SOUTH AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS IN NEW ZEALAND: TOWARDS AN ECOMODEL OF ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION

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DECLARATION

Student number: 0743-150-3

I declare that

South African immigrants in New Zealand: Towards an ecomodel of assessment and intervention

is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

[Signature]

(Ms C. S. SMALL)
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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SUMMARY

The literature on immigration divides migrants into two distinct categories: immigrants who voluntarily leave their home countries in search of better opportunities, and refugees who are forced to leave because their lives or personal freedom is under threat. However, since many South Africans have emigrated (and continue to do so) because of fears for their safety as a result of the high levels of crime and violence in the country, they could be regarded as "reluctant immigrants" or "anticipatory refugees" (Kunz, cited in Khawaja & Mason, 2008, p. 228). In 2013, South Africans were in the top five source countries for immigrants to New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2013), but they had been the focus of only a few research studies (Meares, 2007, p. 49). A possible reason for this lack of research is the fact that most South Africans are fluent enough in English, are usually able to find employment, and because of cultural and religious similarities, can be integrated with greater ease into New Zealand society (Meares, 2007). Hence researchers probably assume that the settlement experience of South African immigrants in New Zealand is similar to that of skilled immigrants from countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

This qualitative study sought to explore the immigration journeys of nine South African families living in Wellington, New Zealand, by conducting autobiographical narrative interviews. The goal was to understand their experiences and the outcomes of emigrating from South Africa to New Zealand. The research aimed to describe adaptation across the pre- and post-migration phases and the factors that impacted on the immigration process, as well as acculturation stress, coping strategies and the support systems utilised. Thematic network analysis was used to extract common themes across participant narratives to develop ecomodels for assessment and intervention with South African immigrants in New Zealand.
The results of this study confirmed that despite similarities between the two countries, South African immigrants in New Zealand experienced considerable adaptation difficulties. Women, adolescents and older adults were at particular risk of developing psychological problems, such as chronic depression. Additional risk factors were pre-migration trauma, family conflict, emigrating with a visitor’s visa, unrealistic expectations, underemployment and financial hardship, marital discord, loneliness and alienation from New Zealand society. Important protective factors were commitment to the immigration process, thorough pre-migration planning and adequate support upon arrival, equitable employment and financial growth, family cohesion, religious beliefs, a positive mindset, fortitude, a sense of humour, family reunification and social connectedness in New Zealand society. It was recommended that the South African settled community fulfil an active role in supporting newcomers, and that New Zealand policy makers establish systems to foster multiculturalism in New Zealand.
KEY TERMS

South African immigrants; New Zealand; Ecomodel; Immigration factors; Phases of adaptation; Acculturation stress; Psychological impact, Coping strategies; Support systems; Immigrant services

UNBIASED LANGUAGE

Owing to the autobiographical nature of this research, the pronoun "she" is used where the participant is female and "he" is used where the participant is male. In all other instances, an effort was made to avoid gender bias.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Pseudonyms were used, unless participants specifically stated that they preferred using their own names. Personal details were altered to maintain participant confidentiality.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Declaration</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key terms, unbiased language and confidentiality</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of tables and figures</td>
<td>xv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background to the problem</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the problem</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the study</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research questions</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance and relevance of the study</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and limitations of the study</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions of terms</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronyms</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outline of research study</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 MIGRATION AND ACCULTURATION PROCESSES</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migration from a global perspective</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The South African context</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The New Zealand context</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migration systems theory</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation models</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Berry’s fourfold model
Biculturalism and multiculturalism
Interactive acculturation model (IAM)
Relative acculturation extended model (RAEM)
Acculturation as a developmental pathway
Factors that influence acculturation
Circumstances and reasons for migration
Trauma and discrimination
Attachment style
Personality style
Concepts of home and identity
Return migration and transnationalism
Phases of the migration process
Factors that influence the migration process
Individual factors
Family factors
Sociocultural factors
Spiritual factors
Environmental factors
Economic factors
Political and government factors
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychological impact of migration</th>
<th>128</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dislocation and uprooting</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss and mourning</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loneliness and alienation</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doubt and disillusionment</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Despair and identity crisis</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renewal and transmutation</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migration and mental health</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stressors, symptoms and behaviour</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological crises and mental disorders</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factors that influence mental health</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk factors</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protective factors</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-risk groups</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress adaptation models</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress and coping theories</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality and trait theories</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coping strategies and styles</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive attribution theory</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional and practical intelligence</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilience and hardness</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlement needs and service utilisation</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maslow’s hierarchy of needs</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Settlement service needs 218
Help-seeking behaviour and access to services 220
Pathways to mental healthcare 224
Cultural competence 229
Migrant settlement service provision 231
Orientation, information and education 235
Practical support with socioeconomic needs 235
Sociocultural networking and support 236
Immigration, legal and advocacy 239
Medical and psychiatric 239
Psychotherapy 241
Assessment, liaison and referral 250
Intervention programmes for migrants in New Zealand 250
New Zealand migrant service providers 251
Pre-migration assessment and intervention 262
Preventive assessment 263
Information and education 265
Psychological preparation 267
Practical support 269
Post-migration assessment and intervention 269
Information and education 270
Prevention programmes 275
Support needs and services 279
Assessment of supportive needs 279
Support for home living 281
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work and income support</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for families</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups, informal networks and leisure</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therapeutic assessment and intervention</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of settlement outcomes</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations for settlement programmes</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESEARCH DESIGN</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aims and research questions</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research paradigm</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research method</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of participants</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample size</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographic profile of participants</td>
<td>319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic network analysis</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of researcher</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data collection and analysis procedures</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview method</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steps in the analysis of information</td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Format and interpretation of results</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility, reliability and validity</td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical considerations</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 RESULTS

Phases of the immigration process

- Pre-migration
- Preparation and migration
- Arrival and survival
- Adaptation
- Re-migration
- Settlement and growth

Factors influencing the immigration process

- Individual factors
- Family factors
- Social factors
- Cultural factors
- Physical environmental factors
- Economic factors
- Political and government factors

The acculturation process

- Acculturation changes
- Acculturation stressors
- Impact on well-being
- Coping strategies
- Resilience

6 ECOMODELS FOR ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION

Introduction
Ecomodel for the assessment of immigrants 590

Pre-migration assessment 593

Challenges 593
Individual risk and protective factors 595
Family risk and protective factors 606
Sociocultural risk and protective factors 609
Environmental risk and protective factors 611
Economic risk and protective factors 612
Political and governmental risk and protective factors 614

Post-migration assessment 616

Challenges 617
Individual risk and protective factors 619
Family risk and protective factors 626
Social risk and protective factors 634
Cultural risk and protective factors 640
Environmental risk and protective factors 646
Economic risk and protective factors 648
Political and governmental risk and protective factors 654

Ecomodel for intervention with immigrants 659

Pre-migration intervention 661
Information and education 662
Practical assistance 665
Medical care 667
Psychological preparation 668
Religious beliefs 671
Post-migration intervention 671
\[\begin{align*}
\text{Welcoming and orientation} & \quad 672 \\
\text{Information and education} & \quad 675 \\
\text{Practical support} & \quad 682 \\
\text{Social support} & \quad 684 \\
\text{Medical care} & \quad 691 \\
\text{Psychological care} & \quad 696 \\
\text{Spiritual care} & \quad 732 \\
\end{align*}\n
7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 737

\[\begin{align*}
\text{Introduction} & \quad 737 \\
\text{Summary of the major research findings} & \quad 742 \\
\text{Recommendations to facilitate settlement} & \quad 751 \\
\text{Limitations of the study and recommendations for future research} & \quad 755 \\
\text{Conclusions} & \quad 757 \\
\end{align*}\n
REFERENCES 760

APPENDICES 783

\[\begin{align*}
\text{Appendix A: Advertisement} & \quad 783 \\
\text{Appendix B: Information leaflet for participants} & \quad 784 \\
\text{Appendix C: Informed consent form} & \quad 789 \\
\text{Appendix D: Demographic information questionnaire} & \quad 791 \\
\end{align*}\n
xiv
TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1  Demographic profile of participants  322
Figure 1 Theoretical immigration assessment framework  26
Figure 2 Theoretical immigration intervention framework  215
Figure 3 Thematic network of phases of the immigration process  339
Figure 4 Thematic network of factors that influence the immigration process  405
Figure 5 Thematic network of the acculturation process  520
Figure 6 Ecomodel for the assessment of immigrants  592
Figure 7 Ecomodel for intervention with immigrants  660
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

South Africans have always been a nation of nomads with courage, a sense of adventure and a pioneering spirit. Some were immigrants, in search of a better life, some were refugees, fleeing oppression and persecution, and others were slaves, brought to the country against their will. The hunter-gatherer San people were some of the earliest inhabitants, followed by other African tribes, who roamed the savannah plains in search of suitable grazing for their animals. Jan van Riebeeck’s arrival at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652, to establish a trading station for passing ships, was followed by slaves from the East and other parts of Africa, as well as a variety of European settlers. During the “Great Trek” that commenced in 1835, discontented Afrikaner farmers moved to the interior of the country, seeking independence from colonial rule. The discovery of diamonds in Kimberley and the gold fields in the Transvaal brought an influx of fortune seekers during the 1800s.

The exodus of large numbers of skilled South Africans during the apartheid years, and after the democratic elections of 1994, was often viewed as the next “Great Trek”. This new wave of “mass migration” raised a number of questions: (1) Why were so many people leaving the “land of milk and honey”? (2) Was this a tragedy or a natural part of human evolution? (3) What were the hopes and fears of this new generation of “settlers”? and (4) Had the process of migration become any easier after Jan van Riebeeck embarked on his “African safari” with three ships and 90 souls to build a fort and start a vegetable garden at the tip of Africa?

In the past, migration was a tedious and perilous journey by ship, ox wagon or on foot, but modern-day life has provided rapid transport to other continents within a day or two via an air-conditioned jet. However, a slow transit had its advantages: a sense of companionship and community with fellow travellers, as well as time for reflection and to
process and adjust to significant changes during the long journey. It was a pilgrimage and a rite of passage: a shared experience of a life-changing event. Despite modern information resources such as mobile phones, e-mail, internet, and Skype, immigrants may still be ill prepared to face the demands as well as the sense of loss, grief, confusion and alienation that awaits them upon reaching their destination.

The reason for conducting this research project was motivated by personal experience. Freud advised that in order to understand the demands of immigration one should refer to one’s “own experiences of life, or turn to the poets” (cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. xiii). I utilised both, as well as the stories of many others who had undertaken similar journeys. My ancestry is a mixture of Dutch farmers, French Huguenots and Scottish missionaries. As a child, I often looked at a model of a sail ship, called the “Artive”, on which my Scottish great-grandfather had made his long voyage to South Africa. I always wondered what had brought him to South Africa, what the journey had been like and whether I would have his courage to leave the country of my birth when the time came. I decided to immigrate to New Zealand in October 2005 owing to the worrying level of crime, the uncertain economic and political future of South Africa and in search of better career opportunities. Prior to emigration I had never been to New Zealand, but after reading about the “clean and green lifestyle”, the extended hours of sunshine, a First World economy and low levels of crime, it became an attractive prospect. Considering the similarities between South Africa and New Zealand, such as the outdoor lifestyle, love of sports, English as the primary language and a British colonial heritage, I thought: “How difficult can the adjustment be?” How difficult, indeed! I’m inviting you to board this ship with me and set sail into the mists towards the unknown shores of Aotearoa, the “country of the long, white cloud” - but beware, this voyage is not for the faint hearted!
Background to the problem

The world has become a global village. The United Nations Population Division estimated in 2006 that there were more than 200 million international migrants worldwide (Ward, 2008a). As neighbourhoods, schools, workplaces and places of worship were undergoing rapid change in host countries, managing difference was becoming one of the greatest challenges (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2003, p. 14). In multicultural societies, people from different national, linguistic, religious, ethnic and racial backgrounds interact on a daily basis, and are confronted by contrasting views on gender, culture, relationships and equality (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2003). The body of literature I consulted on migration phenomena was extensive and involved disciplines such as history, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, geography, demography, theology, medicine, social welfare, education, political science, international relations and commerce (Kristal-Andersson, 2000, pp. 25-26; Van Coller, 2002, p. 12).

International migration affects the demographic, economic, social and political structures of countries of origin as well as destination countries (Meares, 2007). It also has a profound effect on the life and well-being of immigrants and their families. Understanding the psychological processes involved in immigration and managing the associated challenges successfully are crucial for the well-being of immigrants, and to foster cooperation, support and acceptance among members of the receiving society (Dovidio & Esses, 2001, p. 375). The concept of migration has been extensively researched across various population groups and countries, and certain common factors influencing the migration process have been identified. However, there have been relatively few systematic research studies in the disciplines of psychology and psychiatry about the emotional difficulties of migrants (Dovidio & Esses, 2001, p. 377; Kristal-Andersson, 2000, p. 25).
Dovidio and Esses (2001, p. 377) stress the importance of psychologists participating in interdisciplinary studies to investigate the complex dynamics of the immigrant experience, particularly the challenges, changes and adaptations in particular cultural and historical contexts (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, cited in Dovidio & Esses, 2001, p. 381). The effects of loss and rupture in primary attachments due to family separation during the migration process, as well as the challenges of family reunification, also require further study (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2003). Kristal-Andersson (2000, pp. 9-10) emphasises the need to gain more insight into the individual psychological processes, as well as difficulties with familial, sociocultural, environmental, economic and political problems that migrants experience during the various phases of the immigration process, and to explore what preventive, educational, support and therapeutic systems are beneficial. The conclusion drawn is that immigration is a complex phenomenon that requires an in-depth study of the effects of multiple factors, processes and contexts on the adaptation and settlement of a specific immigrant group.

Most of the immigration literature divides migrants into two distinct categories: immigrants who leave their home countries voluntarily and refugees who are forced to leave because their safety is under threat. An immigrant is defined as a person who makes an informed choice to relocate to a specific foreign country, usually to achieve positive goals such as improved work prospects, social conditions or lifestyle (Van Coller, 2002, pp. 1, 13). However, the spouse or children of the breadwinner may still feel that they do not have much of a choice in the decision to emigrate (Van Coller, 2002, p. 8). The decision of refugees to migrate is involuntary because they are forced to leave their country by factors outside their control to escape “threats to life and liberty” (Van Coller, 2002, p. 13), such as war, political upheaval, religious persecution or famine and usually cannot choose their country of settlement (Van Coller, 2002, p. 1). The bulk of migration research thus focuses on the plight
of refugees and advocates for services required to address their survival needs, and to manage
their physical and psychological difficulties upon arrival in the host society. Since it is
assumed that immigrants leave their countries of origin voluntarily, and thus should have
adequate financial and personal resources for successful settlement, research on this migrant
group is scant.

