienced that being forthright, in whatever polite way, is often perceived as rudeness in New Zealand. This cultural difference corresponds with the narratives of other Eastern European research participants in the study of McIntyre (2014, p. 271) on their acculturation experiences in the context of workplace cultural diversity dynamics in New Zealand:

> (In Croatia) they will directly tell you what they think about you and your work. It's much better if you are straightforward with the person. There might be situations when politeness is not the best thing. (Irene, 51-65, Croatia, academic)

> (Kiwis) weren't used to my direct style, initially. I won't go around the bush. But I offended Kiwi when I said 'you have done this wrong'. They said 'oh, we never tell this kind of stuff direct'. Now I'm more delicate. (Theresa, 51-65, Romania, librarian)

In my study, Angela recalled that, due to her wish to fit in, she tried a couple of times to keep quiet about things that were still minor problems and had the potential to become big ones, however, she always regretted it afterwards. Not just

because once the problems got bigger they were more difficult to sort out, but she also felt a sense of guilt about not insisting on an earlier intervention. It seemed to her as if she acted against her own values and personality. Similar experiences were reported by Eastern European research participants in McIntyre's study (2014, pp. 273-274):

> In Hungary, on average, the quality and the standards and the effort you should put into work are much higher than here in New Zealand. I can see sometimes it disturbs my colleagues but I don't want to produce below the standard I was used to. (Nigel, 36-50, Hungary, engineer)

> I like to do a thorough job. My mother always said, 'do this properly'. In my work places in Eastern Europe my colleagues did their job professionally, thoroughly. In New Zealand there's a bit of flying on the surface. If I was a manager I'd enhance the level of thoroughness in New Zealand. (Nick, 36-50, ex-Yugoslavia, engineer)

Thus, thinking along the 3-D wellbeing model, for Angela both the perceptional and relational dimensions were undermined by not acting in line with her values which, according to her perception, jeopardises the upholding of an authentic relationship between herself and her colleagues. The women were of the opinion that there is a false sense of politeness in New Zealand which prevents people from exercising and receiving well-meant critique. As people seldom hear any critique, they assume that they do not need to change anything and the nation is lulled into a false sense of "we are a great nation and everything is all right here" (Anca). Based on her more than 15 years long experience of living in New Zealand, Angela was of the opinion that

For the sake of being nice New Zealanders are not used to say the truth. They say: 'Oh, all right, that's fine' – even if they think the opposite. They also find it hard to exercise constructive critique and especially accept critique. I nearly lost my mind when at organisational meetings they rather did not make a decision just to avoid offending someone who would not agree. (Angela from Germany)

Research participants in McIntyre's study also had difficulties understanding the local way of politeness on the costs of quality at workplaces (2014, pp. 277):

Let's say you're lazy, you're not doing the job properly but they still try to be your friend, talk to you… sugar-coated basically. (…) I'm still struggling to understand why they are doing it. True feelings are fighting in me … Let's face it, (…) people lose their jobs in my country and you learn very fast. It's harsh but there are advantages. (Freddy, 21-35, Hungary, hospitality)

Paula traced back the reasons for this cultural behavioural form to how Pakeha parents overpraise their children:

They say 'Good boy!' for everything, even if it is just a normal thing you can expect from a child to do it: Walking – Good boy! Greeting someone and putting away something – Good boy! As if it would be an extraordinary thing. On the other hand, as children are seldom critiqued here, they grow into adults that cannot take criticism and are always satisfied with 'good enough' levels and take it as an offense if someone suggests that something could be done better. (Paula from Poland)

According to the research participants, this overly positive mentality is also backed by the New Zealand government and its education and media policies which women compared to those of their nations during the communist era:

> Here (New Zealand) is the same as what in our countries used to be during communism: The majority of public media is about how good the country and government is, although it is led by a mentally disturbed person *(reference to John Key).* If you hear anything from abroad, that is always negative: wars, accidents or disasters. And our countries are depicted as poor, without any culture or education. (Albéna from Bulgaria)

Albéna told how she was asked whether there were glass-windows on houses in Bulgaria and whether they have televisions. Anca talked about how everyone who hears about Romania thinks about either Dracula, gipsies or orphanages. While Albéna tried to find some excuses for the lack of knowledge due to New Zealand's remoteness, Anca was the opinion that in the age of the internet there is no excuse for why people could not access unbiased news here.

These last quotes show how women were interested in understanding the New Zealand culture, way of thinking, and everyday life. They looked for possible explanations and connections between how people are raised and how public opinion and norms are formed by media and government interests since all these affect their everyday lives and interactions with the domestic population and institutions. While the New Zealand immigration policy proposes the active participation and contribution of migrants to society (New Zealand Government, 2014), new settlers experience the one-sided expectation that they learn the 'Kiwi way of doing things' and abstain from raising concerns about issues or problems they perceive as such. Complying with this expectation, however, prevents migrants from feeling that they really contribute to the society with their knowledge and

experiences, and that their voices are respected and heard. The economic consequences of ignoring migrants' voices were discussed at a panel debate by Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand's (CAANZ): "Our lack of cultural intelligence will impact on our ability to trade. One big concern I have is the lack of cultural and market intelligence on our boards … it's poor." (Andrew Hamilton, cited in Deloitte, 2015)

Albéna thought a lot about how to develop relationships with the mainstream Pakeha population: **"**The hardest thing to understand was how people think here." According to her, there is a big difference in what a good personality means in New Zealand in comparison to her country of origin: "Here they do not talk about qualification but appreciate a personality that is quiet, always says 'Yes', never complains, is not too smart, and never expresses critical opinion." Similar opinions were expressed by some Eastern European participants in McIntyre's study (2014, p. 237):

> The culture here is, in my opinion, that Kiwi's don't interfere…do not criticise or do not come up front with anything except when they are threatened personally. It's a culture of don't jump to someone's' defence, don't mix in other people's business… (Eileen, 51-56, Romania, academic)

Albéna came to the conclusion that she needed to start thinking and acting like people with English backgrounds to get accepted. As people did not give her their real names, she decided to follow this example herself. Because her real name is not Anglo-Saxon, people seemed to react to her name as if it was strange and complicated, so she decided to take on one of the easiest English names such as Anna. She started revealing her real name just to those who were ready to become friends with her. In conversations with people with English backgrounds she realised a big difference: "In my culture we say what we think. English people do

not say what they think. 'Yes, sure' means 'No'. OK, I have to try that, too. I have to do like them." Her attempt to change in order to become accepted is similar to those of the young Assyrian women in New Zealand (Collie et al., 2010), who entered into a mindful identity negotiation, that is, they adjusted their behaviour and identity to their surrounding socio-cultural environment. While Albéna reported a readiness to change in order to fit in, if an adaptation goes against personal values, as it did in the case of Angela who decided not to confront her colleagues about a problem, it can have negative consequences for the migrant. From a psychological perspective, it is accepted that values shape perceptions and feelings about ourselves, about our own and other's actions, and events (Schwartz, 2011). Acting against these values might cause cultural incongruity which refers to the "dissonance of an individual's culture, beliefs and expectations with the surrounding population." (Bhugra & Becker, 2005, p. 22). If such conflict remains unsolved for a longer period of time, migrants can experience identity disturbances and depression (Bhugra & Becker, 2005). According to the narratives of research participants in the previous chapters, all research participants reported having experienced either some identity disturbances and/or a sense of prolonged low mood or depression due to cultural dissonance and integration difficulties in New Zealand. However, they managed to balance these negative experiences by being resilient and by looking for the good things in their chosen new home.

Good Things about Living in New Zealand

All women appreciated New Zealand's natural environment which offers ample cheap opportunities for a wide range of recreational activities. They also felt comfortable with the climate and did not really miss the cold European winter months. What Albéna liked most about New Zealand is nature, the children, and

the giant flowering trees such as magnolias, camellias, and rhododendrons. She got all excited and smiley when she described the beauty of these trees. Research participants also evaluated it as positive that New Zealand is a place of people of numerous ethnicities which allows them to meet people with very different cultural backgrounds and life experiences from their own.

Concerning their everyday lives, the lack, or very low level, of bureaucracy was most appreciated by these women. Angela was of the opinion that "I could not have tried out all these things in Germany. There, everything is very much regulated… New Zealand truly is the country of unlimited possibilities." Being able to submit applications or cancel or modify official files by phone or email saved them much time in comparison to practices in their countries of origin. She compared her New Zealand experiences with those she had in Germany:

> You needed to fill in various applications just to be able to fill in the application that mattered to you and then you needed to collect your stamps from various agencies. This is much simpler in New Zealand and this makes life much easier here. Also, people in Germany are more under pressure in their everyday lives and accordingly they tend to react more rudely if something disturbs them. For example, they are less polite in traffic situations and faster with showing you 'fingers', than in New Zealand. People here have more patience when interacting with each other and this is something I learnt here. (Angela from Germany)

They also agreed that people are friendly and supportive in general and due to the low level of hierarchy it is easy to get access to those in charge. While Angela likes how people who barely know each other help each other, she also perceived that this good tradition has been gradually decreasing for the last fifteen years. On the other hand, she appreciated that

> … even if you make a mistake or fail, it is not a big thing here, you get further chances. Also, legal and financial consequences or penalties are less severe here than they are in Germany and it is much less stress if you need to deal with official matters. (Angela from Germany)

Albéna had a similar view on that: "Here even if you do not succeed or do not progress, it doesn't matter. They just say, 'Life is too short'." In the meantime, she started appreciating this more easy-going attitude when dealing with difficulties or refusals in her life. Adopting the attitude that something is 'not a big deal' if it does not turn out well makes it easier for her to cope with minor disappointments.

Another positive aspect was the more widespread practice of part-time work and flexible working hours than in Europe in general. This allowed the women to be involved in more recreational and family oriented activities than would be possible with a conventional full-time job. While women found it initially disturbing that their colleagues take more rest breaks during working hours and are less stressed about not keeping deadlines than them, they learnt to appreciate the relatively low stress working environments in comparison to what they were used to in their home countries. Their impressions are similar to those of the participants in McIntyre's study (2014, p.281):

> My experience is much less stressful and I feel safer, more supported by (legal) structures, and management, and colleagues. New Zealand is a good place to live and work. (Cecilia, 36-50, Hungary, finance)

Putting women's narratives in context with the classical acculturation literature (Berry, 1997; Oberg, 1960) it becomes clear that, while they would like to contribute to the society and have a sense of belonging and feeling of being at home in New Zealand, there are some cultural phenomena to which these women do not want, or just partially want, to adjust. In order to facilitate better interaction

and engagement, some of them started behaving differently when among their local acquaintances and colleagues than with their own ethnic friends. In such circumstances it is hard to decide whether a migrant is acculturated or not, which was not the purpose of this research, rather, I simply wanted to explore how women feel themselves in their everyday lives in New Zealand. As was highlighted in the literature review under Section 2.1 about acculturation, the classical approach suggested a categorisation of migrants upon their perceived or speculated attitudes towards adoption of their host countries cultural norms and practices. As Rudmin (2006) and Wright (2010) suggested, instead of undertaking an attempt to categorise them, to understand migrants' settlement experiences and reasons for making certain choices, their voices need to be heard first. Acculturation literature in general tends to focus on describing a certain observed behaviour or reaction of migrants such as isolation or preference to spend time with their own ethnic groups. However, it seldom questions the reasons behind the phenomenon or looks at other aspects of the migrants' everyday life in this context. Since women in this chapter talked about the negative and positive aspects of their everyday lives, the next step was to explore what keeps them here and whether they plan to return or to relocate to another country in the future.

8.3 Staying or Returning?

The question of staying or returning is often discussed among migrants when they talk about their short and long-term plans. Since most migrants leave significant others behind, their decision in this context is influenced by a multitude of factors both in their home and host countries. Learning about the considerations of the research participants regarding staying or returning was also important since retaining skilled migrants is in the interest of New Zealand's economy: "through an

improved understanding of what drives migrants to leave, it may tell policymakers what might be done to better encourage migrants to stay in New Zealand." (Henderson & Bryant, 2010, p. 2) These authors also found that "Migrants with the highest qualifications are generally more likely to leave New Zealand. This highlights the fact that New Zealand faces a considerable challenge in keeping hold of its most highly skilled migrants." (Henderson & Bryant, 2010 p. 1) An explanation for this phenomenon might be that, as mentioned in previous chapters, skilled migrants are allowed into the country but, due to overt and covert boundaries such as having an accent, lack of networks and local experience, they cannot secure fulfilling employment in New Zealand. In this section, the women reflect on the extent to which they see themselves as part of the New Zealand society, what their future ambitions are, and whether they intend to stay or return to their countries of origin or move to another country.