Various researchers have highlighted the artificial distinction between voluntary and
involuntary migrants, based purely on immigration categories and visas. Worldwide political
volatility due to ethnic conflict and international war efforts to combat terrorism have led to
large numbers of people feeling that their personal safety is compromised, and they are thus
compelled to leave their home countries. These groups of people constitute a large number of
reluctant or semi-voluntary international immigrants who do not meet the United Nations’
definition of refugees, even though many of them suffer extensive trauma in their homeland
and have limited resources available for resettlement. It can be argued that South Africans
constitute a unique subgroup of semi-voluntary migrants (Pernice, Trlin, Henderson & North,
2000, p. 27) owing to the tumultuous political history of the country and the worldwide
condemnation and sanctions against South Africa during the apartheid years, as well as the
escalating level of crime and violence in the new South Africa.

Prior to leaving South Africa, a large number of South Africans have been directly or
vicariously exposed to terrifying experiences such as high-jacking attempts, armed burglary,
rape and the murder of family or friends. According to Harrison and Nortje (2000, p.
Introduction -4), these experiences are similar to those faced by refugees from war-ravaged
countries. Some South Africans decide to immigrate on the spur of the moment after a
traumatic event to avoid “becoming another statistic”. They often leave South Africa without
adequate pre-migration preparation and with limited post-migration resources and support
structures. In addition, owing to immigration points systems and age restrictions for acquiring
permanent residency, many South African immigrants find New Zealand is their only viable option. Meares (2007, p. 283) concludes that immigration from South Africa is predominantly characterised by “push” factors or moving away from disruptive or negative circumstances, as opposed to “pull” factors or moving towards the desirable or positive attributes of a new country. Meares (2007, p. 283) and Van Coller (2002, p. 14) recommend that we view the motivation to migrate as a reactive-proactive continuum with various shades of “push” and “pull” factors. Instead of using exclusive categories such as “immigrant” and “refugee”, Meares (2007, p. 284) prefers to use the term “reluctant migrant” for a person who is motivated by a combination of “push” and “pull” factors - in other words, weighing up the perceived benefits and costs of the relocation. Khawaja and Mason (2008) endorse the classification of South African immigrants as anticipatory refugees or reluctant immigrants because these individuals fit Kunz’s (cited in Khawaja & Mason, 2008, pp. 226, 228) description of individuals who leave their country of origin before economic sanctions, or military and political conditions make immigration impossible.

Extremes on this “push-pull” spectrum may lead to psychological adaptation problems because high “push” factors may involve the trauma of forced relocation, while a high “pull” motivation could result in unrealistic expectations of the host country (Van Coller, 2002, p. 14). South Africans usually enter New Zealand as skilled immigrants, but leaving South Africa is often motivated by fear emanating from the high level of crime and violence, as well as political, social and economic uncertainty. Harrison and Nortje (2000, p. 4) therefore propose that for South Africans, the immigration process and assimilation into New Zealand culture may differ from that of other immigrants owing to added dimensions of stress. Khawaja and Mason (2008, p. 227) add that South African immigrants may experience psychological stress patterns that are different and more severe than those of voluntary immigrants. Pernice et al. (2000, p. 27) confirm that despite apparent cultural similarities
between South Africa and New Zealand, South African immigrants experience poor mental health, similar to that of immigrants from India and China, and suggest that “push” factors and other psychosocial stressors may be involved.

There was worldwide competition between developed countries to attract skilled workers, and changes in the New Zealand immigration policy in 1998 made New Zealand a more attractive and accessible destination for immigrants (Meares, 2007). More than a quarter of the 4,242,051 people currently living in New Zealand are immigrants, of which 54,276 were born in South Africa (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). Because South Africans are placed in the same category as immigrants from other First World countries, they are not eligible for the financial, medical and psychological support offered to refugees to facilitate settlement. Many South Africans enter New Zealand under the “skilled immigrant” category and are reluctant to seek assistance owing to fears that if they disclose medical or psychological difficulties, their work visas could be revoked or they might not be granted permanent residency or citizenship. They therefore either consult with workers who are not qualified to deal with the complexities of their psychological experience, for instance, immigration consultants, or attempt to cope via their informal networks until a crisis occurs. Owing to a sense of shame, they are often reluctant to disclose underlying problems to family and friends, and financial constraints may prevent them from seeking help from a health professional. South Africans also find it difficult to locate a suitable psychotherapist because they were afraid of being judged, invalidated or misunderstood. Some of their experiences are a normal part of the immigration adjustment process, but certain difficulties could lead to more serious, long-term problems such as mood disorders, suicidality, substance abuse and family violence. According to Meares (2007, p. 267), there is currently a lack of post-settlement support services for migrants in New Zealand, and the government recognises the
importance of funding strategic initiatives to improve settlement outcomes for migrants and their families.

Te Pou (2008, pp. 6-7) identified the need for further research on the following topics relating to migrant mental health in New Zealand: (1) the prevalence of mental illness; (2) risk and protective factors for mental well-being; (3) the impact of mainstream and culturally targeted mental health promotion initiatives; (4) how to improve access to services; (5) the quality of mental health assessment and intervention by primary health care services; (6) which mental health services and treatment approaches are the most effective; and (7) the cultural competency of mental health clinicians. Te Pou (2008, p. 7) recommends a collaborative approach between service providers, researchers and members of refugee and migrant communities to enhance the quality and applicability of research, as well as the dissemination of research findings to service providers, planners and funders, policy makers and communities. According to section 22 of the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000 (cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 9), district health boards (DHBs) have a responsibility to “improve, promote and protect the health of the population within their district”. Addressing the mental health needs of people from a migrant background constitutes an important part of this mandate (Te Pou, 2008, p. 9).

Statement of the problem

Because the pre-migration and settlement experiences and the mental health needs of New Zealand’s migrant communities could differ from those studied in international research, conducting New Zealand-specific research was vital (Te Pou, 2008, p. 22). Some subgroups could experience unique patterns of mental health problems, and the type of interventions that would be effective could also vary between migrant groups (Te Pou, 2008, p. 22). In 2013, South Africans were in the top five source countries for immigrants to New
Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2013), but they have been the focus of only a few research studies (Meares, 2007, p. 49). This lack of research is possibly because of the fact that most South Africans can speak English, they are usually able to find employment, and owing to cultural and religious similarities, they are expected to integrate with greater ease into New Zealand society (Meares, 2007). Hence researchers probably assume that the experience of the immigration process by South African immigrants in New Zealand is similar to that of skilled immigrants from countries such as the United Kingdom, Europe and the United States of America. Higgins (2008) adds that there is a paucity of New Zealand research on South African youth, owing to the flawed assumption that they are not sufficiently “different” (p. 19) from their New Zealand peers to experience settlement problems.

Research on South African immigrants in destination countries such as the United States of America, Canada and Australia has focused on specific aspects of immigration such as preparation for immigration (Van Coller, 2002), cultural, ethnic, racial and national identity (Barkley, 1998; Wood, 2005); the cognitive-attributional aspects of adaptation (Grusd, 1982) acculturative stress and depression (Segel, 1995); predictors of psychological distress (Khawaja & Mason, 2008); and return migration (Lauckner-Rothschild, 2005). Because most studies on South African immigrants in New Zealand have been conducted by non-South African researchers, universities or large research organisations, this could limit participant disclosure about controversial, personal or sensitive issues for fear of being judged or offending members of the host nation. These studies focus on the more practical aspects of immigration or on issues of national interest such as the following: the gendered experience of migration (Meares, 2007); home and belonging (Philipp & Ho, 2010); housing experience and settlement outcomes (Johnson, Trlin, Henderson, North, & Skinner, 2005); chain migration (Johnson, Trlin, Henderson, & North, 2006); attitudes towards immigrants (Spoonley, Gendall, & Trlin, 2007; Ward & Masgoret, 2008); portrayal in the media
acculturation and mental health outcomes (Alpass et al., 2007); economic integration (Meares, Lewin, Cain, Spoonley, Peace, & Ho, 2011); employment of skilled and professional migrants (Coates & Carr, 2005; Firkin, Dupuis, & Meares, 2004; Statistics New Zealand, 2004); and employment and mental health (Pernice et al., 2000).

Studies conducted with South African immigrants in New Zealand by South African researchers include a range of topics such as the following: decision making and reasons for emigration (Du Toit, cited in Bornman, 2005; Brokensha, 2003; Ehlers, Oosthuizen, Bezuidenhout, Monareng, & Jooste, 2003; Lucas, Amoateng & Kalule-Sabiti, 2006; Oosthuizen & Ehlers, 2007); language attrition (Barkhuizen, 2006); the role of personality and coping in immigrant well-being (Pietersen, 2000); the relationships between tenure, stress and coping strategies (Bennett, Rigby, & Boshoff, 1997); and a practical-theological approach to adaptation (Reyneke, 2004). The book by Harrison and Nortje (2000) provides practical information for prospective immigrants to New Zealand and they briefly touch on the emotional impact of immigration. To the best of my knowledge, no study has investigated the overall immigration journeys of South African immigrants in New Zealand that include pre-migration, post-migration and return migration processes and experiences. Research with South African immigrants mostly utilises quantitative methods (Bennett et al., 1997; Bornman, 2005; Grusd, 1982; Oosthuizen & Ehlers, 2007; Pietersen, 2000) such as postal questionnaire surveys and psychometric scales. Only a few qualitative studies have been conducted using semi-structured, open-ended, conversational and biographical narrative interview methods for data collection (Barkley, 1998, Brokensha, 2003, Lauckner-Rothschild, 2005; Marchetti-Mercer, 2012, Meares, 2007; Reyneke, 2004; Van Coller, 2002; Wood, 2005). Hardly any studies employ thematic analysis of participant narratives (Brokensha, 2003; Van Coller, 2002; Wood, 2005) and only one study with South African
immigrants, utilising thematic analysis to create a thematic map, could be located (Marchetti-Mercer, 2012).

Clinicians and other service providers faced with South African immigrants in New Zealand who experience adaptation and settlement difficulties lack a comprehensive model for the assessment of pre-migration and post-migration risk and protective factors, as well as other immigration-related processes that have an impact on their psychological well-being. There is also no comprehensive model relating to preventive, supportive and therapeutic interventions for South African immigrants in New Zealand, based on their specific needs during various phases of the immigration process. A number of researchers recommend using an ecological framework or ecomodel for conducting mental health research with immigrant populations to capture a wide range of interrelated or nested factors (Al-Baldawi, 2002; American Psychological Association, 2012; Bronfenbrenner, 1994, 1999; Deaux, cited in Awad, 2007; Johnson, 2007; Meares, 2007; Roer-Strier, 1996; Yakushko & Chronister, 2005).

Purpose of the study

Qualitative research was conducted to describe the immigration experience of South African immigrant families in New Zealand. The research was approached from a post-modernist paradigm, in other words that perceptions of reality may vary across sociocultural and historical contexts. An ecological framework was utilised for this study to examine the migration journeys of South African immigrants in New Zealand. The aim of was to explore the complex, reciprocal interactions between individuals and families, and the environmental systems they encountered, to develop an ecomodel of pre-migration and post-migration assessment and intervention to facilitate adaptation, settlement and well-being of immigrants. This ecological framework included individuals and families in the microsystem, intergroup
attitudes and immigration agencies in the mesosystem, the sociocultural and physical environment in the megasystem, socioeconomic factors in the macrosystem, and government and political factors in the exosystem (Al-Baldawi, 2002; American Psychological Association, 2012; Bronfenbrenner, 1994, 1999; Deaux, cited in Awad, 2007; Johnson, 2007; Meares, 2007; Roer-Strier, 1996; Yakushko & Chronister, 2005). These five levels were explored within an overarching chronosystem that included developmental processes of individuals and families during phases of immigration process, as well as the sociocultural and political-historical contexts of both countries.

The general aim of this study was to explore the various factors that had an impact during the respective phases of immigration, acculturation and adaptation of South African immigrant families in New Zealand. A further objective was to examine the coping strategies and support systems utilised by South African families in New Zealand to serve as a buffer to immigration stressors, and to determine the efficacy thereof in terms of well-being, resilience and settlement outcomes. The specific purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the experience of South African immigrant families in New Zealand by utilising a single narrative-seeking question to elicit rich descriptions of their immigration journeys. Since the research was conducted by a South African immigrant researcher and participant stories were allowed to unfold naturally during the research process, it was hoped that this would lead to more in-depth insights into their immigration experiences.

Nine families, who had immigrated to New Zealand at least three years earlier and were living in the Wellington region, were selected for this study. A convenience sample was chosen as the researcher was based in the Wellington region, and because immigration research and discussions with the settled South African community indicated that after three to five years, most immigrants had settled fairly well and were able to reflect on the vicissitudes of their immigration journeys. Transcriptions of recorded narratives were
subjected to thematic network analysis to extract common themes across participant narratives. The practical goal of this study was utilising the themes obtained from participant narratives to develop ecomodels of assessment and intervention with South African immigrant families in New Zealand.

The specific aims and objectives to be achieved were as follows:

(1) Reviewing migration literature to establish a theoretical framework of the phases and factors that influenced the immigration process, acculturation stressors, coping strategies and the well-being of immigrants

(2) Reviewing migration literature to establish a theoretical framework of settlement needs, support systems and service provision to immigrants during the various phases of the immigration process

(3) Developing an ecomodel of assessment, by conducting a qualitative study of the factors, processes and contexts that had an impact on the immigration journeys of South African immigrant families in New Zealand

(4) Developing an ecomodel for intervention, by conducting a qualitative study to identify strategies and resources that facilitated settlement and improved adaptation, well-being and resilience to determine which support systems and interventions were required to meet the needs of South African immigrants in New Zealand

(5) Increasing the level of awareness and understanding of the challenges faced by South Africans as a group of “reluctant immigrants” in New Zealand, and make recommendations to the South African immigrant community, family and friends in South Africa, New Zealand society, employers, service providers and policy makers to promote successful settlement
Research questions

The research questions for this study were as follows:

(1) What was the experience of South African immigrant families in New Zealand and what factors had an important impact on their immigration journeys?

(2) What coping strategies, resources and support systems did South African immigrant families in New Zealand utilise to manage immigration and acculturation stressors during the various phases of the immigration process?

(3) How did family and friends who remained in South Africa respond when people decided to emigrate to New Zealand, and did they continue to support the emigrants after their arrival in New Zealand?

(4) Did South African immigrant families in New Zealand experience prejudice, intolerance or discrimination by the broader public, employers, immigration officials or government agencies?

(5) Did South African immigrant families in New Zealand experience a change in their personal, professional or cultural identity and how did it affect their behaviour and sense of self?

(6) Did South African immigrant families in New Zealand experience physical, psychological or spiritual difficulties during their immigration journeys, and how did it affect their adaptation and settlement?

(7) What were the support needs of South African immigrant families in New Zealand?

(8) What recommendations could the settled community make to facilitate adaptation and settlement of South African immigrants in New Zealand?
Significance and relevance of the study

New Zealand is a country of immigrants, where more than 25% of the population were born abroad (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). In their countries of origin, many experienced social upheaval, political instability, crime and violence, environmental disasters and personal tragedy. Even voluntary immigrants from relatively stable countries, such as the United States of America or the United Kingdom, experienced acculturation and adaptation difficulties and missed their families and friends back home. Nevertheless, three specific migrant groups were identified as particularly important for research in New Zealand: African and Middle-Eastern refugees, ethnic migrant communities who have different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and second-generation refugee and migrant communities (Te Pou, 2008, p. 22). Hence the specific needs of South African immigrants, who could be classified as reluctant immigrants or anticipatory refugees (Khawaja & Mason, 2008, p. 240), are not addressed by New Zealand’s mental health research agenda.

Few studies have been conducted on the experiences of South African immigrants, and most either focus on a specific topic or are conducted by non-South African researchers. Since the researcher in this study is an Afrikaans-speaking immigrant in New Zealand, she felt that the participants would possibly be less hesitant to share their personal experiences or to approach sensitive issues as there would be a bond of mutual trust and understanding. This research created a forum for South African families where they had the freedom to tell their immigration stories in their own language and at their own pace, without fear of judgement, to uncover unique facets of the South African community in New Zealand. Utilising the personal narratives of South African immigrant families and viewing their experiences from an ecological perspective permitted a holistic exploration of the interconnectedness between various immigration factors and processes that spanned the entire immigration journey. This study also examined the differentiating factors between South African immigrants who had
settled successfully and those who had returned to South Africa. Extracting common themes across participant narratives, and comparing them with information obtained from an in-depth literature review, supported the development of comprehensive ecomodels for the assessment of pre-migration and post-migration risk and protective factors for South African immigrants in New Zealand, as well as their settlement needs in terms of information and education, and practical, vocational, social and psychological support. The practicalities of relocation were also explored, and useful recommendations by participants relating to all aspects of the immigration process were included in the results.

The implications for clinical practice were to increase the understanding of health professionals regarding the challenges faced by South Africans as a unique group of reluctant immigrants in New Zealand, and to provide a framework for assessment and intervention with South African immigrants. According to Te Pou (2008, p. 53), dissemination of research findings and service provider and community engagement are crucial for improved service delivery and the mental well-being of refugee and migrant communities in New Zealand. The results of this study could raise the awareness of the South African immigrant community in New Zealand about the support needs of newcomers, which would hopefully lead to a proactive approach to facilitate the settlement of their co-nationals. The ecomodels that were developed could also provide useful guidelines to the general public, employers, service providers and policy makers about the experiences and support structures required by South African immigrants to settle successfully in New Zealand.

New Zealand residents also recently experienced trauma that led to involuntary internal migration after two large earthquakes and repeated floods in Christchurch. The stories of earthquake victims revealed similar themes reported by the South African immigrant participants. For instance, people took “psychological ownership” (Van Helden, 2013) of their natural and human-made environment. They thus experienced an acute sense of
loss and grief at the destruction of well-known buildings, such as the Christchurch cathedral. Many felt disoriented when famous landmarks were torn down. New Zealanders valued the heritage buildings of Christchurch, reminiscent of British settlement, and thus experienced a disruption of their historical narrative as well as cultural loss when many of these buildings could not be saved. Earthquake survivors suffered financial and personal loss, as well as a disruption of their social networks, and had to manage relocation with limited resources while feeling extremely vulnerable. Similar to international migrants, loss and change triggered their attachment system and they sought validation, reassurance, protection and support from others (Van Helden, 2013). Their immediate needs also included reliable information, practical assistance and finding a safe “home base” for emotional grounding and to restore their self-confidence (Van Helden, 2013). However, in the aftermath of the earthquakes, many people’s store of resilience was systematically eroded because of bureaucratic hassles, which were not dissimilar to those seeking a residency visa, and led to financial hardship and a continuous struggle for survival. They experienced a sense of unfairness, distrust, helplessness and despair that led to chronic depression. In the long term, promoting self-efficacy, restoring social connectedness (Van Helden, 2013) and establishing collaborative systems to ensure financial recovery were found to be the most effective for post-earthquake resettlement. It thus became apparent that there were some thematic similarities between the experiences of other migrant groups in New Zealand, and those obtained from the narratives of the South African research participants. The results of this study could therefore provide useful information for preventive, educational, support and therapeutic interventions with other “reluctant” migrant groups in New Zealand who had been exposed to pre-migration trauma, such as international immigrants from countries that had experienced significant sociopolitical changes, ethnic violence or environmental disasters, and those who had been forced to migrate internally after the Christchurch earthquakes.
Scope and limitations of the study

This study was conducted with a small sample size, comprising nine South African immigrant families who had been living in the Wellington region of New Zealand for three years or longer. Study participants were selected through personal and professional connections and were a convenience sample. Purposeful selection from the convenience sample was done to diversify participant families in terms of demographic factors, such as age, race, ethnic group, language, religion, socioeconomic status, occupation and family composition. This study did not include members from the black, Indian or Asian communities in South Africa, those who were living in other areas of New Zealand or those who had recently emigrated from South Africa. This research captured a moment in time where the participants reflected on their immigration journeys, and therefore may not accurately represent their experiences shortly after arrival or their future settlement outcomes. A more in-depth investigation would also be required into the experiences of children who emigrated from South Africa with their parents, as well as the challenges faced by second-generation South African immigrant children. Additional research would be required to explore the long-term adaptation, cultural and language changes, as well as trans-generational effects of immigration on this population. Further research would also be needed on the experiences of South African immigrants in New Zealand who migrate onward to another country, or return to South Africa on a temporary or permanent basis.

Immigration is a highly personal process and the experience of the apartheid era immigrants, post-apartheid immigrants and the new millennium immigrants may vary because of different pre-migration experiences and the interactive nature of acculturation between the immigrant and residents of the host country. Hence these research results cannot be generalised to all South African immigrants in New Zealand. The ecomodels constructed
for assessment and intervention with South African immigrants in New Zealand could be applicable to some “reluctant” migrants, but the results would not be transferable in the general sense to other migrant groups. It would therefore be up to each clinician to ascertain the usefulness of this data for individual clients.

Definitions of terms

Acculturation is the process of integrating new cultural values, assumptions and norms that result from continuous, first-hand contact and interaction between two distinct cultural groups (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, cited in Berry 1997, p. 7; Van Coller, 2002, pp. 16-17). Berry (1997, p. 10) identified four different acculturation strategies that immigrants may use during the acculturation process, namely assimilation, integration, separation and marginalisation.

Adaptation refers to the changes that occur in individuals or groups in response to environmental demands (Segall, Dasen, Berry, & Poortinga, cited in Bakker, Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2004, p. 390) that enable them to cope appropriately with new conditions or situations (Van Coller, 2002, p. 10). For migrants, it includes acclimatising and orienting in an unfamiliar society and adjusting to life in a new country (Canadian Council for Refugees, cited in Ho, Cheung, Bedford, & Leung, 2000, p. 12).

Coping strategies are emotional reactions, thought patterns and behaviours resulting from the individual’s efforts to deal with the internal and external demands of a particular life experience (Van Coller, 2002, p. 10).
Cultural identity is the aspect of the core self-presentation that is aligned with the norms, attitudes, values and communicative idioms of a particular group of people and is determined by factors such as ethnicity and religion, as well as regional and linguistic variables (Akhtar, 1999, p. 170).

Culture shock is caused by sudden and drastic changes in a person’s sociocultural environment (Hartman, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 170), which disrupt the newcomer’s identity and challenge his or her psychological stability.

Diaspora is the breaking up and scattering of a people (Akhtar, 1999, p. 171).

An ecomodel is a socio-ecological framework, adapted from Bronfenbrenner and others (Al-Baldawi, 2002; American Psychological Association, 2012; Bronfenbrenner, 1994, 1999; Deaux, cited in Awad, 2007; Johnson, 2007; Meares, 2007; Roer-Strier, 1996; Yakushko & Chronister, 2005), which endorses a reciprocal interaction between individuals and their environments over time. In the context of immigration research, human experience is a function of the complex interplay between an individual, as well as contextual risk and protective factors that affect well-being, adaptation and settlement.

Emigration is the act of leaving one’s home country with the intention of living and acquiring permanent residence in another country (Du Preez, 2002, p. 80). An emigrant is a person who has left his or her country of origin for the purpose of settling in a host country.

Ethnicity refers to the culture of a people and includes language, religion, values, customs, and history, modes of expression and patterns of interpersonal behaviour (Akhtar, 1999, p.
Ethnicity is a measure of cultural affiliation, as opposed to race, ancestry, nationality or citizenship (Statistics New Zealand, 2004, p. 23). As ethnicity is self-perceived, people can identify with or belong to more than one ethnic group (Statistics New Zealand, 2004, p. 23).

Immigration is the act of migration or relocation from a foreign country to resettle in a new destination country for the purpose of permanent residence (Akhtar, 1999, p. 174; Du Preez, 2002, p. 80).

Immigrants are voluntary migrants who make an unforced choice to legally relocate from their country of birth to a foreign country or region (Akhtar, 19991, p. 174), with the option and freedom to return to their country of origin (Fong, 2007, p. 3; Kristal-Andersson, 2000, p. 45). The decision to immigrate may be for personal or economic reasons and the goal is usually to improve one’s lifestyle or work prospects (Van Coller, 2002, p. 9). A first-generation immigrant is a person who has moved from his or her country of origin to reside in the host country, while a second-generation immigrant is a person who has been born in the host country who is the child of parents who were first-generation immigrants (Fong, 2007, p. 3).

Integration is the long-term process through which newcomers become full and equal participants in all the various aspects of a new society.

Māori is a generic word that has come to represent New Zealand’s indigenous peoples.

Mental health refers to a state of psychological well-being that extends beyond the mere absence of a mental disorder. It includes positive feelings of subjective wellbeing, together
with positive functioning in daily life that enable individuals to cope with everyday stressors, work productively and make a contribution to their communities (World Health Organisation, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 16).

Migration is the temporary or permanent movement or relocation from one’s country of origin or birth to live in another country (Van Coller, 2002, p. 9). It can also refer to the movement of people from one area to another within the boundaries of the same country (Du Preez, 2002, p. 80).

A migrant is a person who leaves his or her country of origin to take up permanent residence in another country (Deverson & Kennedy, cited in Herrick & Morrison, 2010, pp. 2-3.).

Pākeha is the Māori term for New Zealanders of European descent (Moorfield, cited in Hokowhitu & Scherer, 2008, p. 260).

Refugees are involuntary migrants who were forced to leave or flee owing to factors outside their control, such as war, political upheaval or famine, and who seek shelter in a foreign country (Akhtar, 1999, p. 177). According to the 1951 United Nations convention, refugees have a well-founded fear of persecution because of their race or ethnic background, nationality, membership of a particular social group, religious or political beliefs and are therefore at risk for oppression, imprisonment, torture or annihilation (King, 2002, p. 96; Kristal-Andersson, 2000, p. 44). Refugees often suffer trauma in their homeland, have little time to prepare for the departure, are often forced to leave without possessions and family members, probably cannot choose their country of settlement, and are unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin because of fears for their personal safety.
Resilience refers to people’s ability to utilise a repertoire of coping skills to manage stressful situations successfully, and as a result develop long-term patterns of mastery and competence that enhance their capacity to overcome future adversity (Hawley & DeHaan, 1996, p. 4; Walsh, 1996, pp. 2-3).

Settlement describes the process whereby migrants become part of the social and cultural life of their new country (Savolainen, cited in Herrick & Morrison, 2010, pp. 3-4), which requires mutual adjustment and accommodation by the migrant as well as the host society (Fletcher, cited in Ho et al., 2000, p. 12).