New Zealand and Me

First, Sophie talked about her feelings of belonging and place within the New Zealand society:

> As I lived in many countries before, it is clear for me that I will always be a foreigner here. I think you can feel at home just at home in your own country and while abroad, you will always be 'just' a migrant – an outsider. However, as language is very much embedded in the culture, being fluent in English I do not experience this as negative as someone who has language difficulties. For example, for my partner the language barrier is a huge issue: he feels like a fish without water. Another big difference between me and him is that we both came here for very different reasons: he came to New

Zealand to live a better life, and I came here to jump start my yoga teaching career. (Sophie from Slovakia)

Sophie's partner's high expectations from a new life in New Zealand and language difficulties caused him many challenges during his first years of settlement which corresponds with the suggestions of Wangari (2011, p. 5): "How well immigrants cope with such stressors depends on age, immigration motivation, education, and communication levels". Sophie was also confident that with her multiple language skills, work experience, and qualifications she would easily find corresponding jobs in Europe. Thus, leaving New Zealand for better opportunities would not cause her any problems. This self-confidence also made her more open minded towards some local peculiarities. As Berger suggests, contrary to the often-biased descriptions of female migrants weakness, immigrant women show much resilience, self-confidence, and a 'can do' attitude when facing challenges (2009, as cited in Okuyama, 2014). Another explanation Sophie found for herself was that, since she was a member of an ethnic minority in Slovakia, she had never experienced how it feels to belong to a dominant culture, and therefore she could more easily accept her minority status in New Zealand in comparison to her Hungarian partner:

Due to the historical tensions between Slovakia and Hungary, being a Hungarian here in New Zealand is different than what it was being a Hungarian in Slovakia. Here nobody cares where you come from because the majority of people came from somewhere else. Thus people accept here easier that you are migrant. (Sophie from Slovakia)

Sophie successfully transferred her life skills as a member of a minority group in Slovakia to her migrant position in New Zealand. Instead of seeing her minority status as a disadvantage, she decided to normalise it since many other

people are migrants in New Zealand. Accepting and making the best of things one cannot change (e.g. her being a migrant) is a positive psychological coping strategy that can significantly contribute to people's wellbeing by letting them focus on aspects of their lives they can change for the better (Lopez & Snyder, 2009). While she has friends "from all walks of life and ethnicities", she is of the opinion that:

> A migrant feels better at ease with another migrant due to having similar life experiences through the migration process. This is not because you do not want to be friends with Kiwis, it is probably rather that they do not really want to socialise with migrants. Although they are friendly, they hold a certain distance from you. Probably, they also feel after some attempts that you are too different, especially if you come from a very poor country or region. As they do not have similar experiences, they do not feel that they have too much in common with you. According to the 'Law of Attraction": you attract those who are similar to you. (Sophie from Slovakia)

Her views about the experiences of migrants in New Zealand concerning the establishment of friendship-like relationships with locals and other migrants were echoed by other studies conducted with migrants as well (e.g. Henderson (2004; Strategic Social Policy Group, 2008).

Mila regarded herself as a Yugoslavian migrant woman instead of a Serbian or New Zealander one, despite having spent over 20 years in New Zealand. She reported that regardless of the initial difficulties she was content with her work, relationships, and achievements here. Her example shows that contrary to traditional assumptions about the necessity of acculturation, migrants who decide to manage their lives in congruence with their own cultural values do not fare worse than those who prefer a stronger adaptation to their host culture (Van Oudenhoven, Ward, & Masgoret, 2006). However, despite being content with her life in New

Zealand, Mila had some doubts while raising her children whether it really was better for them to become so separated from their culture, grandparents, and extended family. However, now that both children have become adults, speak Serbian, and maintain relationships with friends and family in ex-Yugoslavia, she felt better about her and her husband's decision to move to New Zealand. Such doubts about staying or returning for the sake of children are very common among migrants, especially when parents consider the different types of educational and occupational opportunities for their children as well as the maintenance of their language and culture (Bürgelt, Morgan, & Pernice, 2008; Dustmann 2003).

Anca still felt a strong affinity with her Romanian and Hungarian cultural heritage. While she had local friends, colleagues, and even a local partner, and she felt content with her life as a researcher in New Zealand, she considered her stay in New Zealand only temporary (see more under next section about plans). It was not by chance that she selected a research topic about Romania that would allow her to visit her country of origin during the research process. Her example shows that migrants who spend a productive, positive time in a country still can feel a lack of true belonging to it and decide to return to their homes of origin. For them, the loss experienced in the perceptual domain of their wellbeing dominates over the positive material and relational dimensions (3-D model). On the other hand, knowing that they can return allows them to cope better with culture-specific challenges since their adaptation is a temporal necessity only.

Paula looked at her life in New Zealand from a more practical point of view: she had to stay here as her divorced partner was here and they had a child they both were keen to look after. Now, she also had a local partner and, through him, a family and friends around her. While she felt accepted by them, her difficulties entering the job market in accordance with her work experiences and education made a

major negative impact on her self-esteem. Not being able to show her talents prevented her from feeling accepted by and becoming part of the wider New Zealand society. This was partially the reason why Paula was not too keen on having New Zealand citizenship and she preferred to keep her and her child's Polish citizenship.

Her case demonstrates the importance of paid employment in their areas of expertise for migrants (Henderson, 2004; Spoonley, Peace, Butcher, & O'Neill, 2005; Wright, 2010) and how overt and covert employment barriers can prevent them from feeling part of the society – even if they have a local partner and family. Paula's divorce put her also in a vulnerable position since she was without work and without the consent of her partner she could not relocate back to Poland with the child. According to an American study, "foreign-born women are twice as likely as foreign-born men to be widowed, divorced, or separated" (Grieco, 2002, para. Marriage) which leaves these women, especially if unemployed, especially vulnerable. Thus, unlike Anca and the other research participants, Paula had to remain in New Zealand if she wanted to stay with her child, at least until he has grown up. Summing up, it seems that for her long-term wellbeing and feeling of belonging to New Zealand, it will be paramount to find employment that she feels content with.

After 15 years, Angela was pleased with her life in New Zealand. On the other hand, as reported earlier, she still experienced cultural differences she had difficulties dealing with. However, after initial attempts to change herself, she rather decided to keep some of the German virtues that were important to her and accept cultural differences. According to her, if non-migrant New Zealanders were more often exposed to other people's ways of thinking, they would become more open minded in the future. This view corresponds with the suggestions of Leong

and Ward (2011) who propose more contact and interaction in educational, occupational and other social environments among migrants and non-migrant New Zealanders.

Brigi increasingly felt more appreciated at her workplace by her employer and colleagues and she enjoyed preparing and delivering her dance lessons. Participants liked her classes and complimented her on her skills and knowledge. She felt also fulfilled when she danced for her own pleasure or devised choreographies. These positive feedbacks helped her to feel more at home in New Zealand. However, she did not think that she was fully integrated in and accepted by the mainstream or Māori communities. In the meantime, she managed to come to terms with many things and, after many challenges, became able to feel positive about herself, her skills and achievements, and making future plans in New Zealand (see subsequent section). Thus, similarly to the other women, the feeling of belonging to New Zealand has not been achieved yet and the reviewed literature suggests that for migrants to feel more accepted both by Māori and Pakeha important societal changes are needed in New Zealand (Henderson, 2004; Leong & Ward, 2011; Spoonley, Peace, Butcher, & O'Neill, 2005).

Albéna has described herself since the date of her New Zealand citizenship in February 2014 as 'a European New Zealander' and not as a Bulgarian or Bulgarian New Zealander. Even before her citizenship she felt more connected to the European culture in general than to the Bulgarian in particular. According to her, this was due to having always lived in the cosmopolitan capital which had more similarities to other cities in Europe than to the culture of the rural Bulgaria. Her sons identified themselves more as New Zealanders but when asked they said that they are from Bulgaria, not from Europe. Although, after seven years in New Zealand Albéna had some acquaintances, she still found it hard to form deeper

relationships. She also tried to explain to herself why people are not more open-minded to establishing new relationships:

> On weekends they frequently say they are going to visit their mothers or sisters who often live in the same town or even in the same street. They stick to their families because they are given to them by God, but it seems that many of them cannot establish relationships outside of these family circles. (Albéna from Bulgaria)

According to a survey by Statistics New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2011), most locals indeed spend their free time with their families or other people they know well. This is followed by preference for time alone or with family members outside of their household. They devote the least time to people they do not know and migrants seem to belong to this category.

Another explanation Albéna found for her isolation is that people might feel uncomfortable with her and even afraid of her because they might think that she would be better or cleverer than they are or that her outgoing, straightforward personality may scare them away. She described her initial attitude when she arrived in New Zealand as open-minded and hopeful as she had positive experiences by interacting with other cultures in Europe (e.g. Germans, Austrians, and Hungarians): "Living in a cosmopolitan city makes you open minded. I have never felt to be different from other cultures I met in Europe." She thought that it was easier for her to interact with people from bigger cities (e.g. Auckland) then with people who only have been living in rural areas: "People from cosmopolitan cities make me feel 'OK, I am not as different'. The adjective *cosmopolitan* is often used to describe people who are free from national prejudices because of their extensive experiences in interacting with other cultures or it refers to places where people from different parts of the world live. Since Auckland and other big cities in

Europe are a melting pot of many nationalities, it is understandable that they did not find Albéna's accent or open manner strange. On the other hand, in smaller towns like Cambridge or Hamilton, where Pakeha do not mix very often with migrants, she experienced being regarded as "too different" from the majority. From a wellbeing perspective, being an outsider and, despite various attempts, not being accepted 'in the group' can cause considerable stress and undermine migrants' self-esteem and self-confidence: migrants experience themselves as 'being not good enough' for the majority.

Summing up how research participants felt about their place in New Zealand, it seems that those who managed to secure fulfilling employment are more satisfied with their lives here and established more connections with the domestic population. However, as will be discussed in the next chapter, the question of whether to stay or return to their home lands was only partially influenced by their employment status and more by other factors. Thus, the last narratives in this study are devoted to these women's plans and aspirations.

Plans for the Future

Since Sophie had obtained her residency status in New Zealand, she and her partner thought about becoming a family. This was not possible before, as there was too much uncertainty about whether she could stay in New Zealand. As for her professional career, she thought it would not be possible to keep a full-time job when she had children. She rather would like to work as a part-time yoga instructor, language tutor or as a sport coach while having some private clients as well. They would like to move from their flat into a house with a garden and were assessing the advantages and disadvantages of living in or outside of Hamilton. Their long-term plan was to buy a house instead of renting. Thus, despite her initial plan to

spend only one year in New Zealand, Sophie would like to stay and raise her family here.

Since both of Mila's daughters had grown up and went to live overseas, Mila had to re-evaluate her role and purpose as a mother and her motivation for staying in New Zealand. When she talked to her friends who had already gone through this separation in Serbia, she realised that their perspective was quite different from hers as their children moved just 100km away from them, still within Serbia. She, however, moved to New Zealand to allow a better life for her children who had now moved back to Europe. Thus, Mila needed to figure out what would be the point of her for staying in New Zealand. After many discussions with her husband they decided to make rather a rational than an emotional decision: They decided to stay here because financially they could support their children better from here than from Serbia and they also needed to take into account their entitlement to New Zealand superannuation. However, for Mila, at the time of our interview it was still open for discussion whether to return to Serbia once they retired. According to a study conducted by Dumont and Spielvogel (2008, p. 162) about return migration patterns in the OECD countries, "for many immigrants, returning home is a prospect they cherish and one that sustains them during their migration history. Ties with the home country, even if stretched, keep this aspiration alive." The authors suggest four main reasons for return migration: "failure to integrate into the host country; individuals' preferences for their home country; achievement of a savings objective; or the opening of employment opportunities in the home country thanks to experience acquired abroad" (p. 163). For Mila, the second and third aspects seem to influence her future decision on whether to stay in New Zealand, while for Anca, as will be discussed next, all except the second aspect seem to be important.

While she was happy to study in New Zealand, her long term plan was to go back to Europe and to work for an international organisation as an expert. She hoped to earn enough money to bring her parents back to Romania as well since they, and her mother especially, could never get used to living in New Zealand. She planned to support them financially so they could spend their pensioner years in Romania without the need to work again: "I would prefer going back to my continent of origin and hopefully I will be able to live and work there, within the next three to five years."

Concerning her long-term plans, Paula would like to stay in New Zealand and perhaps buy a bigger country house later. According to her, the fewer educational opportunities and cultural/historical experiences made people rather narrow minded in New Zealand and, to avoid this, she wished for her child to have a European tertiary educational experience. Eventually, she would be happy to move back to Europe for a couple of years to be close to her grown up child and prospective grandchildren. According to Percival (2013), the loss of a partner or the wish to be closer to grandchildren residing in the country of origin can significantly influence older migrants' decision to return home. Alternatively, older adults whose grandchildren are in the host country often decide to remain close to them and stay in the host country, even if otherwise they would desire to return home.

Angela's short and long term goal was to develop her consulting business further. She also planned to visit Germany within a year and kept the routine of visiting each second or third year. Although she did not set a time frame, her long term plan was to work and live in a developing country for a while:

I find it very interesting to observe developments. Even Hamilton went through lots of changes during the 15 years I have been here. Nowadays, you cannot experience such dramatic changes in Germany. I also find that

people in developing countries are more friendly and open-minded towards trying out new ideas. (Angela from Germany)

Brigi kept a list of her short and medium term goals that she regularly updated. Upon completing a task or achieving a goal, ticking an item provided her with a feeling of accomplishment that she was progressing with her life. As, in the first couple of years after her arrival in New Zealand she could not tick any of her goals, she felt stuck in her life. However, she was very happy to report that in the meantime she had completed all her previous aims and now she set up a new plan for 2015. Her plans included both practical tasks, like renewing her Hungarian passport, and goals concerning future studies. She wanted to complete her training in yoga which is more popular in New Zealand, and she hoped to find clients and yoga work more easily than she had with her less known style of massage therapy. She also thought about completing a small business management course to learn how to run her own dance, yoga & massage enterprise in the future. While this was a long term goal, in the meantime she also wanted to progress from her position as a kitchen assistant into office work. She had worked for years in office administration roles in Hungary and wanted to update her skills by learning to use some accounting and data management programmes frequently used in New Zealand offices.

It had been two years since she had visited Hungary and she planned to travel home again the following year. She calculated how much she needed to save to accomplish this goal and put a certain amount of money in her saving account each week. "It is a good feeling that I can afford myself to save and to know that by the time I need it I will have the money to buy the tickets." Sometimes she also thought about how good it would be to live closer to Hungary, somewhere in Europe, but this was not something she consciously planned to do. She would like

to have a bigger house that could incorporate a big studio room as well. She had visualised this room already in great detail, knew where her office desk would go, how she would fit it out and that she also would lease it for others to hold courses. She could see herself as a tutor who teaches others and provides them with certificates at the end of their training.

Albéna thought about looking after children in her home while their parents were working. As she was a full-time student in her final year, she realised that there was not much time for implementing this goal. While she wished to socialise more, she had taken on a student from Korea as a boarder and, in addition to her studies, providing for him took some time. Her sons wanted to persuade her to accept a cleaning job at a school but, after talking with her case worker at Work & Income they pointed out that she would lose her benefit and would have no more than $50 left for living which would only cover her petrol costs to get to her place of work. Thus, the case worker encouraged her not to look for jobs but to finish her studies. So, she decided to complete her accounting studies that year and apply for a job: "Even if I would not find a job, I have experience to do my own business, for that is also good that I know accounting." These examples show her resilience and determination to implement her plans. Trying to find something positive if things didn't turn out as planned suggests an optimistic attitude which can provide additional strength when facing challenges (Lopez & Snyder, 2009).

Albéna was, however, somewhat reluctant to think about the long-term future when her sons would leave home. She would like to have a part-time job, a small house in Raglan close to the beach, socialise more, and even find a partner to share her life with, but the latter had several obstacles. She explained that those on benefit could lose their entitlement if they had a partner, regardless of whether they kept separate financial matters, especially in the beginning. Thus, while for a lot of

single people on benefit finding a partner would positively influence their overall wellbeing, physical and mental health, the fear of losing the benefit and being financially disadvantaged when together prevents them from entering into relationships. She planned to go home within two years to sell her flat in Bulgaria. In hindsight she was of the opinion that it would have been better selling the flat earlier and buying a house here with a mortgage, as having paid rent for seven years amounts to half the price for a house. She would like to buy a smaller house in Raglan or somewhere else close to the beach. Albéna's example shows that for many migrants with a property at home it is not easy to decide whether to sell it before their departure into the uncertain new life or whether to keep it and sell it later when the settlement worked out. For those who decide not to sell initially, it is often difficult to make financial and time arrangements to return home later to sell their properties, especially if they do not have someone who can do it legally for them. As she put it, renting houses for years can be costly and prevents them from owning their own property. South-African women in New Zealand reported similar hardships to Albéna's:

> Under- or unemployment, and the consequent loss or decrease in income, compounds the overall financial losses faced by those making the transition between South Africa and New Zealand. Significant differences in the value of the respective currencies mean that most migrants cannot replace their housing with something at a similar level, nor can they replicate their previous standard of living. (Meares, 2010, p. 477)

As Tabor & Milfont (2011) conclude, many migrants experience financial hardship and they acknowledge that financially they are much worse off than if they had remained in their countries of origin. It seems for them that either the advantages experienced in the non-material domain outweigh their financial

difficulties or there are other reasons that would make their return to their home countries more difficult.

The narratives concerning future plans of research participants showed a wide variety of plans which seemed to be independent from how settled or acculturated they felt themselves in New Zealand. While both Mila and Angela had lived in New Zealand for over 15 years and both reported being content with their lives, Mila's closest relationships were still with migrants from ex-Yugoslavia and she thought about returning to Serbia once retired. Angela, on the other hand, had many local friends and she did not think about returning to live in Germany. However, she still faced cultural challenges and thought about moving to a developing country at the time of our interviews. Anca's and Albéna's stories are also quite opposite. Albéna still had difficulty finding a job and a partner, and in establishing friendships with locals, she made no plans to leave New Zealand. On the other hand, Anca, who had not just local friends but a local partner and a researcher position she was proud of, was determined to leave New Zealand. As the examples show, the process of acculturation is neither a straightforward one nor something static and is very much dependent on the environment as well (e.g. Bourhis et al., 1997; Schwartz & Zamboanga, 2008; Wright, 2012). However, for some, even the most inviting environment cannot compensate for the loss experienced in relation to the home country, thus a return to home becomes the final goal.

8.4 Summary

The goal of this chapter was to present the final pieces of narratives the women disclosed at their last interviews and during focus group sessions. First, the process of getting to know each other was described and analysed with regard to the ethnic background of research participants and how they engaged with each

other. After mutual trust was established through the means of sharing food and positive appraisal of each other's cultural background, women moved on to find out similarities and differences in their perceptions about life in New Zealand and locals in general. Their discourses highlighted many common themes such as hidden barriers to fair access to employment opportunities; differences in communication styles when addressing problems or exercising critique; overly positive portraits of New Zealand as a nation in comparison to overly negative portraits published about countries from Eastern Europe; and difficulties to establishing friendship-like relationships with Pakeha and Māori.

The women also found it important to exchange thoughts about what they liked about their lives in New Zealand. Here, the most frequent themes were the beautiful nature, cheap recreational opportunities, more relaxed working environment, low level of bureaucracy, possibility of making mistakes without severe consequences, plenty of opportunities to try out new things, and being part of a colourful multi-ethnic community.

Finally, they drew a balance on their experiences and future ambitions, and reported about their short and long-term plans with respect to staying in or leaving New Zealand. To what extent women felt a sense of belonging to New Zealand and/or to their countries of origin varied and did not necessarily correlate with the time their spent in New Zealand or with how successful they were in their academic or professional careers. While Anca was finally content with her life, she could not wait to return to Romania and her long-term goal was to work somewhere in Europe. Despite having spent more than 15 years in New Zealand and feeling content with their lives, Angela and Mila had thoughts about either moving to another country or returning home. On the other hand, Albéna, with less satisfactory employment and/or relational connections, was still keen on staying here, while

Brigi and Paula were bound by their marriages and children from locating back to their countries of origin. Thus, the narratives highlighted how different interests, obligations, aspirations, and feelings of belonging influence final decisions on staying or returning for individuals differently.

This chapter was the last to transmit the stories of research participants. While some readers might find the quotations somewhat lengthy with too much detail, when reporting these stories, I also kept in mind the key principles of the Kaupapa Māori research paradigm: namely, that not only the researcher and academic community should benefit from the conducted research but the research participants themselves as well (Bishop, 1999). For most women this was the first opportunity to tell their stories and, upon completion of the interview process, they emphasised how beneficial it was for them not just to be listened to but to read their stories in a printed format by receiving the interview summary reports. They looked forward to finding their stories and messages in the thesis as well.

After closing the narrative part of the thesis, the implications and contributions of the research will be discussed in more detail (Chapter 9).

9 CONTRIBUTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In chapters four to eight, seven Eastern European women provided insights into their lives and personal journeys from their homelands to New Zealand. Their stories revealed both negative and positive aspects of their everyday lives and highlighted how the acculturation process is more individual and complex than simple models could explain. The goal of this chapter is to synthetize the findings of this study into the following main areas: research aims and questions (Chapter 9.1), theoretical insights (Chapter 9.2), followed by implications for mental health service providers and policy makers (Chapter 9.3). Finally, the limitations of this study will be discussed and recommendations for future research provided (Chapter 9.4).

9.1 Research Aims and Questions Revisited

This study explored the everyday lives of Eastern European migrant women in New Zealand from their own perspectives. While the still limited amount of literature about Eastern European migrant women is slowly increasing within the European Union, the literature review revealed significant gaps concerning knowledge about the aspirations and everyday lives of Eastern European women in New Zealand. Here they are often referred to as 'other Europeans' and it is commonly assumed that they 'fit in' or 'fade in' relatively easily to the Pakeha population. This research aspired to explore the extent to which these assumptions were true for the seven women who provided insights into their lives. It also sought to raise awareness of the aspirations, strengths, resourcefulness, wellness, and needs of this group of migrants in New Zealand. Below, the main findings in context to the research questions will be summarized.

Life in Eastern Europe

I asked participants what their everyday lives were like in those Eastern European countries they migrated from. I was interested in understanding the possible precursors to their migrating as well as setting their lives in context. The everyday lives of the seven women were a busy interplay of studies and careers, nuclear and extended family involvements, and regular cultural and recreational activities. Based on the values these women were brought up with during the socialist area, they aspired to lead a lifestyle which consisted of having a family, a fulfilling career, achieving financial independence as far as possible, and regularly attending cultural and social events. While most of these women regarded having children at some stage in their lives as important, none of them aspired to become a full-time mother. They were keen to move on with their careers and often relied on grandparents or other family members and the state-owned childcare facilities to be able to do so. However, according to Chorvát (2007), Eastern European women's attitude both to family and employment differs from those women in the West:

> Seemingly, post-communist women convey an important message for their Western counterparts: they are probably more emancipated than their Western colleagues. Most of them know that the best thing for them, for their personality and identity as well as for their families is a combination of paid work and family responsibilities. After forty years of 'full employment' it is natural for them to be employed; however, they also appreciate the value of motherhood, which is often overlooked by most Western feminists, who question 'traditional' social roles. (p.17)

The narratives revealed another unique feature in comparison to communication practices in New Zealand: The way of everyday communication among people in Eastern Europe is rather direct and straightforward, and what is called 'small talk' in New Zealand is not really cultivated by them (McIntyre, 2014). Thus, research participants offered their opinions directly in their social and workplace relationships. Aspiring to high standards in their studies and work, and gaining recognition for such achievements, was also part of their upbringing and everyday life. So too is personal grooming and being well presented in public places: whether it was going to the doctor or just to the local grocery, being neatly dressed and looking their best was regarded as important as it signalled their ability to take care of themselves and to respect others as well as the space they entered (Ibroscheva, 2013).

While the women acknowledged having nostalgic sentiments towards their past lives, they also pointed out societal and economic challenges which had negative impacts on their wellbeing. These included rapid urbanisation (e.g. in Bulgaria), economic problems, bureaucracy, corruption, stress due to high demand in employment and education, and societal pressure to look their best (Tari, 2008).

The importance of these findings in New Zealand's immigration context is that, contrary to local assumptions of a general European similarity with Pakeha culture, the women in this study highlighted the different values, ways of being and communicating, aspirations, and social embeddedness they were used to in their countries of origin. Only by knowing their background is it possible to understand their struggles when exploring how they established their lives in New Zealand.

Reasons and Aspirations to Move to New Zealand

Learning about the migrants' reasons and aspirations to relocate can contribute to more critical analysis of local regulations and how they support or undermine the migrants' wellbeing. The significant contribution of this theme to the overall understanding is that it revealed how different reasons induced these women to select New Zealand as a destination, what preconceptions they had about New Zealand, how their decisions were made, and what aspirations they had from their new lives here.

Some of the research participants thought about living abroad before the idea to move to New Zealand came up. Talking to expatriates from their home countries made New Zealand appear in a positive light worth exploring as potential destination (for example in the case of Angela and Albéna). Other research participants relocated hoping for better material or career advancement, or followed their family members who had similar aspirations. Finally, one research participant decided to relocate due to spiritual reasons after having spent a month as a training participant in a marae.

Both the traditional values and preconceptions these women held shaped their dreams and aspirations concerning their future lives in New Zealand. Similarly to studies conducted with other migrant women with academic qualifications (e.g. Creese & Wiebe, 2012; Man, 2004; Meares, 2010; Romocea, 2014; Shan, 2009), a common theme of these women's aspirations was how, upon mastering the language, their qualifications and work experiences would lead them to stimulating and fulfilling jobs. Some of them in my study envisioned themselves also as entrepreneurs in their professions. Concerning their private lives, two women also hoped to find their future partners in New Zealand (Albéna and Brigi), while Paula hoped that the new country would have a positive impact on her troubled marriage.

All women saw their future lives living as part of a society where they are acknowledged in their professional careers, have friends from various ethnicities, have opportunities to pursue hobbies, attend various cultural events, and to travel as they had become accustomed to. Maintaining connections with those significant others left behind by using the internet, and by having enough financial means to travel home regularly, emerged as a common theme in their narratives as well. This corresponds with the needs of other Eastern European migrant women as reported in the anthology by Anthias, Kontos, and Morokvasic-Müller (2013).

Goals and Challenges

Most research participants measured the success of their settlement upon the quality of homes they managed to establish for themselves and their family members, their ability to join the workforce (or study programme) in line with their qualifications and work experiences, and their relationships with local people. Establishing rapport with other migrants was much easier than with locals, however, none of them preferred to limit their interactions to migrants only.

These women also hoped that they could socialise and establish friendship like connections with the locals quite easily, however, opportunities to meet them were limited, especially in the first two years of their settlement. Those migrant women who needed to attend language courses could only meet other migrants there, while women who already were fluent in English had difficulties to enter paid employment. This prevented their interaction with locals. Some of the women entered voluntary jobs, however, most volunteers were new settlers themselves which kept them further isolated from the mainstream society. Women who finally managed to secure paid employment in the areas of their expertise often misunderstood the statements of their colleagues by taking them literally. On the

other hand, their own open and straightforward style of addressing problems was perceived to be received as offensive and harsh by their local colleagues and acquaintances. Due to such misunderstandings it would be beneficial to learn about each other's styles of communication and values in social interaction.

Apart from one woman who learnt about Māori culture in Hungary, research participants in general did not have much knowledge about the special status of Māori in comparison to other ethnicities, and they also did not feel that the Treaty for Waitangi was relevant to them as migrants. Women provided examples of both academic and movie representations of indigenous history and everyday life which they perceived differently than the mainstream audience. As a result they felt that the issues between the Māori and the Crown were even less relevant for them. This study also highlighted how the migrants' perceptions of Māori culture and customs differed from each other: while some of these women felt much similarity based on family, community, and environmental values, others regarded it as a very different culture that is hard to interact with.