Acronyms

ACC (Accident Compensation Corporation); CATT (Crisis Assessment and Treatment Team); EAP (Employee Assistance Programme); NZQA (New Zealand Qualifications Authority); PTSD (Post-traumatic Stress Disorder); WHO (World Health Organisation); UN (United Nations); DHB (District Health Board); IRD (Internal Revenue Department); WINZ (Work and Income New Zealand); ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages)

Outline of research study

Chapters 2 and 3 contain a comprehensive literature review that was used to construct the theoretical immigration assessment framework (figure 1) and the theoretical intervention framework (figure 2) that formed the basis of the preliminary coding manual used for the thematic network analysis of participant narratives. In chapter 4, the aims and objectives, and research questions described in chapter 1 are revisited, and the research paradigm, research method, data collection and analysis procedures are discussed in more detail. In chapter 5, the
themes extracted across participant narratives are systemised and described by means of three thematic networks: (1) the phases of the immigration process (figure 3), (2) factors that influence the immigration process (figure 4), and (3) the acculturation process (figure 5). In chapter 6 the themes depicted in the three thematic networks in chapter 5 are integrated with relevant information from the literature review in chapters 2 and 3 to develop ecomodels for assessment (figure 6) and intervention (figure 7) with South African immigrants in New Zealand. In chapter 7, the major findings of this study are summarised, and recommendations are made to facilitate the adaptation and settlement of South African immigrants in New Zealand. Limitations of this research and recommendations for future research lead up to conclusions of the study.
CHAPTER 2

MIGRATION AND ACCULTURATION PROCESSES

One of the specific aims of this study was to review migration literature to establish a theoretical framework of the phases and factors that influenced the immigration process, acculturation stressors, coping strategies and the well-being of immigrants. For the literature review in chapters 2 and 3, primary sources of publications were used as far as possible. Secondary sources were utilised where primary sources were not readily available from the Unisa library or reference libraries in New Zealand. Both primary and secondary sources were appropriately referenced according the American Psychological Association (APA) style. In the literature, the terms emigrant and emigration, or immigrant and immigration usually refer to the geographical location of the person. In this study, the experiences of South African immigrants in New Zealand were viewed from the perspective of emigrants leaving South Africa and becoming immigrants in New Zealand, to provide an account of their pre-migration as well as their post-migration journeys. Chapter 2 provides a literature review of the phases of the immigration process and the factors influencing immigration and acculturation. The psychological impact of immigration, risk and protective factors, as well as stress adaptation models will be discussed in the first part of chapter 3. These elements are utilised to establish a theoretical immigration assessment framework (figure 1) that forms the basis of a preliminary coding manual used to conduct a thematic network analysis of participant narratives. The process of developing the theoretical immigration assessment framework is further discussed in chapter 4. The layout of the phases of immigration and type of Clip Art used in figure 1 were based on Van Coller’s (2002, pp. 41, 73) framework.
Figure 1. Theoretical immigration assessment framework.
Fairchild (cited in Petersen, 1958) views immigration as the peaceful movement of individuals between countries that are more or less at the same level of development. He believes that immigration is governed by two opposing human tendencies; to stay put unless we were forced to move, and a restless spirit that compels us to explore. Petersen (1985) suggests that people primarily migrate to obtain something new, to improve their lives or to regain what they previously had. He emphasises the importance of examining the underlying causes, the environmental context, the precipitants and emigrants’ motives when the phenomenon of immigration is studied (Petersen, 1958). According to Jansen (cited in King, 2002, p. 90), migration should be viewed from multiple perspectives as it is a geographical, demographic, economic, political, sociological and psychological concept. Migration influences and changes the environments, population and social structures, as well as the cultural systems of both the places of departure and arrival, and in turn affects the impetus for migration and the adaptation of migrants (King, 2002, p. 90).

Traditional forms of migration, which were mostly driven by labour shortages, were settler migration, refugee migration and guest worker migration. This has led to the unfortunate assumption that all migrants are poor, desperate, uneducated and socially inferior (King, 2002, pp. 89-90). However, King (2002) challenges this perception because of his belief that the boundaries between migrant classifications, namely internal versus external, forced versus voluntary, temporary versus permanent and legal versus illegal, have become blurred. Hence the current trends of mobility are not adequately reflected by statistics. In addition, certain migratory trends are not researched or documented if they are not perceived to be problematic (King, 2002, p. 102). He also questions Segal’s (cited in King, 2002, pp. 92-93) sharp distinction between voluntary and forced migration, and proposes at least four points on a continuum of coercion and free will: (1) “free will” (p. 92) migrants who move for noneconomic or life-choice reasons, such as retirement in a temperate climate; (2) those
who are persuaded to migrate because of life circumstances such as finding employment; (3) those who are compelled to migrate owing to circumstances beyond their control, such as an environmental crisis, political upheaval or interethnic tension; and (4) migrants who are forced to move and have no control over the decision, for example, refugees fleeing to survive extradition or children taken abroad by their parents (King, 2002, pp. 92-93).

According to King (2002), the United Nations (UN) definition of a refugee is outdated because of the current scale of political chaos, economic collapse, religious and ethnic conflict and environment disasters, leading to crisis-driven migrations and a large number of displaced persons. King (2002) also points to the problematic distinction between the “legal” and “illegal” (p. 93) immigrant because a valued migrant with a valid work visa can become an undesirable, illegal immigrant overnight if the visa expires and cannot be renewed.

According to the International Organisation for Migration (cited in King, 2002), approximately 3% of the world population are classified as international migrants. However, very few people die in the same place they were born, and therefore King (2002) suggests that we are all migrants in some shape or form. He argues that migration is the norm, rather than the exception, and that we should refrain from regarding migrants as the “others” who are somehow different from “us” (King, 2002, p. 94). Cohen (cited in King, 2002, p. 94) thus supports a post-modernist view of migration, with the emphasis on the permeability and subjectivity of sociocultural ideals and identities. This allows a change of focus from the immigrant as an “uprooted” individual to that of a “transplanted” (Bodnar, cited in Pedraza-Bailey, 1990, p. 45) person to underscore the continuity between the pre-migration and post-migration cultural contexts.

According to Van Dalen and Henkens (2007, p. 46), there are four main forces that drive emigration; human capital, social networks, personality traits and quality of life. From the human capital perspective, the economics of migration favours young people who are
healthy, better educated and more adaptable, and can more readily recoup the financial costs of migration via lucrative employment (Van Dalen & Henkens, 2007, pp. 46-47, 55). Social networks and pressure from family, friends and co-workers in the host country, as well as life-cycle changes, such as divorce, can be incentives for emigration (Van Dalen & Henkens, 2007, pp. 47, 55). Individual personality characteristics, such as sensation seeking and self-efficacy, facilitate emigration because these people view unfamiliar environments as less threatening, are willing to take risks and have the confidence to enable them to overcome problems (Van Dalen & Henkens, 2007, pp. 47, 58). These characteristics may also predict return migration and repeated migrations (Van Dalen & Henkens, 2007, p. 58). Quality of life issues such as crime, ethnic conflict, housing and working conditions, pollution, loss of natural environments, population density, education systems, social security, health care and care for the elderly can also play a pivotal role in international migration (Van Dalen & Henkens, 2007, p. 58). Additional factors that may serve as a motive for migration include a search for excitement, adventure, experience, leisure, seeing the world, an escape, a rite of passage or self-realisation (King, 2002, p. 95). In other words, migration itself has become a desirable activity instead of merely the traditional, economic means to an end (King 2002, p. 95).

To reflect the complexity of migration in the 21st century, King (2002, pp. 89, 97-100) suggests we consider a more diverse range of typologies such as the following: migration of crisis; back-and-forth or shuttle migration; independent female migration; migration of skilled professionals and executives; student migration; long-stay tourism; the big Overseas Experience (OE) during a “gap” (p. 99) year; love migration or transnational intimacy; environment preference migration or alternative lifestyle migrations; foreign second-home ownership; residence abroad and expatriacy; retirement migration; and hybrid tourism-work migration. Urry (cited in King, 2002, p. 101) uses the metaphor of
“contemporary nomads moving through fluid, de-territorialised spaces” to describe the “ethnoscapes” (Appadurai, cited in Bornman, 2005, p. 388) of our modern, global society. Migration has become a global business market, with its own prices, agents, brokers, buyers and sellers of migrants and migrant services (King, 2002, p. 102).

Migration from a global perspective

Encountering groups of people from a different culture was once the domain of a handful of adventurers seeking to explore the exotic and dangerous outposts of civilisation (La Brack, 2002). Fascinating accounts of meeting foreign tribes, witnessing strange cultural practices, and having narrow escapes were recorded in faded, hand-scribbled diaries and preserved in dusty archives (La Brack, 2002). We started moving away from the security of village life during the Industrial Revolution, and the era of globalisation has paved the way for mass migration of humans owing to a transnational exchange of capital and goods, electronic communication technology and ease and affordability of long-distance travel (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2003). This trend has intensified because of warfare, refugee movements, sociopolitical changes, international business ventures, student exchange programmes, and economic migration (La Brack, 2002, p. 602).

The current global economy is knowledge based and relies on the skills of highly educated individuals (Saravia & Miranda, 2004). Industrialised nations attract competent individuals by creating better opportunities for tertiary studies, financial prosperity, career advancement or business expansion by means of selective immigration policies, tax incentives, employment opportunities and active recruitment (Saravia & Miranda, 2004, p. 608). The result is a “brain drain” (Mattes & Mniki, 2007, p. 25) from developing nations, and a “brain exchange” (p. 25) or the circulation and transfer of skills and the redistribution of talented individuals among industrialised nations (Saravia & Miranda, 2004). Rhode (cited
in King, 2002, p. 95) describes the unfortunate outcome of “brain waste”, which is the unemployment or underemployment of highly skilled, qualified immigrants in low-skilled jobs, because their qualifications are not accepted by the host country.

Larger global networks of relationships have made cross-cultural interactions a part of daily life, and they are reshaping economies, societies and cultures (La Brack, 2002; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2003). When people from diverse cultures live and work in close proximity and are confronted with contrasting cognitive frameworks and value systems, the potential for confusion, prejudice and conflict is increased. The global village phenomenon bombards us with a wide array of languages, religions, social practices and cultural beliefs, and had given rise to the term “culture shock” (Furnham & Bochner, cited in La Brack, 2002, p. 603) during the 20th century (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2003).

The South African context

Developing nations produced approximately 55% of the world’s 130 million migrants during the 1990s, and sub-Saharan Africa, including South Africa, contributed about 80% of Africa’s 5.7 million refugees or “forced movers” (Afolayan, 2001, p. 18). According to Afolayan (2001), the main factors that have contributed to emigration in sub-Saharan Africa are high population growth, ecological disasters, political instability, high levels of crime, corruption and foreign debt, deteriorating socioeconomic conditions, unsatisfactory working environments, noncompetitive remuneration and a lack of future prospects. The multi-ethnic nature of this region has made the co-existence of diverse groups in a tenuous environment even more problematic, which has inevitably led to a crisis situation and the displacement of large numbers of people (Afolayan, 2001). Afolayan (2001, p. 14) recognises political, religious, ethnic or military conflict as the official reasons for large-scale refugee movements,
but advocates an expansion of the definition of a refugee to include other causes of a forced exodus or involuntary migration.

South African emigration in the 20th century was characterised by peaks, such as during the Soweto uprising of 1976, the State of Emergency in the 1980s and the run-up to the 1994 elections. The first South African democratic elections of 1994 were met with a mixture and trepidation and optimism. Fears of widespread violence and civil war were dominant themes, but it was hoped that the new dispensation would herald a new age of reconciliation, harmony and prosperity for the diverse racial groups in South Africa (Bornman, 2005, p. 386). Nelson Mandela, the first president of the post-apartheid era, coined the phrase “Rainbow nation” (Bornman, 2005, p. 386) in an attempt to embody the diverse ethnic, cultural, language and religious groups in a new national identity and to create a South Africa where everybody would feel at home. According to Crush (2002), however, the efforts of the African National Congress to establish a post-apartheid South African nationhood led to policies that fostered insularity and exclusivity where “those deemed to originate from beyond the country’s borders were considered to be outsiders” (p. 166). South Africa’s new political dispensation brought an end to the age of isolation, and the country has become part of the global economic community again, which has opened up opportunities for disenfranchised citizens concerned about the increase in political violence and crime, to seek employment abroad. As a result of South Africa’s political background, arguments for and against emigration have become emotionally charged because such arguments are interpreted from a racial perspective and are viewed as disloyalty to the new South African nation (Brokensha, 2003, pp. 6-7).

Crush (2002, p. 153) contends that the “big five” destinations for South African emigrants are the United States of America, Australia, the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Canada. According to Statistics South Africa (cited in Lucas, Amoateng, & Kalule-
Sabiti, 2006, p. 46), approximately 110,000 people officially emigrated from 1990 to 2003, but when these figures were compared to immigration figures of destination countries it was concluded that the number could be two to three times higher (Bornman, 2005; Crush, 2002). The number of South African emigrants to New Zealand from 1990 to 2003 was about 25,000 (Statistics New Zealand, cited in Lucas et al., 2006, p. 48). In 2006, the total number of South African immigrants in New Zealand was 41,676 (Statistics New Zealand, 2006c) and by 2013 this number had increased to 54,279 (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). Since 1994, between 2,300 and 4,300 South African immigrants have been granted New Zealand residency annually (Department of Labour, cited in Ministry of Social Development, 2008, p. 18). The reasons for the discrepant immigration statistics between South Africa and host countries were that some emigrants had returned to the United Kingdom with their ancestral British passports, and many people had left South Africa without declaring their intention to emigrate, or had changed their immigration status from a temporary work visa to permanent residency after entry into the host country (Lucas et al., 2006, p. 47). Others viewed their migration as a temporary measure as they wanted to retain a psychological anchor to South Africa (Du Preez, 2002) and wished to retain the option to return.

A survey by the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) estimated that up to 20% of South African graduates were living abroad (Brokensha, 2003, p. 3). Van Rooyen (cited in Brokensha, 2003, p. 7) concluded that at that time, between 71 and 74% of South African professionals considered emigrating. The outflow of skilled workers, coupled with the inflow of large numbers of unskilled labourers from neighbouring countries placed a burden on economic resources, increased unemployment and worsened crime rates (Du Preez, 2002, p. 82). According to Du Preez (2002, p. 83), at least 25,000 people were murdered and up to 50,000 rapes were reported each year (Raubenheimer, cited in Oosthuizen & Ehlers, 2007, p. 16). Surveys conducted by Crush (2002) and the accounting firm, Grant Thornton (cited in
Cokayne, 2008), found that 58% of skilled respondents had expressed a desire to leave South Africa, 42% were likely to leave within the next five years, and 82% listed violent crime as the main reason for considering emigration. Wagstyl (cited in Khawaja & Mason, 2008, p. 227) found that 96% of South Africans who had emigrated cited fear of criminal violence as a reason for leaving South Africa. Grant Thornton found that of the 300 businesses surveyed, 72% reported that employees or their relatives had been affected by violent crime during the previous year (cited in Cokayne, 2008). The South African Law Commission (SAPA, cited in Khawaja & Mason, 2008, p. 227) alleged that only 6% of violent crimes reported to the South African Police had resulted in a conviction, and that 75% of the reports never made it to a court hearing.