An important aspect of research participants' everyday lives in New Zealand remained the upholding of emotional and cultural connections with their significant others in their home countries. Most of them were keen to maintain some of their traditions such as language use, religion, cooking, values, and world view, and passing it on to future generations.

Finally, women expressed their thoughts about staying, returning or moving to another country. When reflecting upon their lives in New Zealand, some positive patterns emerged frequently in the women's narratives, such as the beautiful nature, cheap recreational opportunities, more relaxed working environment, low level of bureaucracy, possibility to make mistakes without severe consequences, plenty of

opportunities to try out new things, and being part of a colourful multi-ethnic community.

Aspects women found difficult to cope with (even after having spent years in New Zealand) were the 'networking' system in the employment market which they compared to corruption; the low quality of houses concerning building material and insulation; the locals' lack of knowledge and prejudice about the Eastern European region; the 'tall Poppy' syndrome; and the 'beating around the bush' style conversation instead of addressing issues and problems straightforwardly (see also narratives in the study of McIntyre, 2014). Women also reported how they tried to adopt this style of conversation in order to fit in and enhance their interaction with their local peers, and how they felt in hindsight as if they would have acted against the values they have been raised with for generations – again, similar experiences were reported by McIntyre (2014).

Women's Coping Strategies

A common theme when talking about challenges was how research participants developed the routine of talking to overseas friends and family members over Skype and exchanging short forms of information and photos on Facebook and by email. Talking to close family members or a friend was also often utilised, however, new friendships were seldom regarded to be as deep and intimate as those which developed during childhood or as young adults in their countries of origin. Some women reported religious and spiritual practises that helped them to feel more grounded and confident in themselves, while others preferred a mix of physical and spiritual activities such as doing yoga or dancing. Painting, crafting, and cooking were also common coping tools to lift these women's mood and spirit. All women reported that they did not use shopping sprees, emotional eating or

drinking, or drugs as a way of coping when under stress. Following a balanced lifestyle as a combination of healthy food and physical activity (e.g. walking, running, hiking, dancing, yoga, and gardening) was highly regarded by all research participants. Three women wanted to or became engaged with mental health providers. One women in depression and despair after her marriage broke up was not recognised as 'bad enough' for further intervention due to her well-groomed appearance. Her GP neither provided her with an antidepressant nor with a referral to general counselling. Another woman suffered from depression, low self-esteem and hopelessness due to not being able to find work and relationship problems. She was diagnosed months later after giving birth with post-partum depression, a diagnosis which she did not agree with but accepted in order to be able to access counselling. She was lucky as the counselling quickly picked up the real reasons for her low mood and she successfully entered relationship counselling with her partner. On the other hand, counselling did not help to raise her confidence in her skills since she did not manage to find employment. The third woman went through different non-governmental and ethnic counselling services until she found a culturally appropriate counsellor. While she developed good rapport with her, the number of low cost sessions she could access was limited and according to her not enough.

Concerning the future plans of these migrant women this study highlighted that neither the lengths of their stay nor their general satisfaction with their everyday lives in New Zealand influenced significantly their decisions about whether to stay or leave the country. Rather, it was an interplay of various additional aspects such a as sense of belonging to their home culture or the European continent, friendships and family ties at home, and in Europe in general, and the prospective location of

their children once they become adults. Living close to them after retirement seemed to be important for most of these women.

Main Findings and Previous Research

The above presented main findings of my study, with respect to the values, customs, preferred lifestyles, challenges, and coping strategies of the seven women, correspond to a great extent with the suggestions of the literature about Eastern European migrant women (e.g. Anthias, Kontos, & Morokvasic-Müller, 2013; Ibroscheva, 2013; Maydell-Stevens, Masgoret, & Ward, 2007; McIntyre, 2014; Samaluk, 2014; Svendsen, 1996). Extending these comparisons to literature conducted with other skilled ethnic women, strong similarities were found to the challenges they faced in the qualification and employment market both in New Zealand and overseas (e.g. Bürgelt et al., 2008; Creese & Wiebe, 2012; Man, 2004; Shan, 2009). In contrast, my findings concerning the settlement, integration, and wellbeing of the research participants in New Zealand did not correspond with the traditional acculturation literature which is mostly based on Berry's acculturation model (1997). Rather, my findings support the arguments of those scholars who proposed the acknowledgement of migrants as agents of their own lives and aspirations, and questioned the traditional expectations of assimilation and acculturation as imposed by those in power in host countries (e.g. McGregor, 2007; Rudmin, 2006; Van Oudenhoven, Ward, & Masgoret, 2006; Wright, 2010). The literature provided insights that induced me to apply a critical, strength-based theoretical frame. Hence, in the next section, the fifth research question will explore how this theoretical frame was suitable for the research topic and research process of this study.

9.2 Theoretical Implications

Contributions to Research Design

First, this section revisits and deliberates on how I developed a theoretical framework for my study. This will be followed by a critical discussion of how the three theories, namely the Kaupapa Māori framework, the Human Wellbeing theory, and the PERMA model of Positive Psychology contributed to the research.

In the planning phase of this study, the intention was to use a Kaupapa Māori framework to guide the research design and research process, and the PERMA model of the theory of Positive Psychology as an analytical tool when interpreting the participating women's wellbeing in New Zealand. Such a joint application of an indigenous and a Western research philosophy proposed to be a unique contribution to the theoretical field. When I entered the analytical phase of the interview summary reports, I came across the theory of Human Wellbeing through additional readings. This theory seemed to work especially well in studies about the migrants' wellbeing. Thus, I decided to adopt this theory as well and devised the following conceptual framework to guide my research (Figure 9.1):
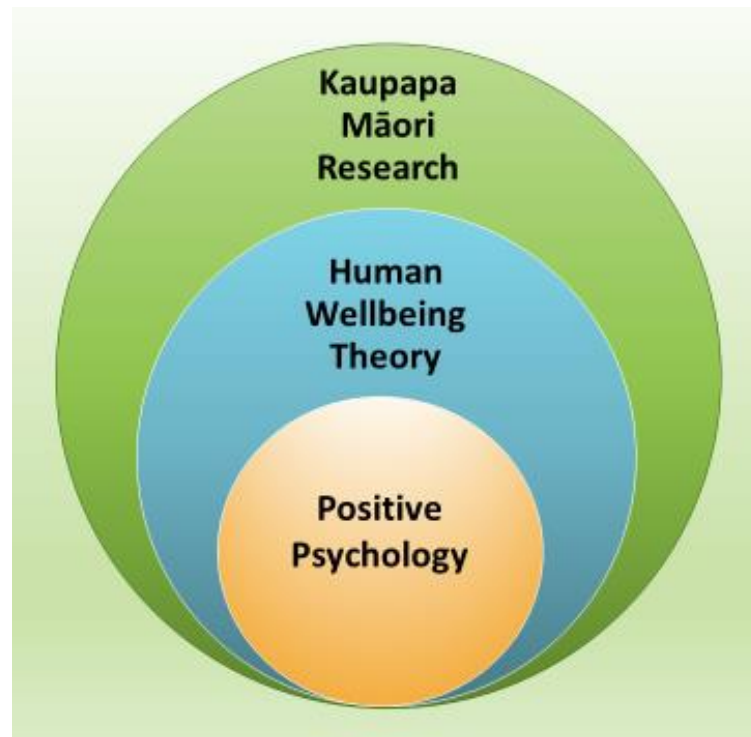
Figure 9.1. Integration of Kaupapa Māori research, Human Wellbeing theory, and the theory of Positive Psychology

As the form of the framework suggests, Kaupapa Māori Research remained the overall guiding principle throughout the research process since it addressed issues from the planning phase through the implementation and dissemination of research results (Walker, Eketone, & Gibbs, 2006). Additionally, considering the relevance for the research topic, its paradigms helped to highlight questions around social injustice and power inequalities (Walker, Eketone, & Gibbs, 2006). Addressing these issues is paramount for psychologists since, as highlighted by the report of the World Health Organisation on *Mental health, resilience and inequalities* (Friedli, 2009), the

> levels of mental distress among communities need to be understood less in
> terms of individual pathology and more as a response to relative deprivation
> and social injustice, which erode the emotional, spiritual and intellectual
> resources essential to psychological wellbeing. (p. 5)

Through this, a link could be established to the theory of Human Wellbeing which brings together a critical lens to analyse the material, perceptual, and relational dimensions of everyday life. At the same time, this theory linked together societal phenomenon with individual experiences as perceived by migrants. Similarly to the Kaupapa Māori framework, this is a critical approach which seeks to empower underprivileged groups by providing them with an opportunity to hear their voices and needs. Narrowing down the focus to the individual, this theory linked well with the PERMA model of Positive Psychology, which provided a more individual analytical tool applied on a case by case basis for these women's narratives.

It is important to highlight, however, that the framework I developed and worked along does not mean that any of the theories would not be enough on their own to investigate the everyday lives of migrants or that a different combination would not be feasible. For example, the theory of Positive Psychology also addresses institutional and societal issues (Lopez & Snyder, 2009) and the Kaupapa framework is also applied to individual narrative inquires (Ruwhiu, 2008). Thus, the framework I worked with is the result of my interpretations and sense making of the research data. Below, I provide insights into my findings when working with each of these theories.

Kaupapa Research Framework

The purpose of this section is to discuss how the Kaupapa Māori research paradigm worked as an overall framework for the topic; for the research participants who were migrants from Eastern Europe; and for me as a migrant researcher with an academic background in Western research methods. It was hypothesised in Chapter 3 on the research design that, as women came from countries where

collective cultural values are still very present, a collective value orientated research framework could provide a more familiar space to feel at ease in disclosing information. For this purpose Kaupapa Māori research strategies, as recommended by Bishop (1999, see Chapter 3.1), were applied throughout the research process. The next discussion provides examples to the different principles listed in Table 3.1 *The Relevance of Kaupapa Māori Philosophy and Strategy for the Thesis* in Chapter 3.1. Their purpose is to illustrate how Kaupapa Māori research principles were implemented; how they generated more benefit for the research by yielding rich data; and how research participants perceived the benefits of contributing to this research.

Legitimation of diverse epistemologies (culture, language, values, and worldview). Being migrants, research participants were aware of this paradigm and all accepted that I and they can have different views on everyday life in New Zealand. During the interviews and focus group sessions this mutual acceptance and interest was strongly present. As far as it was possible women could converse in their mother tongue during the interviews. Women were very much aware of these values without the need to discuss them. During first interactions with me and later with each other in a group, first they always praised something in the culture of the other, showed how much they knew about each-other's food, cultural or sporting achievements. Then they tried to find commonalities between their cultures (food or customs) and it was only during the last step that they talked about special features of their own culture and their own lives. This mutual acceptance supported well the interaction between the researcher and research participants.

Putting these research experiences in context with the literature further underlines the importance of the legitimation of diverse epistemologies for any study conducted with people, since:

In a research context, to ignore the reality of inter-cultural difference is to live with outdated notions of scientific investigation. It is also likely to hamper the conduct of research, and limit the capacity of research to improve human development. (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2003, p. 24; as cited in Hudson, Milne, Reynolds, Russell, & Smith, 2010, p. 1)

Thus, honouring the epistemologies and values of those participating in any research is both a methodological requirement and an ethical obligation of any researcher to prevent epistemological racism (e.g. Bishop, 1999; Hudson, Milne, Reynolds, Russell, & Smith, 2010; Tiakiwai, 2015).

Collective ownership and benefits from research. When this principle was discussed with the research participants, they were surprised and curious about how this concept would be implemented. The participating women had not experienced or heard before about research participants having the right to review and modify data and express suggestions concerning themes. While they had all completed academic research projects before or participated in research previously, they considered it as 'logical' or 'natural' that, first of all, the research should benefit the researcher, the supervisors, and the relevant tertiary institution. Collective benefit from research was expected in a more generic way such as to advance knowledge in a special area of public interest. Personal benefit for research participants (apart from receiving incentives or small gifts for participation) was not discussed with them before.

One example to secure collective ownership and benefit was that women could choose a name to be used in the research. While at first this might seem a very tiny gesture with not much relevance, it had a significant impact on how the women felt about their stories. Initially most women replied that I should choose a name I think would work best for my thesis. When I insisted that they choose and also tell me what made them choose a particular name, they took this task seriously. This task provided them with the opportunity to select a name that was meaningful for them for various reasons which were often tied in with stories from their lives. Some research participants chose names of a famous public person from their cultures whose courage and resilience inspired them and, through this, they felt strengthened in their values and aspirations. Another participant selected a name which her family members knew she intended to give to her future daughter. It was very disappointing for this woman to hear that her sister used this name for her baby. According to the research participant, she felt betrayed and as if she would not have the right to use this name for her future daughter any more. Now, that she decided to use this name in the research for herself, she felt more empowered and came to the conclusion that she has the equal right to give this name to her future daughter, irrespective of whether this might look odd to some family members.

Participating women also had the opportunity to review their interview summary reports and modify them. Their initial response was: "You are the researcher, you know what would work best for your thesis, I do not want to cause any difficulties". When reading through their stories, however, they really enjoyed the process and felt a strong sense of ownership of them. Interestingly, at the end, women decided to change minor details only to preserve their identity in their narratives. It is also important to point out that as the number of Eastern European migrants is quite low in New Zealand, research participants showed much courage

in revealing very personal aspects of their everyday lives as well. They were of the opinion that people and decision makers needed to hear about their struggles and achievements.

These examples illustrate well how Kaupapa Māori principles contribute to the empowerment of research participants by making them co-agents of the research they participate in. Such an empowering experience has a positive impact on people who take part in research which goes beyond the research process and, as such, contributes to the wider welfare of those less fortunate (Hudson, Milne, Reynolds, Russell, & Smith, 2010). Since all research in general, but health sciences such as psychology in particular, are expected to advance human knowledge and wellbeing, the Kaupapa Māori principle of collective ownership and benefit successfully safeguards this aspiration.

Culturally relevant methodological practice. This principle plays an important role in "…ensuring that where possible all thoughts, ideas and concepts pertaining to the research project are expressed in ways that are culturally relevant" for the research participants (Ruwhiu, 2008; p. 11).

In my study, research participants could decide where, when, and how they wanted to tell their stories. Some used pictures, others food or an object to start discussing. As far as I spoke their language, women were provided with the opportunity to talk in their mother tongue. While transcribing the interview summary reports was more time consuming where translation from German or Hungarian was necessary, it was easier to build rapport with these research participants and less clarification was necessary than in the case of interviews conducted in English.

A further component of culturally relevant methodological practice was my familiarity with the geographical, cultural, political, and economical characteristics of the seven countries of which research participants came from. This eliminated the need for them to explain basic societal and cultural characteristics to set the scene when talking about their lives and values in their home countries. Their narratives were often filled with "You know, how it was…"; "I do not need to explain it to you…"; "You know what I mean even I cannot translate it into English". Feeling understood by 'half-words' provided women with more confidence to talk about their personal issues and this helped to grow a more personal and detailed data set within the time limits of interviews.

These illustrations add to the growing evidence for the importance of culturally safe practices within and outside academia (e.g. DeSouza, 2008; Richardson & Williams, 2007; Torrie, Dalgety, Peace, Roorda, & Bailey, 2015; Williams, 1999) and how upholding Kaupapa Māori principles can safely guide such practice.

Critical analysis of existing power relationship. As Smith and Reid (2000, p. 6) summarise, "Kaupapa Māori challenges the political context of unequal power relations and associated structural impediments." Since it should be our responsibility as researchers to contribute to the positive transformation of the society by critically questioning power inequalities, reflecting on our own position within our research projects should be our starting point (Barnes, 2013). During the initial information sessions I made research participants aware that my position as a researcher is at the same level as theirs, although we have different tasks during the research process. While they found this very positive, they needed some encouragement and prompting to exercise their rights especially in the first

interviews. Research participants' perception of marginalisation, discrimination, and other power inequalities were openly discussed both with me and in group sessions. Participants also became proactive by giving each other advice, contact numbers of relevant agencies, and support. As these research participants' initial reluctance but growing enthusiasm and contribution showed, the traditionally accepted practice of power inequalities between researcher and those 'researched' would have been neither just nor productive for the research. As Kemmis (2010) proposes, in our practice as researcher we rather should aim for

> …developing a critical approach among participants, empowering participants to take action, building their sense of solidarity, drawing on and developing their life experiences, opening communicative space between them, and so on, all of which can contribute to changes in currently established modes of praxis. (p. 17)

Long-term development of mutual purpose and intent between the researcher and the researched. According to King (2004) on relationships in research the researcher should expect to be available for the studied community beyond the research period and/or research context. In the case of this study, research participants invited me and each other to different events and occasions since our last focus group session, such as their art exhibition, cultural dance performance, yoga studio, or helping out as a baby sitter. We all experienced it as quite extraordinary and in many ways rewarding how this research bonded us together, eight women from seven different countries. This would have been hardly possible if I used a traditional research method which required distance and neutrality between researcher and research participants to avoid the establishment of relationships or friendship as confounding variables. However, to utilise this

principle ethically, the initiation of collaboration should come from and be agreed on by both parties, not from the researcher only (Bishop, 2011). This notion is also closely related to the question of self-disclosure by the researcher, which will be reviewed next.

Personal investment of the researcher by openness and self-disclosure.
As Bishop (1999) suggests, "The 'personal investment' by the researcher is not an act by an individual agent but emerges out of the context within which the research is constituted" (p. 3). As a migrant woman myself, I remained open to sharing my experiences with the research participants when they asked about it. While all women asked me at various stages what my interpretation was of different aspects of living in New Zealand, the Polish research participant told me directly at the beginning of our research encounter that she would not tell me anything before I told my story. Although in a traditional researcher-research participant setting most research participants would not have asked for self-disclosure, but in this study they were keen to use this chance. Thus, openness and self-disclosure by the researcher was an important tool to build rapport with these women.

In summary, I can say that using the Kaupapa Māori research paradigm proved to be beneficial in many ways: for the research topic by yielding a rich, deep data set; for the research process by providing practical and ethical guidelines; for the researcher by establishing rapport and collaborative work relationships on interview summary reports; and for the research participants by strengthening their self-confidence and identity through telling their stories and contributing to the research, and by establishing new friendships. Research participants also reported on how much they enjoyed the research process and they found they benefited a lot from talking through both good and bad things in their lives; from meeting with

each other, and as a result they felt more special, proud and confident about themselves. On a personal note, I also benefited from self-reflections concerning my own journey and plans in New Zealand throughout the research process.

Looking at these positive outcomes from a critical perspective I can say that the Kaupapa Māori framework worked because it addressed an often overlooked need of minority groups: to be heard, acknowledged, and taken seriously when voicing concerns. The liberation and empowerment these women experienced within the research process transcended into their everyday lives as well. The positive responses of these women to being treated as equals, however, should also push our attention to traditional exploitative practices which are still deemed as acceptable by mainstream ethic committees. While research participants are 'used to' being treated as sources of information without much benefit to themselves, and they are unlikely to complain about such treatment, this practice does not question power inequalities and does not contribute to the liberation and empowerment of those less fortunate in our society.

From a psychological point of view, I wanted to use a strength-based approach when conducting interviews and analyse final outcomes that align with values of Kaupapa Māori research as well. To avoid a one-sided depiction of struggles and difficulties where strength, resilience, and positive coping skills can become easily overlooked, the theory of Positive Psychology was used as guiding principle. Below, women's narratives will be discussed.

Women's Narratives through the Dimensions of the Theory of Human Wellbeing

As elaborated in the Literature Review and Research Design chapters in more detail, I came across the theory of Human Wellbeing when I undertook

additional readings while analysing the narratives. Being an Eastern European migrant woman myself, after 13 years in New Zealand, I could neither put myself nor the research participants into any segments of John Berry's acculturation model or what Ward (2008) calls the "Berry-Box". This was due to this theory's narrow focus on the cultural identity and 'readiness' of migrants to 'acculturate'. Furthermore, acculturation theory suggests that acculturation is a key determinant of successful settlement, the characteristics of which are often defined by the researchers and immigration bodies instead of the migrants themselves (Rudmin, 2006). I discussed further critical approaches to the acculturation literature under Chapter 2.1 (e.g. Bourhis et al., 1997; Rudmin, 2006; Van Oudenhoven, Ward, & Masgoret, 2006; Ward, 2008; and Wright, 2010) which will not be repeated here. Rather, the three dimensions of the theory of Human Wellbeing (material, perceptual, and relational), will be discussed next in the context of the women's narratives.

Material dimension. The material dimension encompassed aspects of income, employment, housing, and general living standards and it was shown throughout the narratives that difficulties experienced under this dimension negatively affected these women's perceptions about themselves and their relationships to others. The narratives raised critical issues about power inequalities resulting from not acknowledging these women's skills and qualifications, and other overt and covert barriers such as networking, to access employment. Furthermore, difficulties accessing quality housing provided challenges for these women to create homes that corresponded with their understanding of how a home should be (e.g. insulated, warm, bright, and clean).

Perceptual dimension. Challenges experienced in the material (e.g. unemployment or underemployment) and relational dimensions (e.g. difficulties

establishing friendships with locals) negatively influenced the research participants' conceptions about themselves, their values, skills, knowledge, abilities, and place in the New Zealand society. The lack of experiencing success and difficulties establishing relationships in the long-term made some of these women feel isolated and even depressed. Conversely, once some of them secured work and study aligned with their skills and expertise, their confidence returned and it was easier for them to meet both locals and other migrants. Similarly, establishing a home close to their values filled them with a sense of achievement and strengthened their sense of belonging to their new environment.

Relational dimension. Personal and social relations are important for human wellbeing in general and for migrants who arrive in a new environment in particular (Wright, 2011). The women in this study often established first relationships with other migrants and with those of their own ethnicities. All reported difficulties in understanding cultural peculiarities of New Zealand communication and some customs even after they mastered the language to a high standard. The lack of employment made it especially difficult for some to meet locals since, as it was shown in Chapter 8.3, apart from employment situations they seldom socialise with unfamiliar migrants in their spare time (Statistics New Zealand, 2011). Women's narratives through the relational dimension also highlighted the importance for them to maintain their connections with significant others in their home countries. This was achieved by using the internet and social media, as well as savings for the purpose of visiting their countries as often as they could financially afford it. They were also keen to pass on traditional knowledge and cultural practices to the next generation.

Women's Narratives through the Perspectives s of Positive Psychology

As described in more detail in Chapter 3.1 on research design, Seligman's PERMA model (2011) was used as a guiding principle during interviews for two reasons: First, to avoid overlooking strengths, skills, and positive coping strategies when women reported about negative events, and second, to identify which aspects of the PERMA model were weak in the research participants' lives when they faced difficulties and challenges. Before entering into the analysis of narratives, revisiting Seligman's PERMA model (2011) can be beneficial. The acronym consists of five elements that people from diverse cultures identified as prerequisites to their psychological wellbeing and happiness: **P**ositive emotions - the ability to remain optimistic, feelings of joyfulness, happiness, and contentment; **E**ngagement – being completely absorbed and interested in activities; **R**elationships – being authentically connected to others, feeling accepted and cared about by others; **M**eaning – belief in leading a purposeful existence, feeling related to something bigger; and **A**chievement – having a sense of accomplishment and success in mastering everyday activities and reaching goals (Seligman, 2011).

Positive emotions. While research participants reported various problems and challenges in their everyday lives in their home countries, such as financial and employment difficulties (Sophie and Brigi), worries about safety due to imminent war (Mila), marriage and relationship problems (Albéna and Paula), stressful lifestyle (Angela), and family pressure to relocate to New Zealand (Anca), they all held a significant level of optimism which allowed them to trust in their own abilities to introduce positive changes into their lives by migrating to New Zealand. Their ability to remain optimistic was based on earlier experiences of successfully coping with stressful situations which nurtured women's resilience. For example, although Paula reported significant difficulties in her marriage and acculturation

while being a migrant in Germany, which later led to clinical level depression, she managed to develop hope and positive expectations from the relocation to New Zealand. While Anca and Sophie were reluctant to move to New Zealand and both reported feeling "devastated" and "frightened" by the idea, once their decision was made, they again tried to imagine positive aspects of their future lives.

Once relocated to New Zealand, the narratives showed that not everyone's hopes and plans became realities, and women faced considerable obstacles and challenges to make them happen. According to research conducted by Wright (2010) with migrants from Peru in London and Madrid, migrants noted major losses, such as loss of autonomy, enjoyment, relatedness, and status. These significant losses are present in all narratives of the seven Eastern European women: Paula got divorced; Albéna and Brigi experienced significant difficulties in securing meaningful jobs and establishing relationships with local people; Angela reported massive challenges when starting her first business and losing her second, Anca, Albéna, and Mila suffered from not being able to establish a similar status and connections as they had at home. Finally, all women experienced a sense of loss of enjoyment due to the lack of cultural activities they used to be actively involved in in their home countries.

While in hindsight all women reported that it is hard to imagine how they survived these painful periods, they reported that once they emerged from them, they felt wiser, more resilient and stronger than before. People who experience such personal growth, often have the attitude of "That which does not kill me makes me stronger." (Nietzche, as cited in Davis and Nolen-Hoeksema, 2009, p. 641). Davis and Nolen-Hoeksema (2009) suggest, that "personal growth emerges from the process of renegotiating goals and priorities, which involves disengaging from or revisiting former core projects, activities, and strivings, and initiating new ones that

are intrinsically meaningful" (p. 647). The narratives of research participants showed many examples of how they renegotiated their previous goals and how they paved different pathways in their lives by taking on new studies, jobs, and responsibilities, and by reinterpreting the meaning of past events in hindsight. These findings suggest that research participants score highly in positive emotions which strengthened their resilience and determination during hard times.

Engagement. This domain refers to the experience of 'flow' when someone feels completely engaged in and absorbed by an activity (Seligman & Csíkszentmihályi, 2000). According to Nakamura and Csíkszentmihályi (2009), this occurs when "thoughts, feelings, wishes, and actions are in harmony" (p.195). Research participants reported different activities when they experienced freedom, satisfaction, and fulfilment, and these were the activities they mentioned when they talked about coping strategies. Among others, it was dance for Brigi and Albéna, cooking for Paula, reading and planning new buildings for Mila, painting for Angela, yoga and challenging outdoor activities for Sophie, and reading and creating artworks for Anca. However, ideally, engagement and a sense of 'flow' does not only occur in recreational activities. As a significant amount of everyday life is spent at work or study, experiencing full engagement and flow when doing a certain job or even studying can significantly enhance people's feeling of wellbeing (Nakamura & Csíkszentmihályi, 2009). In contrast, when people have to spend hours engaged in activities in which they don't experience similar positive engagement, their feeling of wellbeing and life satisfaction decreases. In this sense, while Brigi and Albéna could feel a positive flow when cleaning their own homes, being highly qualified to do more challenging tasks and working as cleaners elsewhere did not provide them with similar fulfilment as their thoughts, feelings, wishes, and activities were not in harmony. An earlier study reported the negative

psychological effects of the deskilling experiences of migrants both in New Zealand and abroad (e.g. Bürgelt et al., 2008; Cresse & Wiebe, 2009; Man, 2004; Maydell, 2010; Meares, 2010; Shan, 2009; Tipples, 2006). As one participant in Man's study asked quite rightly: "… they use professional people to do menial labour. How do you expect us to function well psychologically?" (2004, p.145)

To find the desired harmony and engagement with their professional activities, all research participants showed perseverance in seeking and/or retraining to secure appropriate jobs, and none of the participating women felt that, despite several failed attempts in New Zealand, they needed to accept the status quo, such as remaining cleaners. The examples provided in this section highlight the resilience, inventiveness, resourcefulness, and strength of migrant women in this study.