Brokensha (2003), Dodson, Louw and Mersham, Van Rooyen, and Young (cited in Lucas et al., 2006, p. 51), Du Toit (cited in Bornman, 2005), Khawaja and Mason (2008, p. 235), Van Rooyen (cited in Oosthuizen & Ehlers, 2007) and Wagstyl (cited in Khawaja & Mason, 2008, pp. 227-228) concluded that the main reasons for emigration from South Africa were the following: escalating crime, violence and lawlessness; concerns about safety and security; fears of a decline as observed in other African states; political instability; mismanagement; incompetence and corruption; lack of moral values; the AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) pandemic; a breakdown of infrastructure; a decline in public services such as healthcare and education; a decline in living standards and quality of life; affirmative action policies; fears about a future for their children; the high unemployment rate; a lack of job opportunities and career prospects; poor job security; and better work and business opportunities abroad. Harris (cited in Crush, 2002) concludes that in the developing world, a significant “brain drain” indicates a vote of “no confidence” (p. 153) in the home country, while Crush (2002, p. 152) reports that 57% of South African emigrants were prepared to renounce their South African citizenship.
Prospective South African emigrants faced four major obstacles; the emotional and psychological implications, the high financial costs of emigration, financial and administrative barriers created by South African authorities, and restrictive immigration criteria of host nations (Van Rooyen, cited in Brokensha, 2003, p. 8). Despite considerable “push” factors, South Africans were hesitant to emigrate owing to strong family ties, a fear of the unknown and loyalty towards South Africa (Ehlers et al., 2003, p. 32). Some felt that they lacked sufficient courage to leave, while others reported that they did not have the financial resources or were already too old to relocate, or that their job applications were unsuccessful (Ehlers et al., 2003, p. 32). The physical act of emigration was often preceded by an “inward migration” (Bornman, 2005, p. 390) or “psychological emigration” (Du Preez, 2002, p. 83) owing to feelings of powerlessness and helplessness, resulting in emotional detachment from current affairs, apathy regarding social and political participation, and decreased creativity and productivity in the workplace. This withdrawal from society into a private world behind electrified fences led to isolation and estrangement from the broader community, and the achievement of individual goals became paramount because it provided a sense of control in an unpredictable environment (Bornman, 2005, pp. 389-390). Some people migrated internally to areas in South Africa they perceived as safer or that offered a better quality of life (Du Preez, 2002), but others believed that this strategy was akin to moving to the upper deck of the Titanic.

In the past it was assumed that most emigrants were white, educated, liberal, English-speaking South Africans, but Louw and Mersham (cited in Lucas et al., 2006, p. 53) pointed out that the fifth wave (1990 onwards) of South African emigration consisted of English-speaking whites, Indians, Coloureds, blacks, as well as a significant numbers of Afrikaners. Bornman (2005) found that Afrikaans-speaking whites feared a loss of their language, culture and ethnicity because these were a crucial part of their social identity. Nevertheless, research
indicated that during this period, nearly 27% of Afrikaans-speaking whites had decided or were considering emigration (Bornman, 2005, p. 393). Rossouw (cited in Bornman, 2005, p. 391) speculated that the Afrikaner dream of an ethnic homeland, where they could achieve cultural, social and political autonomy, died with the 1994 elections. A number of Afrikaners reported that after the 1994 elections they no longer considered South Africa as their country, and this loss of “place identity” made it easier to break ties with South Africa (Bornman, 2005, p. 391). Maintaining the norms and standards of Western civilization was a decisive factor for all South African emigrants, and Bornman (2005, pp. 397-398) speculated that this had probably motivated Afrikaners to immigrate to English-speaking countries, despite the need to preserve their language and cultural heritage.

Louw and Mersham, and Rule (cited in Lucas et al., 2006) referred to the mass migration of South Africans after the 1990s as a “Diaspora” as it fitted Cohen’s (pp. 45-46, 53) description of the “dispersal of a group with a strong ethnic consciousness from a common homeland to two or more regions outside their country of origin, due to traumatic events, or in search of work and other pursuits”. The literal meaning of Diaspora is “the scattering of seeds”, and the term originally referred to the exile of the Jews from Judea in biblical times (Diaspora, Wikipedia). The South African media and researchers also increasingly referred to “Afrikaner-Diaspora” (Bornman, 2005, p. 388) to depict the growing number of Afrikaner communities in other countries, and Du Toit (cited in Bornman, 2005) confirmed that the current mass emigration of Afrikaners fitted the Diasporic model. Du Toit explained that diasporic emigration was characterised by more stress and anxiety than economic migration as individuals were under more pressure to migrate, and they often viewed immigration as an act of self-preservation (cited in Bornman, 2005, p. 388). The physical, social, cultural or political structures that underpinned their identity were under threat, they were constantly exposed to crime and violence, and a critical incident such as a
highjacking attempt could tip the scale towards the final decision to emigrate (Du Toit, cited in Bornman, 2005, p. 388).

The New Zealand context


The formalised British-Māori alliance initiated successive waves of British, Irish, Scottish and European settlers to meet the labour shortages of a developing nation (Ward & Masgoret, 2008). They were joined by smaller numbers from other European countries, as well as Chinese and Indian migrants during the Otago gold rush in the 1860s (Reyneke, 2004, p. 205). The period surrounding World War II saw an influx of refugees from Germany, Poland, the Netherlands and Hungary (Reyneke, 2004, p. 205). The post-war period of the 1960s was characterised by temporary and long-term, semi-skilled workers from the Pacific region to meet labour shortages (Ward & Masgoret, 2008). The 1970s to 1980s saw the
inflow of refugees from Czechoslovakia, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Iraq (Reyneke, 2004, pp. 205-206). In 1991, the New Zealand government started a recruitment drive to attract highly qualified, skilled and entrepreneurial migrants, which attracted large numbers from Asian countries, particularly China and India, to settle in New Zealand (Ward & Masgoret, 2008). Since 2000, New Zealand has continued to provide a home for refugees, including people from Somalia, Zimbabwe, Bosnia, and Kosovo (Reyneke, 2004, p. 206). Each year, New Zealand accepts a United Nations quota of 750 refugees and around 300 family members (Department of Labour, 2004, p. 18). Currently, about one in four people living in New Zealand was born overseas (Statistics New Zealand, 2013) and it was predicted that the numbers of ethnic minority groups would continue to expand over the next 15 years (Ward & Masgoret, 2008, p.228).

Migrants who wished to reside permanently in New Zealand had to apply through one of the residency streams of the New Zealand Residence Programme; the Skilled or Business Stream, the Family Sponsored Stream and the International or Humanitarian Stream (Masgoret, Merwood, & Tausi, 2009, p. 25). The Skilled and Business Streams accounted for 60% of all people granted permanent residence in New Zealand, with most gaining residence through the Skilled Migrant Category (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 25). Five source countries contributed three-quarters of all Skilled Migrant Category migrants; the United Kingdom and Irish Republic, South Africa, China, India, and the Philippines (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 25). The Skilled Migrant Category was a points-based system that allowed people to gain permanent residence if they had the essential skills, qualifications and experience to contribute to New Zealand’s economy (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 25). The Business Stream included investors and entrepreneurs, whereas the Family Sponsored Stream allowed New Zealand citizens and residents to sponsor family members, such as spouses and partners, dependent children, parents, adult siblings and adult children to live in New Zealand.
The International and Humanitarian Stream included the United Nations’ mandated annual quota refugees, asylum seekers, and the Pacific Access Category was for citizens from Tonga, Tuvalu and Kiribati (Ministry of Social Development, 2008, p. 7). Most migrants were relatively young, with about 50% being younger than thirty-five years of age, and the majority had spent time in New Zealand to visit, study or work before obtaining permanent residence (Masgoret et al., 2009, pp. 33, 36).

Reyneke (2004, p. 210) describes New Zealand as a relatively prosperous, First World country, with a simple, but meaningful lifestyle, underscored by the motto that people are the most important thing. It is an egalitarian society in terms of gender, age, race, religion, sexual orientation, level of education and socioeconomic background, and it has comprehensive social welfare and community development programmes (Buckland & Warwick, cited in Reyneke, 2004, p. 210). According to Buckland and Warwick (cited in Reyneke, 2004, p. 219), it is a “fluid” and classless society without a large divide between rich and poor, and most households have access to modern conveniences, such as a car, telephone and television (Buckland & Warwick, cited in Reyneke, 2004, p. 210). Neighbourhoods are more integrated in terms of socioeconomic status, ethnicity and racial groups than South Africa (Reyneke, 2004, p. 219). New Zealand society is inclined to frown on so-called “Tall Poppies, which is any kind of behaviour that deviates from the national norm and is considered too “flash”, such as innovation or an outstanding achievement (Reyneke, 2004, p. 221). New Zealanders are politically correct, value social harmony and overtly reject racism in any shape or form despite not having an unblemished record in this regard (Buckland & Warwick, cited in Reyneke, 2004, p. 211).

The “Treaty of Waitangi” was an ongoing political bone of contention between “Pākeha” (New Zealand Europeans) and Māori regarding different sets of guidelines, opportunities and service provision for their respective groups, as well as restoration of
indigenous land ownership, such as the controversial foreshore and seabed legislation (Reyneke, 2004, p. 212). Most people feel relatively safe because of the low levels of crime and violence. Serious crimes evoke national shock and condemnation, and are reported in news bulletins for weeks. Social relationships and business interactions are characterised by high levels of trust and integrity (Reyneke, 2004, p. 216); homes do not have burglar bars, cheque books are posted to unlocked, residential post boxes and goods are often shipped to individuals with an invoice for payment. Levels of corruption and unemployment rates are low, despite a worldwide economic recession. Politicians are held to a high standard of integrity, and a few indiscretions with an official credit card spell the end of a promising career. New Zealanders are environmentally aware and oppose endeavours, such as whaling, deep-sea oil drilling, open-cast mining and nuclear power that could damage their image as a “clean and green” country (Reyneke, 2004, p. 215). South Africans are often amused when they are greeted by a line of enthusiastic sniffer dogs at New Zealand airports to ensure that no hidden foodstuffs, that could pose a biohazard for a predominantly agricultural society, enter the country.

According to Reyneke (2004, p. 217), the education and welfare of children are a high priority and numerous organisations, activities and child-friendly environments have been established to support exploration, development and child advocacy. Smacking or any form of physical discipline is not permitted because it is considered child abuse, and may result in arrest and prosecution. New Zealanders are community-oriented and feel compelled to lend a helping hand in times of crisis or human tragedy; local businesses and other volunteers often offer materials and skills to assist a hapless homeowner to sort out the mess left by an unscrupulous tradesman. They are patriotic and proud of citizens that “carry the flag” internationally, for instance, the All Black rugby team and Sir Peter Jackson, producer of the Lord of the Rings films. Despite a “laid back” (Reyneke, 2004, p. 221) attitude and informal
social style, New Zealand is often referred to as the “nanny state” owing to extensive rules, regulations and guidelines, accompanied by reams of paperwork that govern most aspects of society. For example, bicycle riders are required to wear safety helmets at all times, vehicles require a regular “warrant of fitness” assessment, building consent is a lengthy process, and accidentally removing a “protected” plant or tree from one’s property incurs a hefty fine.

Lucas et al. (2006, pp. 58-59) concluded that the emigration of all races from South Africa was accelerating and that the current wave constituted the largest exodus in South Africa’s history. South Africans often visited New Zealand for an LSD or “Look-See-Decide” trip to evaluate the country as a potential emigration destination. Johnston et al. (2006, p. 1230) found that 40% of South Africans visited the country prior to immigration, while another 40% had been in the country for less than six months on a visitor’s or work visa when they applied for permanent residency. Owing to selective immigration criteria, many South Africans in New Zealand were skilled or highly skilled, had tertiary qualifications and had a professional, managerial or technical background (Du Preez, 2002, p. 81; Lucas et al. 2006, p. 45). According to Statistics New Zealand (2004, pp. 5, 8) nearly 30% of South African immigrants had bachelor’s or higher degree, and they had low unemployment rates. South Africans reported that they had immigrated mainly for political or institutional reasons and to improve their children’s prospects, and they chose New Zealand because of opportunities, lifestyle and culture, and the environment (Johnston et al., 2006, pp. 1229-1230).

Johnston et al. (2006, pp. 1231, 1246) found that most South African immigrants in New Zealand had friends, family members or business contacts in the country upon arrival, but did not depend on them for migration assistance, employment or housing. They relied on family and other acquaintances for general information on New Zealand, but utilised their own resources or an immigration consultant for additional assistance (Johnston et al. 2006,
Johnston et al. (2005, pp. 419-420) reported that most South African immigrants entered New Zealand with at least one other individual, usually a family member. New South African immigrants kept in close contact with friends and family back home, and because of mostly positive settlement experiences they actively promoted the migration of others to New Zealand (Johnston et al., 2006, p. 1246). Social networks were often used by successful immigrant “pioneers” (Johnston et al., 2006, p. 1247) to facilitate the “chain migration” (Afolayan, 2001, p. 16) of friends and family, where networks of information and support were utilised to encourage the move of successive generations to New Zealand. Spoonley et al. (2007, p. 20) however, found that New Zealanders were supportive of policies that allowed immigrants to bring only close family members to New Zealand. The majority of South African immigrants were likely to apply for New Zealand citizenship, possibly because of the option of dual citizenship (Johnston et al., 2006, p. 1245). According to Louw and Mersham (cited in Lucas et al., 2006, p. 61), because of the cultural similarities between South Africa and Australia, a separate South African community would probably cease to exist after three generations. It is feasible that the same would apply to the other four destination countries, including New Zealand.

Migration systems theory

Migration is the temporary or permanent relocation from one’s country of origin or birth to live in another country, called the host country (Van Coller, 2002, p. 9). It can also refer to movement within the boundaries of one country. According to Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological model (1999, pp. 4, 11) or process-person-context-time model (1999, p. 5), human behaviour and development are a multilayered concept and should be viewed as a dynamic, reciprocal interactional process between individual characteristics and surrounding environmental systems, such as the interpersonal, sociological, cultural, and historical
proposed five layers of overlapping or "nested" (1994, p. 39, 1999, p. 11) contextual systems:
(1) a microsystem (biological, emotional and cognitive structures, immediate life settings,
and close interpersonal relationships); (2) a mesosystem (connections between different
microsystems or social settings, such as between home and school); (3) an exosystem (more
distant, larger or indirect social systems, such as the workplace of a parent, the
neighbourhood or family social networks); (4) a macrosystem (such as economical, social
and cultural values, customs, laws or lifestyles reflected by political or religious structures);
and (5) a chronosystem (patterns of personal and environmental events and normative
changes or transitions over time, as well as sociohistorical circumstances).