Relationships. In Positive Psychology this term stands for feeling accepted, acknowledged, and taken care of by individuals, groups, and the larger society. It also refers to one's relationships to institutions, policies, and regulations (Lopez & Snyder, 2009). Relationships play an especially important role in the lives of migrants since all their established connections are affected by changing cultural and geographical locations. At the societal level, some entitlement becomes lost (e.g. social security, citizenship) and relationships at the meso level (colleagues, neighbours) also vanish. Relationships with close friends and family members staying in the homeland go through different transformations and most commonly their intensity declines (Groseth, 2013). It is understandable therefore that migrants, especially those migrating on their own, see it as priority to establish positive relationships in their new surroundings. Whether they experience the host society with its individuals, rules, and institutions as welcoming or reserved, makes a huge difference for the wellbeing of migrants as people define their identities in relation

to others. Hence, migrants often experience a loss of identity when they do not feel welcomed, accepted, and cared about (Johnston & Longhurst, 2011; Meares, 2010).

According to the narratives, research participants experienced significant losses and difficulties in this domain. While women accepted the inevitable loosening of their relationships to their homes of origin, and expected some initial difficulties in establishing new relationships in New Zealand, the challenges were longer lasting and had a more negative impact than anticipated. Some examples are Brigi's difficulties in establishing closer relationships to both the Pakeha and Māori community; Albéna's failed attempts to form and maintain contact with the local population; institutional boundaries women faced by not having their qualifications and professional experiences accepted (Albéna, Mila, Angela, Anca, and Paula). These refusals signalled to them that they were not good enough, and they were not appreciated and cared about.

Research participants showed much perseverance in this domain as well: finally, Mila achieved working as a partner in an architect bureau; Paula has a local partner whose family accepted her; Brigi's relationship with her partner improved significantly since their couples' counselling; Albéna, Anca, and Angela acquired new qualifications through which they could establish professional relationships; and Albéna tirelessly joined different clubs and organisations to meet new people.

Meaning. Within the discipline of Positive Psychology, the meaning of life is considered to be an important aspect of people's wellbeing (Steger, 2009). The meaning of life relies on two fundamental concepts: comprehension and purpose. The term comprehension refers to "people's ability to find patterns, consistency, and significance in the many events and experiences in their lives, and their synthesis and distillation of the most silent, important, and motivating factors" (Steger, 2009, p. 679). People try to understand themselves, other people, and their

closer and wider environment, and they attempt to find their unique place in the web of these interactions. Comprehension refers to people's understanding and sense making of these multiple interactions (Steger, 2009). Purpose, the second concept, "refers to highly motivating, long-term goals about which people are passionate and highly committed" (Steger, 2009, p. 679) which are consistent with how people make sense of their lives, thus with their comprehension.

All women reported that their lives have meaning and purpose, and that they felt that they were part of a bigger dimension than themselves. For most women this manifested in having, or desiring to have, a family and children; caring about their closer community and wider ecological and social environment; and practising either religion or other spiritual activities to feel connected to a larger entity, such as God, mankind, nature, or the universe. Most difficulties were encountered when research participants' concepts of their place and role in their new surroundings, New Zealand, bumped into hurdles by not being able to find the same place in society as they had in their home countries (e.g. Albéna, Anca, Brigi, and Paula). In such cases, women needed to renegotiate their concept of self and others (members of host society and other migrants) and how to interact with them to find a new place in which they would feel content. Accordingly, they had to modify the long-term plans they felt passionate and motivated about, enter into compromises, or look for new purposes. As an example, Albéna dreamed about becoming the best teacher in mathematics and science for students, however, despite her proven pedagogic concept and knowledge, her difficulties sitting the required English exam made this dream impossible. Her skills and experience with business and numbers directed her to become a bookkeeper instead. However, when she recalled her original dream, she had tears in her eyes which indicated that substitute goals cannot always provide the same motivation then original ones. Anca, on the other hand,

saw herself as a psychologist first. Since her qualifications were not accepted, she felt like she was in vacuum for a year, not knowing what her purpose should be. Finally, she found a new vocation that for her is even more inspiring than her original plan was: working in the headquarters of the European Union in the interest of minority people. Angela sees herself in the long-term in a developing country, enhancing peoples' lives by setting up sustainable businesses. Mila also encountered a challenge by entering a new phase of life when her daughter left home and even the country. What is the reason for staying in New Zealand when friends and family members are back in Europe? Through discussion with her husband, they redefined their roles in providing financial support for family members which, for them, is easier done from here without giving up the option of returning home at a later stage.

It is important to mention that even during the periods of depression and despair, none of the participating women reported suicide ideation. While they questioned the meaning of their lives in periods when everything seemed to fall apart, through self-reflections, talking to friends and family members, especially from their homelands, and carrying out their religious, spiritual or cultural practices, women managed to find new meanings for their lives.

Achievement. Seligman (2011) identified that having a sense of mastery, and feeling of accomplishment through realisation of goals is a fundamental building block in people's wellbeing. While contribution to extra-personal goals (group, workplace or society) partly builds a sense of achievement, people need to feel that their contribution has played a role in the success. Thus, a wish to contribute to larger groups to advance non-personal goals can become the personal goal itself. Hence, for the purpose of personal wellbeing, whether goals are collective or individualistic (in an ideal case people have both), people need to feel

a sense of mastery and accomplishment about them (Seligman 2011). Goal setting is a fundamental first step towards achievement. In their everyday lives, people set immediate, short-term, and long-term goals among which some goals have higher stakes than others, and some bear more inspirational and motivational values, than others. If people are prevented from experiencing a sense of mastery over their goals, their self-esteem and confidence in their own abilities decreases. Low self-esteem and self-confidence emerge as typical characteristics in a number of mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, addiction, compulsion type disorders, and various personality type disorders, just to name a few (Rizwan & Ahmad, 2015).

Concerning the especially vulnerable position of migrants who have set their goals high (creating a home, secure financial background) even before they arrive in their new, unfamiliar environment, experiences of inability to master and accomplish tasks can occur more frequently than what they are used to. If external obstacles (rules, institutions, hidden or open barriers to enter job markets and establishing relationships) repeatedly prevent them from experiencing a sense of achievement, this sets back not only the migrants' sense of self-worth and self-esteem, but their attitude towards the host society as well, which may result in further alienation and isolation making any positive change even more difficult (Groseth, 2013; Ward & Masgoret, 2008; Wright, 2010).

In their narratives, the research participants reported about both their achievements and accomplishments, and their difficulties in reaching their goals. Generally, these women were proud to talk about how they secured and upgraded their first homes, be it through renting (e.g. Albéna, Mila, Paula, and Angela) or staying with family members or working in a farm in exchange for food and shelter (Brigi). Upgrading the, in comparison to European standard, low quality

accommodations through additional insulation, cleaning, and partially self-made decorations filled women with a sense of mastery and accomplishment they were proud of. Setting up every day routines with children, school, work, shopping, and various house chores were also perceived as achievements, although having missed the appreciation of others was also reported by some women (e.g. Brigi, Albéna). The lack of positive feedback on mastering these mundane activities becomes especially significant when other areas of life, such as work environment, are not present and women spend most of their times running the household. It was clear from the women's narratives that professional and academic achievements were highly regarded in their home countries. When disclosing information about their lives to those at home, understandably, they were not happy to report that instead of advancing in their previous careers they still worked as cleaners or were unemployed after several years of living in New Zealand. Such downward scaling on the social ladder due to reasons beyond one's control is hard to come to terms with for everyone, especially for migrants (Groseth, 2013; Man, 2004; Ward & Masgoret, 2008).

9.3 Synthesis of Theoretical Frameworks

This section reviews some of the limitations I experienced when applying the 3-D model and the PERMA model to interpret the narratives of the research participants. Both the 3-D model and the PERMA-model have been referred to by their developers as holistic, which is a descriptor often claimed by approaches that seek to encompass all factors that may influence or determine a certain phenomenon. Relying on the 'holistic' notion of a theory, however, runs the danger that important aspects outside of what is considered to be part of the 'holistic' become neglected. In my thesis, two important themes of the women's narratives

appear to be hardly or not encompassed by these two theories, namely health (including physical and mental wellbeing) and religion or spirituality.

Health, which in cultures of European origin often referred to as the sum of mental and physical health, was an important aspect of the research participants' everyday lives. When women talked about the importance of healthy eating, they took both pride and responsibility of being able to cook healthy food for themselves and their family members to maintain good health. Concerning mental wellbeing, most of the research participants experienced low moods and depression at some stage of their lives. Understandably, during these periods their overall wellbeing was negatively affected. Religious and spiritual factors seemed to play also an important role in most of these migrants' wellbeing: for example, for Mila and Albéna it was important that they had access to the Orthodox Christian church; and for Sophie and Brigi practising yoga has become an important determinant of feeling well both physically, mentally and spiritually.

In context of the 3-D model, the *relational dimension* seems to be the most appropriate to include health and religion or spirituality, however, this dimension refers only to "a state of 'being' with others" (Wright, 2011, pp.1462-1462) and neglects a state of 'being' within oneself as a wellbeing component. Including one's relationship with oneself could embrace the individual's physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of wellbeing. An extensive literature search suggested one main critical point of the Human Wellbeing Theory, namely that it appears to neglect political economy as an important influencer of human wellbeing (Sumner, 2010). As a response Sumner argues that especially the subjective and relational dimensions of wellbeing make the 3-D model fundamentally political, since they address the notion of agency:

Who has what, who can do what, who feels good about what they can have and do, who commands resources, who is able to achieve their needs and goals with those resources, and who constructs meanings in terms of goals to achieve and processes to achieve those goals are all intrinsically political issues. (Sumner, 2010, p. 1068)

Considering the PERMA model, while the element *Positive Emotions* appears to give space for mental health, physical health as a contributor to personal wellbeing does not seem to fit under the acronym. Similarly, the aspect of spiritual and/or religious fulfilment is hard to allocate unless the category of *Relationships* is extended from being connected to others to being connected to self and higher powers as perceived by the individual. Looking at some of the critiques of the PERMA model, a study devoted to explore happiness in Malaysia found that a

…three-factor model (positive emotion/relationships, meaning/ accomplishment, and engagement) fit the data better than the proposed five factors. We then coded and examined the qualitative questions on perceptions of well-being. While the PERMA constructs were generally represented, there were also other constructs that went beyond the PERMA model, such as religion, health and security. (Khaw & Kern, 2014/2015, p.10)

Since these limitations of the PERMA model were also present in my study, it seems that the model's applicability across cultures should be considered with caution. According to another critique, "An empirically based version of the good life as proposed by positive psychology is a donut with something missing at the core—the moral map." (Sundararajan, 2005, p.35). The writer of this article points out that the core values behind positive psychology are based on Western value systems and as such cannot be claimed to be universal. Other studies, as listed in

Frawley's (2015) comprehensive review of critics, requested more robust evidence-base measurements to support the theory's claims.

An alternative wellbeing model of White (2009) attempts to include all aspects neglected by the previously described theories (Figure 9.2):
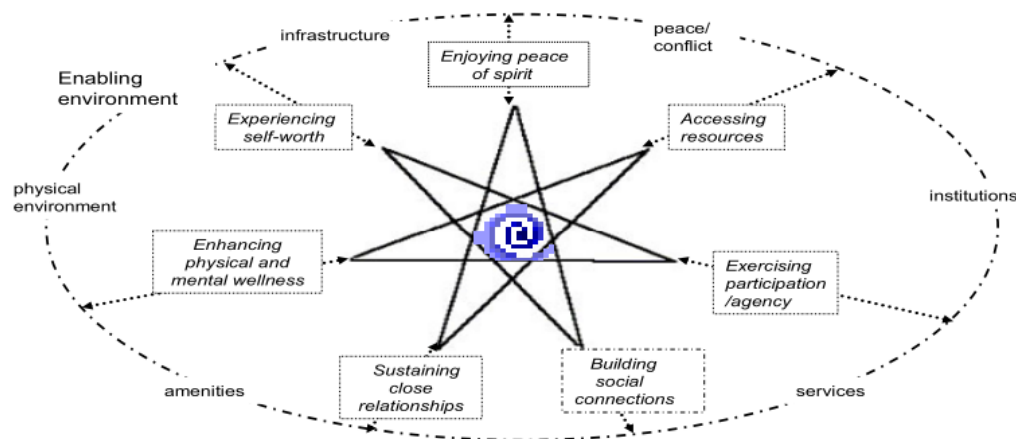
Figure 9.2. An Integrated Model of Personal Wellbeing
Source: White (2009, p. 15)

While no space is allocated here to a more detailed assessment of this model, its complexity shows how difficult it is to capture the everyday life and wellbeing of people. Summing up, it seems that while the Western value based models discussed above claimed to be all-encompassing or 'holistic' in regard to the most important aspects of human wellbeing, they either neglected certain aspects – such as religion, spirituality or physical health – or needed to be combined with other models to enhance their claims.

As discussed in the thesis, the research process benefited much from using the Kaupapa Māori philosophy as a methodological framework. However, Kaupapa Māori research is not only a methodological guideline to safeguard a more ethical and just research process but also an approach to data analysis. Therefore, it is important to reflect on how the research could have benefited from using this indigenous philosophy for data analysis and interpretation more fully. Kaupapa

Māori philosophy claims that data analysis should be culturally appropriate to those involved in the research (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). In the case of Māori research participants, the researcher should have an in-depth knowledge of Māori values, worldviews, socio-economic and socio-political issues in order to provide a valid interpretation of the data. Such familiarity with the contextual background of the research participants is expected also in the case of other minority research participants (e.g. ethnic or differently abled people). While my general knowledge and reading of the Eastern European region supported my understanding of the narratives, I did not find any culture specific well-being model developed in the home countries of my research participants that could have been used as an interpretation tool. However, the narratives revealed important values and aspects of everyday life these women seek to nurture such as nuclear and extended family and friendships, physical and mental health, meaningful work, connection to nature, and spiritual and/or religious practices. These aspects are often found in indigenous wellbeing models, such as the Māori Te Whare Tapa Whā model (Durie, 1994) depicted in Figure 9.3:
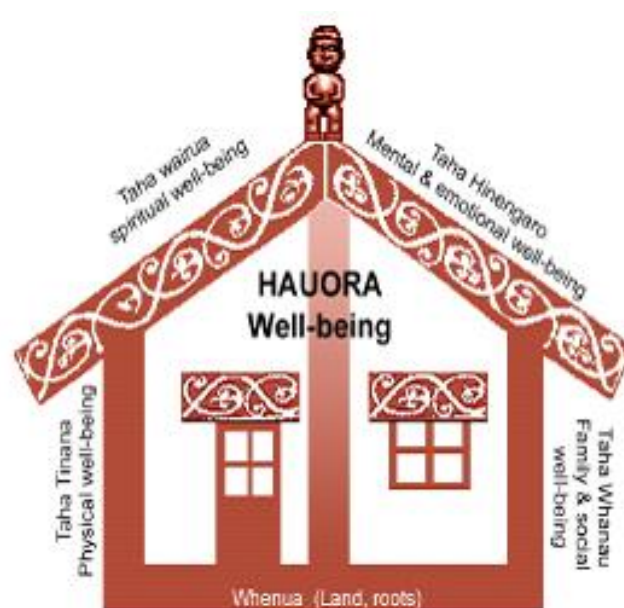

Figure 9.3. Te Whare Tapa Whā model
Source: Durie (1994)

According to this model the foundation of an individual's wellbeing lies with the land and someone's roots (Whenua). In the case of migrants both literature and the narrative of research participants suggest that they strive to maintain roots to their homes of origin and establishing a new home where they can feel themselves at home in New Zealand. The model acknowledges the importance of physical, mental and emotional wellbeing (Taha Tinana, Taha Hinengaro) which these Eastern European women described as pivotal in their everyday lives as well. Family and social connections (Taha Whanau) had a central place in these women's life and all of them reported the importance of either spiritual and religious practices in their everyday lives (Taha Wairua). The advantage of this model is that it allows a wider interpretation of its dimensions while keeping an easily understandable and interpretable structure. This short review suggests that indigenous knowledge can be relevant and worth exploring not only in the context of Māori but of certain migrant and minority populations as well.

Working with the Kaupapa Māori research framework required from me, as a researcher, to raise my critical awareness on issues of social injustice and to think about change making strategies I could influence or initiate beyond the research process. As such, I actively sought opportunities to presented preliminary and final findings at both academic forums, such as seminars and conferences, and in the community (e.g. presentations at the NZ Diversity Counselling Trust). Upon completion of this work I intend to raise awareness on the issues highlighted by the interviews with further potential stakeholders such as Diversity Works NZ (former Equal Employment Opportunities Trust), mental health providers and employment and migration policy makers. With these

intentions in mind, the next section discusses potential implications for these stakeholders.

9.4 Implications for Mental Health Service Providers and Policy Makers

Recent research on acculturation increasingly suggests a move away from the notion that the success of acculturation or integration into a new culture is solely dependent on the migrant's own ability (e.g. Henderson, 2004; Strategic Social Policy Group, 2008; Wright 2010). Host societies can play an important role in preventing or hindering the successful integration of migrants, as discussed earlier under the literature review (Chapter 2) in more detail (Adelowo, 2012; Correa-Velez, Gifford, & Barnett, 2010; Groseth, 2013; Leong & Ward, 2011; Lewis, 2005; Meares, 2010; Maydell-Stevens, Masgoret, & Ward, 2007; Shan, 2009; Ward & Masgoret, 2008). However, the narratives of Eastern European women suggest that the implementation of academic suggestions is still sporadic: marginalisation in social interactions with locals, hurdles to access to health care, gate-keeping for certain academic trainings, and overt and covert barriers to skilled employment opportunities paired with expected retraining still undermine successful integration significantly. The goal of this section is to discuss the implications of research findings for mental health service providers and for policy makers in the fields of training, migration, and employment.

Implications for Mental Health Service Providers

To provide culturally appropriate mental health services for various cultural groups it is paramount to understand their values and aspirations (Maydell-Stevens, Masgoret, & Ward, 2007). According to the narratives of some of the research participants, their white skin colour can make professionals assume that no special

cultural considerations are needed. Those research participants who engaged with health and mental health services often experienced that their complaints about feeling unwell or depressed were not taken seriously. General practitioners and community organisations often interpreted the despair, depression, and anxiety these women felt as not serious enough to warrant a referral to a qualified counsellor or psychologist because they were well dressed, had their hair freshly done, and were wearing make-up (experiences of Paula, Brigi, and Albéna). In such cases, they frequently turned to the internet to learn about their problems and the best treatment options to be able to advocate in their own interests. However, learning that their problems were indeed more serious than indicated by health care providers caused them extra stress and required extra courage from them to go back to their GPs or to seek out other providers for appropriate treatment. While talking to overseas family members and friends was regarded as an option to ease immediate despair, despite the temporary relief after such conversations, research participants often felt remorse about causing extra worry for their loved ones. Subsequently, they preferred not to report problems and difficulties for a while which made their own emotional and mental state even weaker.

Concerning best practice in treatment and assessment, the handbook *Therapies for refugees, asylum seekers, and new migrants: Best and promising practice guide for mental health and addiction services*, published by Te Pou o te Whakaaro Nui, The National Centre of Mental Health Research, Information and Workforce Development (2010) provides useful guidelines. While this handbook is mostly based on research conducted with refugees and migrants of African and Asian origins, some considerations seem to be appropriate for people from Eastern Europe as well: "unemployment among skilled migrants (…) increased the likelihood of poor mental health" and "those who move more frequently have a

higher risk of separation or divorce, which may be explained in part by increased stress and relationship instability" (p. 20). At the same time, "maintaining close links with similar migrant communities promotes well-being and reduces risks during early resettlement" (p. 20). Thus, when assessing migrants, special attention should be devoted to learning about their settlement experiences, relationship, and employment difficulties.

Concerning appropriate treatment modalities, the guideline proposes a strength-based approach acknowledging that "some of the many positive qualities and characteristics of refugees and migrants may include: resilience, courage, creativity, endurance and tenacity, different cultural knowledge and wisdom, and diverse experience" (Te Pou o Te Whakaaro Nui, 2010, p. 35). Appropriate communication to establish rapport and interpret information correctly is inevitable. Women from Eastern Europe often characterised themselves as outspoken, straight to the point, and not valuing small talk. If, in an attempt to establish rapport, the limited time of an appointment was filled with small talk by the practitioner, this was often perceived by the women as being not taken seriously or lack of knowledge on the part of the practitioner. The preference for a more straightforward and even confrontational conversation when compared to Pakeha engagement styles was also highlighted by the narratives in McIntyre's (2014) research on "Acculturation experiences and workplace cultural diversity dynamics: A comparative study of Chinese, Indian and Eastern European migrants in New Zealand". In this research most Eastern European migrants reported that, in order to fit in, they had to decrease the volume of their voice, reduce the level of their assertiveness and confidence when making suggestions, and to use indicative sentences and other polite forms more often than what they were used to in their home countries. These narratives and that of the experiences of Eastern European

women suggest that a mental health provider unfamiliar with this cultural background can easily conclude that a patient who is well-dressed, has a louder than average vocal projection, maintains good eye contact, is outspoken and interested to learn about details, does not appear to be depressed at all, most probably just homesick or somewhat overwhelmed or even arrogant.

As not finding access to skilled employment or study in the areas of their expertise is one of the most often cited challenges migrants and refugees report, unlike in the case of relationship difficulties, addressing the root of problems such as these falls outside the service provided by health and mental health providers. For example, asking an ex-academic researcher to do mindfulness exercises and come to terms with her position as a school cleaner and to put in effort to see the bright side of this situation cannot be regarded as a solution to the problem. Hence, policies and practices in other realms, such as education and employment, need to be addressed to avoid adding extra challenges on top of what migrants need to face when starting a new life in a new geographical and cultural environment. In the next section I discuss some implications for policy makers.

Implications for Policy Makers

According to Groseth (2013), migrant experience of exclusion happens due to power inequalities between them and their host society which uses legislation and a bureaucracy to limit their rights. Migrant experiences suggest that in addition to their settlement costs they need to 'earn' or 'buy' their rights to integration (Anthias, Kontos, & Morokvasic-Müller, 2013; Dordević, 2012). While immigration procedures, travel and accommodation costs, and official translation of numerous documents already cause considerable financial burden, even for those with a solid financial background, migrants accept these challenges assuming that

receiving their work permit or resident visa would open the door towards normal everyday opportunities, such as study, health care, and work in line with one's professional background.

Research participants in several studies (e.g. Bürgelt, Morgan, & Pernice, 2008; Man, 2004; Maydell-Stevens, Masgoret, & Ward, 2007; Tipples, 2006) reported that while their profession was often shortlisted in the skilled migrant's category—which encouraged them to invest money and energy to apply—once here, the NZQA refused accepting their diplomas and degrees, especially if it was of non-Anglo-Saxon origin (e.g. Paula, Albéna, Anca). This happened even to those whose qualifications and work experience had been accepted by the United Kingdom or the USA where they worked as migrants in their profession for several years successfully (e.g. Tipples, 2006). While NZQA's gate-keeping is publically justified with making sure that migrants hold the equivalents of New Zealand qualifications, many overseas professional degrees NZQA does not recognize as 'good enough' are much harder to obtain than their New Zealand counterparts (see migrant contributors to the internet forum: E2NZ.org: http://e2nz.org/?s=qualification). Personal encounters, over the last 13 years, with migrants and stories submitted by migrants to the E2NZ.org forum (e.g. http://e2nz.org/2015/11/27/migrant-tales-biotechnologist-says-nzs-universities-are-a-ponzi-scheme/) often reported that papers they needed to take did not provide them with new or relevant knowledge, and they were only taken to gain access to the profession. While undoubtedly this subtly-enforced 're-education' programme of migrants provides considerable financial income for the economy in New Zealand, the question remains whether the economy would not benefit more by allowing migrants to have jobs they are skilled in and profit from their often very advanced overseas experiences.

Eastern European women were very critical of the concept of expected 'Kiwi experiences' before securing a job in a desired profession. Apart from more open-minded multinational companies and employers who are migrants themselves or locals who have lived abroad, there is still a strong preference to preserve the status quo and image of "the Kiwi way of doing things", irrespective of whether the practice is good or bad (Harris, 2013). To gain this "Kiwi experience", new migrants are often urged to volunteer to first receive employment references in New Zealand in whatever field to make them appear more trustworthy in the eyes of local employers. This practice is also promoted on the Immigration New Zealand website as a great way to establish first connections to locals and to contribute to the New Zealand community (McGill, 2015). While, apart from being a noble action, and volunteering undoubtedly contributes to establishing connections and skilled migrants with a good command of English usually wish to secure regular income as soon as possible to be able to finance their everyday costs. Having managed to establish themselves financially and professionally, the opportunity to volunteer in their free time would be considered by most migrants as a great cause.

Letting volunteering appear as a prerequisite to paid employment for those who would desperately need to secure financial means first has several negative consequences: migrants who have never received a social benefit in their home countries become reliant on unemployment benefits in New Zealand. This can undermine their self-esteem and self-confidence significantly. For a migrant architect working for free in an architect bureau, or a migrant English teacher working for free for a training provider in the hope of getting a reference or even getting hired, comes very close to a form of exploitation which raises further ethical questions. Such arrangements can leave migrants in financial uncertainty for months or even years. That migrant exploitation is indeed a significant problem in

New Zealand is also acknowledged on the Immigration New Zealand website (Immigration New Zealand, 2015), and migrants are encouraged to report such incidents. However, many cases remain unreported as migrants do not want to lose their only chance of getting a reference or paid employment, and they want to avoid starting the same volunteering process elsewhere (Yuan, Cain, & Spoonley, 2014). Additionally, financial insecurity has a known negative impact on the stability of a family's and other relationships, and can easily lead to break ups, further isolation, and mental health and addiction problems (Te Pou o Te Whakaaro Nui, 2010).

Research participants agreed with Angela's remark that the tasks, responsibilities, and time requirements of a significant number of volunteer jobs are so intense that no employer in Europe would expect to find volunteers to carry them out. Albéna has worked for most of her eight years in New Zealand as a volunteer, she has been on a benefit with two children, and she agreed to retrain to become a book keeper instead of a mathematics and science teacher, a field in which she had proven excellence. Yet, after all her efforts, she was still unemployed. Her story is not unique among migrants, especially among females.