Human development occurs as a result of regular, enduring and increasingly complex
interactions between the individual and the environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1999, pp. 4, 6). A
family system or ecological approach to development implies that changes occur as the
outcome of an interrelated, interlocked and interdependent chain of events (Roer-Strier, 1996,
p. 1). Changes occurring in each individual and subsystem will bring about second-order
changes throughout the system, producing a rearrangement of parts (Terkelsen, cited in Roer-
Strier, 1996, p. 1). According to Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological model, bi-directional
interactions occur within the structures of a system and between systems, with the result that
changes, disruption or conflict in one system will have a ripple effect on the other layers
that instability, unpredictability and lack of clear structure in the immediate environment
have a disruptive effect on human development, and that the source of this instability often
originates from broader environmental domains. Bronfenbrenner (1999, pp. 5, 11) therefore
encouraged researchers to employ a process-person-context-time model that includes
individual, biopsychological characteristics, environmental variables, the duration of
interaction, as well as the form, power, content and direction of interactional processes. He believed that this would enable us to determine the most favourable “ecological niche” (1999, p. 10) regarding the influence of social role expectations or transitions, as well as interactional processes on the course and outcome of development (pp. 15, 20).

Developmental outcomes are measured in terms of competence or dysfunction, namely the level of knowledge, skill and ability to manage behaviour across situations and developmental domains (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000, p. 118).

Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological model can also be applied to theories of immigration and acculturation to illustrate the interplay of factors at the micro, meso, mega, macro and exo levels (Al-Baldawi, 2002; American Psychological Association, 2012; Johnson, 2007; Meares, 2007; Yakushko & Chronister, 2005). The effect of immigration on the well-being of migrants and their families is the result of an interaction between micro structures that include individual factors, such as identity, attitudes, values, expectations and memories (Deaux, cited in Awad, 2007, p. 239; Roer-Strier, 1996, p. 1), motivation for immigration, acculturative strategies and family relationships (Johnson, 2007, p. 1430), as well as the informal social networks established by migrants to cope with migration and settlement (Meares, 2007, p. 44). The meso structures consist of intergroup attitudes and behaviour, as well as stereotypes (Deaux, cited in Awad, 2007, p. 239), relations between support networks (Yakushko & Chronister, 2005, p. 293), as well as the industry that has developed in response to migration, for example, immigration lawyers, consultants and recruitment agencies (Meares, 2007, p. 44). Mega structures include environmental factors, such as climate and neighbourhood conditions, as well as sociocultural and historical factors in societies, such as traditions, norms and religion (Al-Baldawi, 2002, p. 272). Economic factors, including the world economy and labour markets, are included in macro structures (American Psychological Association, 2012; Johnson, 2007, p. 1430; Meares, 2007, p. 44). Exo
structures include political factors and government policies, such as international migration laws, immigrant integration policies and political relationships between countries, as well as healthcare, social services and education (Johnson, 2007, p. 1430; Meares, 2007).

Each of these structures contains roles, norms and rules, and the potential for conflict between the culture of the individual and that of the dominant society can affect all systemic levels. Deaux (cited in Awad, 2007, p. 240) used a sociopsychological approach to address the dynamic nature of the immigration experience and suggested that researchers should ask the following three questions: (1) What does the immigrant bring? (2) What does the immigrant encounter? and (3) How does the immigrant respond?

Acculturation models

Culture establishes a set of shared attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviour in a group of people. Goldman (cited in Roer-Strier, 1996, p. 1) suggests that culture evolves as a means of survival and well-being in response to environmental circumstances, and involves adaptive values which reflect accumulated experience and wisdom. Cultural contexts include physical elements, such as geographic location and climate, social factors, such as family customs, social codes, and political regimes, and ethnic factors, such as heritage, customs, language and religion (Roer-Strier, 1996, p. 1). Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (cited in Navas, García, Sánchez, Rojas, Pumares, & Fernández, 2005, p. 22) define acculturation as a bidirectional process that results from continuous, first-hand contact between two distinct ethnocultural groups, resulting in changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups. These groups can merge to create blended or new cultural forms that did not exist prior to the cultural interaction (Berry, 1997, p. 7; Berry, 2001, p. 617).

Intercultural contact has the potential to cause acculturative stress and conflict, which requires negotiation, mediation and mutual accommodation to achieve psychologically and
socioculturally adaptive outcomes for both parties (Berry, 2005, pp. 697-698). According to Berry et al. (cited in Ward, 2008b, p. 111), acculturating groups who are mobile, involuntary and permanent, experience greater acculturative stress. Graves (cited in Berry, 2005) uses the term “psychological acculturation” (p. 701) to describe the changes in identity, attitude, values, behaviour and way of life at individual level, and in ecological, sociocultural and institutional structures at group level (Berry, 2005, pp. 698-699).

Various conceptual frameworks of acculturation have been proposed to depict the complexity of this process, the psychological changes that occur when people adapt to a new cultural context, as well as the factors that influence this process (Berry, 1997, pp. 14-15; Van Coller, 2002, p. 20). Berry (1997, p. 15) and Tadmor and Tetlock (2006) utilised a stress-coping adaptation model to depict the acculturation attitudes and behaviour involved with mastering the situational changes and stressors of acculturation, while Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault, and Senécal (1997) emphasised the effect of interactive processes between immigrant groups and host societies on acculturation attitudes and strategies. Navas et al. (2005) expanded these models to include the various acculturation options preferred, and used by immigrants across various sociocultural domains. Grinberg and Grinberg (1989), Mirsky and Peretz (2006), Schönpflug (1997, p. 55), and Sam and Oppedal (2003) suggested the addition of a developmental approach to include the long-lasting effects of acculturation, such as personality reorganisation and changes in ethnic or social identity, cognitions, emotions and social relationships.

**Berry’s fourfold model**

According to Berry (1997, p. 7), acculturation is a reciprocal process that occurs in both the migrating group and the settlement society, but it has the greatest impact on the migrant (Berry, 2001, p. 616; Berry, 2005, pp. 700-701). Acculturation involves a transition
process of acquiring a new behavioural repertoire (culture learning), and unlearning some
behaviour that is no longer appropriate (culture shedding) to achieve a better fit between the
immigrant and the new cultural context (Berry, 2005, p. 707). The apparently incompatible
behaviours of two dissimilar cultures (Berry, 2005, p. 708) may give rise to acculturative
stress, culture conflict or culture shock (Berry, 1997, p. 13), depending on the level of
difficulty experienced by individuals in managing their new situation (Navas et al., 2005, p. 23), as well as strategies used by the immigrant and host society to resolve their differences
(Berry, 2005, pp. 707-708).

Acculturation is a nonlinear, dynamic, interactive, multidimensional process where
migrants maintain aspects of their culture of origin, while also adopting elements of the new
cultural group (Berry, 1997), and is dependent on the attitudes, identities and behaviours of
both the migrant and the host society (Berry, 2005, p. 710). Acculturation is affected by
conditions that existed prior to immigration, as well as those encountered during contact, and
individuals may explore various acculturation strategies over time as they remodel and
expand their cultural framework. Berry identified four different acculturation strategies that
migrants use to interact with the host society, based on ethnic loyalty, namely the extent to
which the person maintains the original cultural identity and characteristics, the degree of
contact with other ethnocultural groups and participation in the larger society, the level of
motivation of other members of the same ethnocultural migrant group to maintain their
cultural heritage, and the level of acculturation constraints or pressure exerted on the migrant
by the host society owing to acculturation expectations, ethnic attitudes and stereotypes, and
discrimination (Berry, 1997, p. 9; Berry, 2001, p. 618; Berry, 2005, pp. 703-705). National
policies and programmes for migrant settlement in the host country are usually also based on
these four approaches (Berry, 1997, p. 11).
When “integration” (Berry, 2005, p. 705) or a bicultural approach is used, some of the original cultural identity and values are retained, with the addition of the basic traits and behaviour of the dominant culture (Berry, 2005, pp. 705-706) to enhance economic prospects and social mobility. The person pursues active involvement with the larger society, and incorporation or absorption into the host culture is facilitated by countries with a multicultural ideology and acceptance of cultural diversity (Berry, 1997, p. 9; Berry, 2001, p. 619; Sayad, cited in Oboler, 2006, p. 120), which should theoretically lead to mutual acceptance and peaceful coexistence (Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, Horenczyk, & Schmitz, 2003, p. 79). Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., (2003, p. 88) developed three subclassifications of the “integration” preference, based on respondents’ second choices: integration–assimilation, integration–separation and integration–marginalisation. They found that immigrants generally preferred integration–separation, while host preferences were mostly integration–assimilation, resulting in discordant acculturation profiles (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2003, pp. 93-94).

With “assimilation” or “overacculturation” (Lin, Masuda & Tazuma, cited in Pumariega, Rothe, & Pumariega, 2005, p. 587), the individual relinquishes the primary cultural identity in favour of adopting the culture of the dominant society, and prefers to establish regular, close connections with the host culture (Berry, 1997, p. 9; Van Coller, 2002, p. 17) and is dissolved into the “melting pot” (Berry, 2005, p. 706) of the dominant society. Gordon (cited in Pedraza-Bailey, 1990) posits that we need to distinguish between cultural assimilation, which involves becoming more “like” (p. 45) the dominant group in terms of language, behaviour and values, and social assimilation, which means being “taken up” (p. 46) in terms of the educational, occupational and political institutions of society. Kalin and Berry (cited in Berry, 2001, pp. 620-621) also distinguish between an ethnic identity and a civic identity, where the individual’s cultural identity is contained within the
larger national identity, for instance, an African-American, or a so-called “hyphenated identity” (Akhtar, 1999, p. 174).

With “separation”, “traditionalism” or “withdrawal” (Lin, Masuda & Tazuma, cited in Pumareiga et al., 2005, p. 587), the individual places a high value on maintaining the ethnic cultural integrity, while avoiding active participation or involvement with other cultural groups, resulting in minimal interaction with the host or dominant culture (Van Coller, 2002, p. 17). This often occurs in host societies that do not favour or are ambivalent about cross-cultural contact and encourage segregation of minority ethnic groups in community enclaves (Berry, 2005. p. 706). “Marginalisation”, “alienation” or “anomic” (Bourhis et al., 1997, p. 378) occurs when there is little possibility or interest in maintaining the original culture, possibly because of enforced cultural loss, coupled with nonengagement in the new culture, often caused by exclusion, ethnocentricity or discrimination by the host culture (Berry, 2005, p. 705). Bourhis et al. (1997, pp. 378-381) add “individualism” as a fifth category to Berry’s model, where both the immigrant and host community members define themselves and others in terms of individual characteristics, and focus less on identifying with immigrant or host group cultural orientations.

The demands of acculturation lead to changes that result in variable levels of “fitting in” (Berry, 2005, p. 709) and adjustment to the new society. Psychological adaptation refers to psychological and physical well-being and life satisfaction, whereas sociocultural adaptation indicates how well an acculturating individual is able to manage daily life in the new cultural context (Berry, 2005, p. 709) and establish relationships with others (Bakker, Van Oudenhoven, & Van der Zee, 2004, p. 390). Berry emphasises that inconsistencies and conflicts regarding acculturation preferences between the individual and society can give rise to acculturative stress and decreased psychological well-being (Berry, 2005, p. 706). Psychological problems often increase soon after contact, followed by a general, but variable,
decrease over time, whereas sociocultural adaptation has a linear improvement over time (Berry, 2005, p. 709).

Integration in a multicultural society is the least stressful, followed by assimilation and separation, whereas marginalisation is the most stressful (Berry, 2005, p. 708). Ward (2008b, p. 108) found that integrated migrants experienced significantly less ethnocultural identity conflict than separated, assimilated and marginalised individuals. Research indicates that “integration” is the most preferred option, while “marginalisation” is the least preferred option (Navas et al., 2005, p. 24). Integration results in the best adaptation and psychological well-being, possibly because of a sense of acceptance and equitable participation of all groups in society (Berry, 2001, p. 623; Berry, 2005). Assimilation and separation strategies are associated with intermediate adaptation outcomes, possibly because of cultural loss or feelings of rejection by the host culture (Berry, 2001, pp. 623-624; Berry, 2005, p. 705). Those who are marginalised are the least well adapted (Berry, 2001, pp. 623-624; Berry, 2005, p. 709) and experience the most anxiety and alienation (Berry et al., cited in Bakker et al., 2004, p. 390). In addition to acculturation variations in individuals and cultural groups, family members’ acculturation often proceeds at different rates and has different adaptive goals, resulting in an increase in stress and conflict and poorer psychological and sociocultural adaptation (Berry, 2005, pp. 700, 710).

Good psychological adaptation is influenced by personality variables, life change events and social support, whereas effective sociocultural adaptation is facilitated by cultural knowledge, degree of contact and positive intergroup attitudes (Berry, 2005, p. 709). Evidence does not indicate that acculturation occurs according to a specific sequence of acculturation strategies, but rather that it is a nonlinear process that involves the exploration of different patterns over time and across different contexts (Ho; Kim, cited in Coatsworth, Maldonado-Molina, Pantin & Szapocznik, 2005, p. 170).
Biculturalism and multiculturalism

Biculturalism allows for the validation and reaffirmation of the person’s identity by the traditional as well as the new culture (Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 587). According to Berry (cited in Coatsworth et al., 2005, p. 161), a bicultural orientation promotes adaptation in a multicultural context because it allows the flexibility to interact with both cultures. Biculturalism involves maintaining one’s cultural heritage and adding a new cultural identity, but the identities remain independent of each other and are context bound (Hong, Morris, Chiu & Benet-Martinez, cited in Tadmor & Tetlock, 2006, p. 174). La Fromboise, Coleman and Gerton (1993) suggest the “alternation model” (pp. 399-400) as an additive bicultural strategy, where the individual has the freedom to choose the degree and manner to which he or she will affiliate with the culture of origin and the host culture, allowing the person to switch between modes of expression and behaviour to fit a particular social situation. The level of dissonance experienced by acculturating individuals will depend on the degree of discrepancy between the two cultures, and the degree of internal and external pressure they experience to justify their beliefs, attitudes and behaviour in mixed cultural groups (Tadmor & Tetlock, 2006, pp. 178, 185).

Variances in the patterns of biculturalism scores found in adolescents may be due to a process of self-examination and identity exploration in a multicultural society, where they are critically evaluating both cultures and selecting aspects of each that are most suitable across multiple ecological contexts (Coatsworth et al., 2005, p. 168). Coatsworth et al. (2005) suggest that high levels of involvement in at least one culture in a multicultural context promote better adaptation, and that parental monitoring and family functioning play an important mediating role between acculturation and problem behaviour (pp. 161, 169, 171). According to Perez-Firmat (cited Pumariega et al., 2005), “generation 1.5” (p. 587), who
were born in the country of origin, often serve as a generational bridge between the two cultures by enhancing mutual understanding and generating a new hybrid culture.