To summarise this section, I argue for more culturally appropriate service provision from the health and mental health sector by becoming open minded listeners to migrant service users' needs, and by holding less biased assumptions about the needs and symptoms of white migrant women from different cultures. At a governmental level, the problem of overt and covert barriers, and gate-keepers to certain professions and qualifications need to be addressed more radically, and a reform of NZQA accreditation of migrant qualifications remains much needed. The findings of this research also advocate for moving away from promoting the "Kiwi way of doing things" as the only proper way and from the prerequisite of "Kiwi experience". Advertising volunteering as the way to get paid employment should

be revisited as its widespread acceptance and application can contribute to migrant exploitation and cause significant financial, relationship and health problems for migrants, which has a negative impact on the social security system of New Zealand as well.

9.5 Recommendations for Future Research

This study revealed gaps in the literature about Eastern European migrants' everyday lives in New Zealand and highlighted some significant issues at the societal level that future research needs to address. First, due to the limitations of my study, as addressed in the previous section, further research should be devoted to learning about the experiences of a larger number of migrants from the Eastern European region.

Second, these migrants' struggle to have their qualifications and work experiences acknowledged, and the overt and covert barriers to the employment market seem to correspond with those experiences reported by migrants from other countries (e.g. studies by Bürgelt, Morgan, & Pernice, 2008; Maydell, 2010; Maydell-Stevens, Masgoret, & Ward, 2007; Philipp & Ho, 2010; and migrant stories on the web-site http://e2nz.org/migrant-stories/). Thus, future research could synthesise these findings, and explore the awareness and response of the New Zealand Qualification Authority and other relevant decision making bodies to it.

Third, concerning the application of the Kaupapa Māori framework, further studies with other migrant groups could reveal whether the cultural background of migrants, such as coming from collectivist or individualist orientated cultures, would impact this framework's applicability. Also, it would be worthwhile to explore how other migrants experience their participation in studies guided by the

Kaupapa Māori framework and what benefits they can identify through their participation in such studies.

Fourth, as the literature review revealed, there is a very limited number of research studies on Māori and migrant encounters. Exploring how a more fruitful interaction between Māori and other ethnic minorities could counterbalance Pakeha supremacy would provide benefits to other underprivileged population groups as well.

Fifth, Positive Psychology is becoming an increasingly popular theory and is especially recommended in assessment and treatment practice with migrants and refuges. Having its philosophical origins in the collectivist value based Buddhist philosophy, further research could investigate whether there are similar values and elements in Māori philosophy and to what extent Positive Psychology adapted to Māori psychology could be applied to treat thangata whaiora more effectively than present mainstream treatment practices.

Finally, similar research with other ethnic minorities is encouraged to provide insight into their everyday lives, struggles, needs, aspirations, and achievement to allow these groups to be more visible and to advocate for their right to culturally appropriate treatment.

9.6 Conclusion

Based on the research results, this chapter discussed the implications for theory, policy making, and practice. It was found that the Kaupapa Māori framework proved to be an excellent background to build the necessary relationship between the researcher, the topic, and the research participants, and yielded in a rich data set. Additionally, research participants reported the positive impacts they experienced through participating in the research framed by Kaupapa guidelines.

Second, research participants' narratives were analysed through the lenses of the 3-D model of theory of Human Wellbeing and the PERMA model of the theory of Positive Psychology. While the 3-D model highlighted the interconnectedness and impacts of the three dimensions (material, perceptual, and relational) on migrants' wellbeing, the PERMA model underlined the strength, resourcefulness, optimism, and resilience these women demonstrated throughout their journeys. In addition, the findings underlined how the lack of meaningful activities and relationships could undermine these women's wellbeing.

This study also supported the notion that the host society plays an important role in the positive or negative settlement experiences of migrants. In this regard, the risks of migrant exploitation through expected volunteering and unnecessary re-training has been addressed.

Further on, I discussed some implications for health and mental health providers by calling for more awareness of potential cultural differences among white migrant women. Lastly, the findings and limitations of my study led me to recommend some areas for future research, such as Māori and migrant interactions, overt and covert settlement barriers, and the applicability of the Kaupapa Māori framework to undertake further research with migrants.

I close this thesis in the hope that I managed to provide the reader with a deeper insight into the everyday lives of Eastern European women in New Zealand and that the messages from the seven women's narratives will inspire further students and researchers to devote their attention to similar topics. Such studies can contribute to the development of a more just society by providing platforms for migrant women's voices to be heard and better understood in New Zealand.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Email to Eastern European ethnic organisations and associations in Hamilton

Subject: Research project: The everyday lives of Eastern European immigrant women

Dear ……………… *(name of co-ordinator or president of the organisation)*,

I am conducting a research project for my PhD in Psychology degree at the Māori & Psychology Research Unit in the School of Psychology at Waikato University, Hamilton. I am exploring the everyday lives of Eastern European immigrant women in New Zealand with special attention to their experiences and wellbeing since they have left their home countries.

For conducting interviews I am looking for participants who

- are from a country that used to belong to the former East-Block in Europe;
- can communicate in English or German or Hungarian without the need of a translator;
- are 20 years or older;
- have been residing in New Zealand for at least one year; and
- have relocated to New Zealand as an adult.

Please forward this email to members of your community who might be interested in participating in this project. Those interested can contact me either per phone or email for further information.

Thank you for your support.

Kind regards,

Dr Adrienna Ember (PhD)

Phone:

Email:

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Participant Information Sheet

Project Title

THE EVERYDAY LIVES OF EASTERN EUROPEAN IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN AOTEAROA
/ NEW ZEALAND

Purpose

This research is a partial requirement for my PhD in Psychology degree. It requires the researcher to conduct a narrative research on the topic through interviews and subsequent analysis.

What is this research project about?

The planned research aims to receive insights into the everyday lives of Eastern European immigrant women of different ethnic origin from a psychological perspective by learning about their challenges, psychological and psychosocial coping strategies, strengths, and needs in a culturally sensitive way. A second, equally important aim of the research is to empower and support research participants by listening to their stories, paying attention to their concerns and needs, and helping them to utilise their own and other resources to live a more fulfilled life. The outcomes of this research are expected to raise questions about the appropriateness of current policies and practices in a variety of areas such as immigration, education, labour market, health care as well as various cultural and social services.

What will you have to do and how long will it take?

If you consent I would like to conduct three interviews with you (roughly 2-4 weeks apart from each other) at a time and location that is most convenient to you. An interview may take between 60-120 minutes but you may stop the interview at any time. Questions are aimed to get to know what made you to immigrate to New Zealand and how has your life developed since your arrival here. With your permission I will audio-record our conversation and will take some notes. I will then write a summary report for each interview and provide you with two copies: you are welcome to keep the one and send back the other with any comments you wish to make. You have the right to decline the answer to any questions and also to tell me to delete certain parts of your story. You can choose to withdraw the summary of your interview up until I begin to analyse it.

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What will happen to the information collected?

I will analyse the information collected and incorporate findings into the PhD thesis. As this research is part of the overall research programme "The everyday lives of women in New Zealand" lead by Associate Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora at Māori & Psychology Research Unit (MPRU) in the School of Psychology at Waikato University, data collected will remain in the ownership of MPRU. According to academic practice data needs to be kept at least for seven years. MPRU will retain the interview report summaries indefinitely. It is possible that further articles and presentations may be the outcome of this research. No participants will be named in such publications and every effort will be made to disguise their identity.

What discomforts and risks can arise and how will these be alleviated?

Talking about your life and personal experiences may cause strong emotions for you. Before you consent to participate it is important to think about how you can be comforted should you become upset by a memory. Beside friends and family members you are also welcome to use my skills as a qualified life coach and Life Line counsellor or I can refer you to agencies offering free counselling to ethnic people such as Life Line and the NZ Diversity Counselling Trust.

What are the benefits of participation?

Having the opportunity to share your life story and your thoughts and feelings about issues affecting your everyday can be a very empowering experience. It might provide you with new insights and interpretations of past events as you talk and reveal some of your skills and strengths you might have not been aware of. At the end of the research period you will be presented with a small gift as a token of my appreciation for your commitment and support.

On a wider scale, this is the first study that focuses on the experiences and wellbeing of Eastern European immigrant women in New Zealand. Your story will help to reveal misconceptions about people from this geographical area and highlight their strengths, experiences, and challenges in New Zealand. Subsequent reports and publications will aim to raise community awareness at various levels on practices and policies that make the life

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of immigrant women especially challenging (e.g. Ministry of Immigration, NZQA, Ministry of Health, and other institutions).

Declaration to participants

If you take part in the study, you have the right to:

- ask any further questions about the study that occurs to you during your participation;
- be given access to a summary of findings from the study when it is concluded;
- refuse to answer any particular question; and to
- withdraw from the study before analysis has commenced on the data.

Who's responsible?

If you have any questions or concerns about the project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:

Researcher: Dr Adrienna Ember

Phone: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ Email: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Supervisor and leader of the "The Everyday Lives of Women in New Zealand" research programme: Associate Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora

Phone: 07-838-8200, Email: psych2046@waikato.ac.nz

Chair of the Ethics Committee: Dr Nicola Starkey

Phone: 07-838-6472, Email: nstarkey@waikato.ac.nz

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Consent Form for Participants

Project Title:

The everyday lives of Eastern European immigrant women in Aotearoa / New Zealand

I have read the Participant Information Sheet for this study and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I also understand that

- I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time before the researcher has commenced analysis on my data, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality set out in the Participant Information Sheet.
- I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Participant Information Sheet.

Please circle your answer:

- I agree / do not agree for my interview responses to be audio-recorded.

Your Signature: _____

Your Name: _____ Date:_____

Researcher: Dr Adrienna Ember

Contact details: Phone: ███████████████████ Email: ███████████

Supervisor and leader of the "The Everyday Lives of Women in New Zealand" research programme: Associate Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora

Contact details: Phone: 07-838-8200, Email: psyc2046@waikato.ac.nz

Chair of the Ethics Committee: Nicola Starkey

Phone: 07-838-6472 Email: nstarkey@waikato.ac.nz

Interview Narrative Frame

I came to NZ in … .

Before I moved here, I lived in (town)……………, (country)…………….. with

(people)………………………………………………………………………………………………..... .

My role in my family was to ……………………………………………………………..…………… .

Things I did during the week:……………………………………………………………………………

……… .

Things I did during weekends:……………………………………………………………..……………

…………………………………………………………………………………….…………………….…

I used to work as a/an ……………………………………………………………………….…………..

I am also experienced in …………………………………………………………………..…………….

………. .

I learnt / studied (what)……………………………………………………………………….……….. .

In my free time I used to do (hobbies, leisure activities)……………………………………….….. .

Things I liked in my country: ……………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………..………………. .

Things I did not like in my country: ……………………………………………………….……………

……… .

The idea to come to New Zealand emerged first in (year) …………. raised by (me or other person)

……………………………………………………………………………………………………….…... .

My reasons to move to New Zealand were ……………………………………………………….… .

My goals were to ………………………………………………………………..……………………... .

Things I knew about New Zealand:……………………………………………………….…………..

………

Things I knew about the Treaty of Waitangi:………………………………………………………

………

Things I knew about the indigenous Māori:………………………………………………………….

………………………………………………………………………………………………..…………

My sources of information were:………………………………………………………….…………..

How I imagined my life in New Zealand would be: Where would I live?..

With whom? ………………………………………………………………………………………………..

How would I spend my weekdays? ....

…………………………………………………………………………………………………..…………

How would I spend my weekends?...

………. .

How I moved to New Zealand:…………………………………………………………………..……….

Things I took with me: ……………………………………………………………………………………..

Interview Narrative Frame cont.:

Difficulties I faced while moving here:……………………………………………………….……

………………………………………………………………………………………………….………..

Things that went well for my relocation:…………………………………………….……………….

…..……………………………………………………………………..……...…………...

Help / support I received:……………………………………………..……………………..

How I created a new home here:……………………………………………………………………

How I live now:……………………………………………………………………….……………...

Things that are similar to my life at home:……………………...……………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………….…………………………

Things that I are different from my life at home:……………………………...…………………………...

…………………………………………………………………………………….……...………..

Things that I like in my life here:…………………………………………………………….....…

…………………………………………………………………………………….……………………

Things that I miss or do not like here:………………………………………...……………………

…………………………………………………………………….……...………………………

Things that are different from how I imagined:…………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………...…..…………………………

My relationship with New Zealander ("Kiwis"):………………………………………....……

My relationship with other ethnicities:……………………………………………………………

My relationship with Māori:……………………………………………………………………...

When I faced difficulties, the feelings I had were:…………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

It took me (time)…………………….. to overcome these by (doing things and/or getting help from)

………………………………………………………………………………...…….………

I am still struggling with …………………………………………………………………….………..

People / organisation I can turn to for help:………………………………...…………………………

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10 February 2014

Adrienna Ember

Dear Adrienna

Ethics Approval Application – # 14:01
Title: The everyday lives of Eastern European immigrant women

Thank you for your ethics application which has been fully considered and approved by the Psychology Research and Ethics Committee.

Please note that approval is for three years. If this project has not been completed within three years from the date of this letter, you must request reapproval.

If any modifications are required to your application, e.g., nature, content, location, procedures or personnel these will need to be submitted to the Convenor of the Committee.

I wish you success with your research.

Yours sincerely

Assoc. Prof. N. Starkey
Convenor
Psychology Research and Ethics Committee
School of Psychology
University of Waikato