Research on New Zealand migrant youth indicates that the youth have a strong ethnic identity and have frequent contact with ethnic peers, which remains stable across generations (Ward, 2008a, pp. 4, 25). However, ethnic language use and proficiency tend to decrease over successive generations (Ward, 2008a, pp. 4, 25). Integration is strongly endorsed and remains stable over generations (Ward, 2008a, p. 4), and is associated with higher levels of self-esteem than separated or marginalised migrant youth (Eyou et al., cited in Higgins, 2008, p. 17). While assimilation is not widely endorsed, it is better accepted among second-generation youth (Ward, 2008a, pp. 4, 25). Over successive generations, there is a systematic increase in national identity, an increase in national peer contacts and more frequent use of and greater proficiency in English (Ward, 2008a, pp. 4, 25).

According to the Acculturation Complexity Model, bicultural individuals who cope with social and cultural conflict situations by internalising the values of both groups will utilise more complex cognitive strategies in terms of differentiation and integration than those who choose separation or assimilation (Tadmor & Tetlock, 2006, pp. 175, 182). Bicultural individuals are able to act as mediators to lessen cross-cultural communication difficulties owing to their broader cultural knowledge and higher integrative complexity (Tadmor, cited in Tadmor & Tetlock, 2006, p. 186). Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, and Vedder (2001, pp. 493, 498) found that a combination of a strong ethnic identity, as well as a strong national identity, increases self-esteem, promotes optimal adaptation to the host society and improves the psychological well-being of immigrants because it imparts a sense of belonging to their own culture as well as the larger society.

If individuals from two or more cultures are able to maintain their distinct identities and develop tolerance and acceptance of cultural diversity, they can work together as equals.
in the interest of common national or economic goals within a multicultural framework (La Fromboise et al., 1993, pp. 399-401). However, Fishman (cited in La Fromboise et al., 1993, p. 401) maintains that such a multicultural model of society is unlikely to survive more than three generations of cross-cultural contact, and La Fromboise et al. (1993, p. 401) suggest that cultures will probably fuse together to form a new, unique culture. These trends have been observed in South Africa where settlers from various European countries intermingled to form the Afrikaner nation, and in New Zealand, where individuals from European, Māori, Pacific and other cultures have merged to form the new cultural classification of “New Zealander”.

"Interactive acculturation model (IAM)"

According to the Hague Convention of 1930, sovereign states have the prerogative under their own laws to confer citizenship and to admit, or exclude aliens from their national borders (cited in Bourhis et al., 1997, pp. 370-371). These states may allow immigration of foreign citizens to promote their own economic, political or social interests, for humanitarian reasons, or because of historical or regional relations (Bourhis et al., 1997, p. 371). Immigrants, who have settled permanently in their adopted country, may nevertheless find that they are not recognised as full citizens owing to immigration categories established by government policies, and this can have a huge impact on the acculturation choices of immigrants in the host society (Bourhis et al., 1997, p. 371). In addition, immigrants settling in a new country have to negotiate a cultural maze of several host communities, including the dominant majority, indigenous minorities, as well as established immigrant communities, including their own group, who have retained different aspects of their ethnocultural identity in the host country (Bourhis et al., 1997, p. 372).
To address the psychosocial complexity of acculturation, Bourhis et al., (1997, pp. 371, 382) developed the interactive acculturation model (IAM) from Berry’s acculturation model (Berry 2001, p. 618; 2005, pp. 703-705) by utilising a theoretical framework to illustrate the interdependent nature of ethnolinguistic identity, the acculturation orientations of immigrants and host societies and state integration policies on intergroup relations. The acculturation orientation of the immigrant and host society depends on a complex interplay between ethnocultural origin, social class, age, gender, the degree of in-group identification, the degree of social contact between immigrant and host groups, state integration policies and changes in the political, demographic and socioeconomic circumstances of the host country (Bourhis et al., 1997, pp. 381-382). Acculturation strategies can change from the first to subsequent generations of immigrants, depending on their socioeconomic mobility in the host country (Bourhis et al., 1997, p. 382). Immigrant groups who have “low vitality” (p. 382) in terms of the number of individuals, level of distinctiveness, decision-making power and social prestige in the dominant host society will be more vulnerable to segregation, exclusion and discrimination (Bourhis et al., 1997, p. 383).

Intergroup relationships depend on the level of concordance on a fivefold configuration of acculturation strategies chosen by immigrant groups and host societies, and can range from consensual, problematic or conflictive (Berry, 2005; Bourhis et al., 1997, p. 383). According to Bourhis and Cagnon (cited in Bourhis et al, 1997, pp. 383-384), these relational outcomes affect intergroup communication, ethnic attitudes, stereotypes, tension and acculturative stress, and can lead to discrimination in terms of housing, employment, education and the judiciary. This may also lead to lowered psychological well-being of the targeted group members (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2003, p. 82). The most constructive outcome is predicted when there is a match or agreement between the immigrant and host community regarding integration, assimilation or individualism orientations, while the most conflicting
outcomes result where an immigrant group endorses a separation acculturation strategy and the host society has segregationist and exclusionist attitudes (Bourhis et al., 1997, pp. 382-383). National policies for the integration of immigrant groups may attenuate or accentuate these patterns of relational outcomes (Bourhis et al., 1997, p. 384).

Relative acculturation extended model (RAEM)

The RAEM is a theoretical framework that was developed by Navas et al. (2005) from Berry’s fourfold typology (p. 23), as well as the IAM of Bourhis et al. (p. 24), with additional elements to address the variance of acculturation options preferred by the host and immigrant populations versus those strategies eventually implemented, depending on the ethnocultural origin of the immigrant and the particular acculturation domain (pp. 26, 29). The model also takes into account some sociodemographic, psychosocial and behavioural variables that can modify these acculturation attitudes and strategies (Navas et al., 2005, p. 26). Acculturation attitudes ideally preferred and those strategies adopted in reality by immigrants and the host population will vary according to the relative position of power of either group to influence or have control over the other (Navas et al., 2005, p. 31). Powerful societies exert more pressure, are less likely to adapt, and make fewer cultural changes and compromises when interacting with other cultures (Navas et al., 2005, p. 31). The greater the disparity between the options preferred by the host population and those desired by immigrants, the greater the potential risk of frustration or conflict will be (Navas et al., 2005, p. 32).

The adaptation process is complex, selective and relative as the preferred attitudes, the strategies adopted and the perceptions of strategies may differ across groups; a number of acculturation strategies can be used at the same time and they can vary according to the situation or the sociocultural domain, such as political and government, work, economic,
family, social, ideological and religious, as well as prevailing socioeconomic conditions (Navas et al., 2005, pp. 27-29, 31). Elements from the dominant culture are adopted more readily in peripheral, public or instrumental domains, such as political, work or economic, while preserving the cultural heritage in the intermediate domain for family and social interactions, as well as more central, private, symbolic or ideological elements, such as religious beliefs and customs, ways of thinking, principles and values (Navas, Rojas, García, & Pumares, 2007, p. 71). However, these domains are interrelated and modifications in the content of one will result in changes across the various domains (Navas et al., 2005, p. 28).

Navas et al. (2007, pp. 71, 82) found that immigrants tend to adopt an assimilation strategy in the public domain in order to survive in the dominant society, while using integration for social interaction, and separation for the more private aspects of their original culture. However, they found that the dominant culture preferred assimilation or integration across most domains (Navas et al, 2007, pp. 81-82). They suggest that integration may be applicable to each of these domains if interpreted as various shades of “acquire and maintain” (p. 83), but caution that immigrants and the host society may differ in their interpretation of exactly how much was adopted and how much was retained in these domains (Navas et al., 2007, p. 83).

The acculturation option chosen also varies according to the particular ethnic group because of reasons inherent in their culture, the acculturation preference of the host society, as well as the historical and social conditions surrounding immigration (Navas et al., 2005, p. 24). Original attitudes and strategies may change over time with knowledge acquired from exposure to other cultural groups, and the nature and direction of change will depend on the positive or negative evaluation of those experiences (Navas et al., 2005, p. 32). Studies by Berry, Phinney et al., Piontkowski et al. and Ward (cited in Navas et al., 2005, p. 25; 2007, pp. 69-70) described other sociodemographic, psychosocial and behavioural factors that may
influence immigrant and host society preferences. These factors (Navas et al. 2005, pp. 24-26, 33; 2007, pp. 69-70) may be individual (age, gender, social class, reasons for immigrating, time in the host country, education level, ethnocultural origin, linguistic practices, religious and political orientation); psychosocial (in-group identification and bias, mutual prejudice, intergroup contact, permeability of group boundaries, perceived similarity, perceived cultural enrichment, visibility and group status); or group and contextual factors (specific peculiarities of each immigrant and host group country, political context, individualism-collectivism orientation, perceived cultural distance, regulations and predominant ideologies).

*Acculturation as a developmental pathway*

Human development can be seen as a succession of migrations or stages whereby the individual gradually separates and moves away from parents or caregivers towards individuation and independence (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 191, 193). The growing child develops an increasing sense of control and self-sufficiency, which forms the foundation of personal identity as it creates a sense of permanence and stability of the self over time (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 195). In Mahler’s opinion (cited in Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 193), the two critical stages of identity formation are the separation-individuation stage of early childhood, and the identity consolidation stage during adolescence. Akhtar (1999) views migration as the “third individuation” (p. 179) along the developmental journey of separation-individuation and identity consolidation. Throughout life, the individual will work through the difficulties and losses of various life changes, and for the migrant, the developmental skills of childhood and adolescence will have an important effect on the migration process from the “mother land” (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 191).
Birth is the first migration, which involves the loss of a secure source of sustenance and containment, leading to fears of death or disintegration (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 191). Similarly, emigrants may experience fears of “not making it” or “falling apart” when they are removed from everything that is familiar to them. Physical contact allows children to distinguish between their body and objects around them, which builds the physical base of identity (Anzieu, cited in Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 192). For emigrants, it will mean that the sights, sounds, smells, tastes and physical sensations of human-made objects and the natural world that became a part of their identity will be acutely missed, for instance, the smell of the first summer rains. The young child develops an attachment to the caregiver, who provides nurturing, and a sense of safety and cohesion (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 192). This secure “lifeline” with the mother encourages children to explore the environment and broaden their horizons.

Likewise, emigrants who have secure attachments will have greater inner freedom to choose between staying and emigrating, and decisions will be based on a realistic evaluation of the available options (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 194). These individuals will find it easier to separate from and distance themselves from the motherland because they will feel that they are able to remain in contact or return to the homeland (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 194-195). Children acquire language, which helps them to symbolically recreate valued objects that were lost and to interact with other people in their world (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 195). Immigrants who have to learn a new language often find it difficult to think, feel and socialise in a “foreign tongue” and may only feel authentic when they speak their “mother tongue” (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 110). Each new step along the road of separation to independence can be taken if individuals are able to mourn the inevitable losses, trust their ability to recreate what was lost and believe that they can maintain the integrity of their identity (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 195).
Adolescence involves a new stage of separation-individuation as the child “migrates” (p. 197) from the family to a more distant world of peers and the society at large (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 198). Similar to the separation-individuation stages of early childhood and adolescence, the task of psychologically adjusting to a new country involves the disengagement from “old” objects (p. 52), such as the homeland, friends and family, and establishing relationships with “new” objects (p. 52), such as a new country and culture (Mirsky & Peretz, 2006). This symbolic recreation of the process of separating from parents revives childhood conflicts between dependency and clinging to the familiar, versus the developmental push towards independence and individuation (Mirsky & Peretz, 2006, p. 52).

During adulthood, the person experiences further identity “migrations” (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 198) during situations that create new developmental challenges, such as changing job responsibilities, assuming new roles or adopting new ideologies. The so-called “mid-life crisis” is accompanied by anxieties about the loss of youth, diminishing opportunities, economic insecurity and regrets about unrealised potential and unachieved goals (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 198). The developmental crisis of old age is characterised by anxieties relating to the diminishment of capabilities, illness, loneliness and fears of death (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 199). The lone emigrant has to create a new “family” support network, and emigrating families have to cope with changes in their family structure and dynamics to meet the demands of a different society (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-12). New immigrants often have fears about their financial security (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 94), they experience feelings of incompetence and may be disappointed by the lack of opportunities in the new country to match their pre-migration status or fulfil emigration goals (Firkin et al., 2004, pp. 16-17, 35, 47). They experience a sense of loss, fear and loneliness, and their sense of identity is threatened (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 129-
The elderly immigrant often fears dying without being able to say goodbye to family members and being buried in a foreign land (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 161).

Mirsky and Peretz (2006, p. 51) describe migration as a universal and lifelong developmental process, and also believe that the separation-individuation task lies at the core of psychological adaptation to migration. Mirsky and Peretz (2006, pp. 51, 53-54) conclude that immigration can be a positive life transition because it presents a new setting that could facilitate the disengagement from internalised aspects of the past, affording the immigrant the opportunity to achieve a more mature resolution of earlier separation-individuation conflicts and completing psychological maturation tasks. This internal reorganisation is an ongoing, open-ended process, where immigrants come to terms with external losses, while absorbing and integrating elements from the new environment into their self-presentations (Mirsky & Peretz, 2006, p. 53). From this perspective, immigration can be conceptualised as a “developmental crucible” where the unfinished business of all previous developmental stages may be revisited, rekindled and reworked.

Sam and Oppedal (2003, pp. 3-4) concur that migration can be viewed from a life-span developmental perspective because it involves change and maturation, which require differentiation, learning new behaviour and reshaping cognitive structures to adapt to and function adequately in a new sociocultural context. Acculturation is an integral part of life-span developmental transitions, and presents opportunities and challenges that influence competencies, adaptation and psychological outcomes in multicultural societies (Sam & Oppedal, 2003, pp. 10-11). Human development is guided by specific sociocultural contexts, but each person represents a “culture of one” because of individual behavioural responses to cultural cues (Sam & Oppedal, 2003, p. 4). A personally developed culture is constructed in a “developmental niche” (p. 9), owing to enculturation in ethnic networks, as well as inculcation into the majority culture (Sam & Oppedal, 2003, p. 10). Individuals thus develop
different cultural scripts to fit different circumstances in various developmental domains (Sam & Oppedal, 2003, p. 11).

Coatsworth et al. (2005, p. 160) suggest an integration of acculturation research with ecodevelopmental models to determine how patterns of acculturation are linked to sociocultural adaptation and psychological outcomes. According to Schönplüg (1997), migration is a critical life event and adaptation to a new culture is an age-correlated, lifelong process (pp. 53, 55). She also endorses the addition of a developmental approach to include the long-lasting effects of acculturation, such as personality reorganisation and changes in ethnic or social identity, cognitions, emotions and social relationships (Schönplüg, 1997, p. 55). Psychological acculturation involves a process of ethnic identity change that can be conceptualised as two opposing processes, namely the need for assimilation and the need for differentiation (Schönplüg, 1997, p. 54). Psychological well-being is optimal when a balance is achieved between the degree of inclusion in the original and host group cultures, as well as the person’s need for differentiation of self (Schönplüg, 1997, p. 54).

Factors that influence acculturation

Circumstances and reasons for migration

The circumstances surrounding migration, such as the reasons, degree of choice and the motivation to migrate play a key role in the psychological response to the immigration process (Akhtar, 1999, pp. 6-7). The situation of a person on a temporary work assignment in a foreign country differs from that of the migrant who plans to leave his or her home country permanently (Akhtar, 1999, p. 6). Whether the migrant attempts to escape from problematic family relationships, financial hardship, political persecution or ethnic strife, or heads towards new opportunities and wider horizons can play a role in determining the level of success in adapting to the new country (Akhtar, 1999, p. 7). People who have some degree of
choice in leaving their home country have access to a “protective rite of farewell” (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 157) because they have an opportunity to prepare and say goodbye. However, a sudden departure prevents anticipatory mourning (Akhtar, 1999, p. 7) and complicates subsequent adaptation.

Migrants who have the option of revisiting the home country have access to “emotional refuelling” (Furer, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 9), which provides a “tether of belonging” (Akhtar, 1999, p. 8) and leads to better adjustment to their new circumstances (Akhtar, 1999, pp. 7, 11). Akhtar (1999) distinguishes between “extramural refuelling” (p. 10), which includes trips back home and international phone calls, and “intramural refuelling” (p. 10), which involves support by family members who have immigrated with the person, as well as supportive ethnic networks in the new country (Akhtar, 1999). Ronningstam (cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 10) also found that the ethnic community can introduce immigrants to unfamiliar aspects of their own personality and culture. In contrast, exiles or refugees, who cannot revisit their country of origin, are deprived of emotional refuelling, cannot update internalised views of the homeland, and significant emotional anchors, such as graves of family members, are lost forever (Akhtar, 1999, p. 11). Mourning is therefore impeded and the potential for frozen or delayed grief is increased (Volkan, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 11).

Trauma and discrimination

Immigrants are expected to adapt and conform to the norms, beliefs, values, lifestyle and traditions of the host society over time, and this process is facilitated by a welcoming host community (Spoonley et al., 2007, pp. 3–4). Attitudes towards immigrants are influenced by ethnicity, values, political beliefs and the economic climate in the host country (Spoonley et al., 2007, p. 7; Ward & Masgoret, 2008, p. 239). The reactions of the host population to the
newcomer depend on the degree of cultural difference, the physical characteristics of the immigrant, the monoethnic or multicultural nature of the host community, the particular era in which the migration takes places and historical ties between the two countries (Akhtar, 1999, p. 23). Tolerance towards immigrants is increased by positive attitudes towards cultural diversity, as well as the quality and quantity of contact between immigrants and the host society (Ward & Masgoret, 2008). Murphy (cited in Berry, 2005, p. 703) argues that societies that endorse multiculturalism provide a more positive settlement context as they are less likely to impose cultural assimilation or exclusion via segregation and marginalisation of immigrants. Pluralistic societies are also more likely to provide culturally sensitive services, and its communities offer better social support (Murphy, cited in Berry, 2005, p. 703). Berry (2001, p. 623) asserts that only when people have been grounded in their own cultural identity are they able to tolerate cultural diversity.

Immigrants may economically benefit a nation by filling work positions that the local population reject, but they often pose a realistic, symbolic or social identity threat to subsets of a society (Dovidio & Esses, 2001, p. 380). Newcomers may be perceived as a threat because of competition for scarce resources such as employment, or in terms of eroding valued norms and beliefs of the host society (Ward & Masgoret, 2008, p. 229). According to Pettigrew and Meertens (cited in Dovidio & Esses, 2001, p. 380), prejudice may result in overt opposition to immigrants, whereas more subtle biases may lead to the exclusion of certain ethnic groups under the pretext of other reasons. Akhtar (1999, pp. 95-96) illustrates the disguised racism he experienced when, upon applying for an internship at a hospital in the United States of America, he received the following response: “We have found that persons not of our denomination do not feel comfortable working here.” Immigrant groups that are less well accepted often experience hostility, rejection and discrimination, which predict poor long-term adaptation (Berry, 2005, pp. 703-704). The migration of refugees or exiles is
usually associated with a higher level of traumatic events and they enter the new country with more sociopolitical baggage than immigrants (Akhtar, 1999, p. 8). Hence they are often treated with suspicion and reluctantly accepted by the host population (Akhtar, 1999, p. 8). These negative intergroup perceptions and attitudes could create a reciprocal, self-sustaining cycle of rejection (Berry, 2001, p. 628).

Berry (2001, p. 622) states that ethnic prejudice is a universal phenomenon, and even in pluralistic societies, acceptance varies across individuals towards specific cultural, racial and religious groups (Berry & Kalin; Lebedeva & Tatarko, cited in Berry, 2005, p. 704). The large influx of immigrants to New Zealand during the 1990s, which was fuelled by political rhetoric, elicited a number of “Inv-Asian” (pp. 16, 24, 32) articles in the press, and Pacific “overstayers” (p. 24) were cause for concern (Spoonley & Trlin, 2004). There was also a perception that some immigrants groups increased crime rates (Spoonley & Trlin, 2004, p. 39-41) or isolated themselves in ethnic enclaves in large cities, such as Auckland. Māori, who felt politically and culturally marginalised and disadvantaged in terms of health, education and employment, felt threatened by immigrants and therefore had more negative attitudes towards immigration policies (Leong & Ward, cited in Ward & Masgoret, 2008, p. 243). Racial tension grew as Māori pressed their claims for the return of or compensation for traditional lands and resources. Māori asserted their aspiration for political and economic self-determination, including the establishment of a Māori All Black team and other specialised services for Māori, such as healthcare and scholarships (Hokowhitu & Scherer, 2008, pp. 254, 258-259). Protestations of “apartheid” (p. 244) and “reverse racism” (p. 246) highlighted the unwillingness of New Zealanders to acknowledge their own racist history, and uncovered hidden fears about the transformation of “race-based spaces” (Hokowhitu & Scherer, 2008, p. 254).
Colonisation and intermarriage between Pākehā (New Zealanders of European descent) and Māori resulted in “hybrid racial identities” (p. 258), which made it difficult to distinguish between these two ethnic groups (Hokowhitu & Scherer, 2008). The focus in New Zealand during the post-colonial period of the 1980s was to build the economy, recognise Māori rights and establish a national identity (Spoonley & Trlin, 2004, p. 1). New Zealand society has a bicultural foundation, but immigration policies from 1986 onwards added structural complexity by delivering a cultural mosaic to the doorstep of nation building (Ward & Masgoret, 2008, p. 241). However, New Zealand still did not have a national multiculturalism policy to accommodate all its ethnic groups that would promote social cohesion and national unity (Spoonley et al., 2007, p. 2).

South Africa and New Zealand share a common British colonial history and their paths have intersected at various points - from the Boer War to the controversial 1981 Springbok rugby tour to New Zealand that caused a national division (Spoonley & Trlin, 2004, p. 53). South Africa was regarded as the political skunk of the world, and as such South Africans carried a heavy burden of collective, historical guilt which, in the eyes of the world, was unredeemable. There had been ongoing condemnation of South Africa’s apartheid history, and South African emigrants were often accused of being privileged racists who were unwilling to accept a black majority government (Bornman, 2005). Du Toit (cited in Bornman, 2005, p. 389) disputed this assumption because he found that South African emigrants represented the full political spectrum of South African society. South African immigrants felt that New Zealanders resorted to considerable finger pointing and taking the “moral high ground” (p. 53) regarding racism, without having an in-depth understanding of the complexities of South African society (Spoonley & Trlin, 2004, p. 52). South Africans’ forthright way of speaking was perceived as arrogant and aggressive by some New Zealanders, who were used to more indirect communication. South Africans found it difficult
understanding the “Tall Poppy syndrome”, where achievement and wealth were frowned upon in service of egalitarianism, equality and social harmony.

According to Spoonley and Trlin (2004, pp. v-vi) and Butcher et al. (2006, pp. 50-51), during this period, the media often reinforced pre-existing stereotypes and prejudice by using labels, such as “Asian” (pp. 54, 61) that do not reflect the diversity of immigrant groups. South Africans expressed their concern about discrimination against immigrants of Asian origin, and as a result often refrained from identifying themselves as “immigrants” (Spoonley & Trlin, 2004, p. 25). Media reports on South Africans in New Zealand were sparse (pp. 35-36), but calls in 1994 and 1999 for Afrikaans in schools, raised new concerns about the underlying racist attitudes of South Africans (Spoonley & Trlin, 2004, pp. 35-37). However, it also highlighted considerable differences of opinion among the diverse ethnic, language and religious South African immigrant groups (Spoonley & Trlin, 2004, p. 36). Spoonley and Trlin, (2004, p. vi) found that South Africans felt that the media did not understand their culture or experiences particularly well, and were offended by specific reports or incidents, which they felt portrayed them unfairly. South Africans felt that the only time reference was made to their nationality or immigrant status was when it was a sensationalist, emotionally laden or negative report (Spoonley & Trlin, 2004, pp. 51-52). A case in point was the alleged assault and murder of the 15-year-old Liberty Templeman in 2008 by Theo Kriel, who was only 14 years old at the time. The lack of overt emotions and facial expressions of Theo and his parents in the courtroom were interpreted as an absence of shame or remorse about the tragedy, and there were calls for their deportation. The exception to negative stereotyping of South African immigrants were reports on the popular Silver Ferns netball player, Irene van Dyk, who was sometimes identified as South African-born in the media (Spoonley & Trlin, 2004, p. 52).
Spoonley et al. (2007, p. 15) reported that in New Zealand, racism towards immigrants occurs frequently, but that overt discrimination happens less and is mostly observed in public places or at work. According to Domke et al. (cited in Spoonley & Trlin, 2004), immigrants are evaluated according to a cost-benefit analysis, with a “distinct racial subtext” (p. 7). Ward and Masgoret (2008) found that approximately 80% of New Zealanders have a positive attitude towards immigrants, endorse cultural diversity and prefer migrant integration for cultural adaptation (Ward & Masgoret, 2008, pp. 235, 239). The older respondents in the study generally had more negative attitudes towards immigrants and immigration, whereas people who were born overseas were more optimistic that immigrants could make a meaningful contribution to New Zealand society (Spoonley et al., 2007, pp. 25-26). More than half of respondents thought that the number of immigrants to New Zealand should be reduced, but only about 14% thought there were too many immigrants from South Africa (Spoonley et al., 2007, pp. 19-20). Immigrants from Australia and Great Britain were favoured, but South Africans were nevertheless viewed in a positive light by about 66% of respondents (Ward & Masgoret, 2008, p. 235). The ability to speak English, having a professional or trade qualification, and a firm job offer were high priority selection criteria for skilled immigrants (Spoonley et al., 2007, p. 21). Respondents believed that it was important to attract skilled migrants, and 50% thought that South African immigrants could help to boost the economy (Spoonley et al., 2007, p. 17).

Firkin et al. (2004, pp. 11, 14) focused on a discrepancy between New Zealand’s active recruitment of skilled migrants and the reality of living and working as an immigrant in New Zealand society. According to them, the “points system” (p. 10) of immigration policies and acceptance of qualifications by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority and professional bodies creates the impression that migrant skills, knowledge and experience are needed and highly valued (Firkin et al., 2004, p. 25). Information on life in New Zealand
from official publications and recruitment consultants paints a picture of New Zealand as an open, tolerant and welcoming society (Firkin et al., 2004, pp. 11, 25, 47). However, upon arrival, many immigrants are perplexed when they find the attitudes and behaviour of employers and society invalidating, disrespectful, unwelcoming or even hostile (Firkin et al., 2004, p. 11). They find that their qualifications and extensive work experience are often undervalued or discounted, with the result that job hunting becomes a frustrating, stressful and demeaning experience (Firkin et al., 2004, pp. 15-16, 21, 41, 46). For older immigrants, age is an additional barrier to employment as they are usually reluctant to “start at the bottom again” (Firkin et al., 2004, p. 21). Feeling unwanted and discouraged, some are forced to return to their country of origin or attempt to find work in another country, with the result that families are separated (Firkin et al., 2004, p. 16).

According to Firkin et al. (2004, pp. 15, 23), the main barriers to employment are unfamiliarity with New Zealand culture and a lack of local knowledge, social networks and New Zealand work experience, but some feel these are used as smokescreens for other forms of discrimination. Employers and recruitment consultants often discriminate against candidates with a non-New Zealand accent, despite their English fluency, or use the excuse that the applicant is overqualified for the job (Firkin et al., 2004, pp. 15-17, 21, 35, 47). Many highly skilled and professional immigrants end up in low skill areas of the workplace (Firkin et al., 2004, pp. 20-23). According to Coates and Carr (2005), job selection bias tends to favour Australian and British immigrants over South African immigrants. They propose that the reasons for this bias are the “recruit in own image” (p. 590) phenomenon - in other words, a higher perceived similarity between New Zealand and these two source countries, as well as the relative social dominance of Australia and Britain owing to their socioeconomic position in the world (pp. 592-593). Coates and Carr (2005) highlight the lack of research on more covert forms of selection bias, as well as post-selection bias or so-called “treatment
discrimination” (p. 594), which adversely affect performance appraisals and internal promotions.

Ward and Masgoret (2008, p. 239) and Spoonley et al. (2007, p. 27) suggest that endorsement of multiculturalism, knowledge about immigration and direct contact in schools, at work and in neighbourhoods could help to reduce prejudice and foster positive attitudes towards immigrant groups and immigration policies. Ideally, intercultural contact should be voluntary and cooperative, and occur between people of equal status who share a common goal (Pettigrew & Tropp, cited in Ward & Masgoret, 2008). Ward and Masgoret (2008, p. 243) assert that cultural inclusiveness in school classrooms results in intercultural friendships and more positive intergroup attitudes. Diversity and intercultural training in the workplace are beneficial to improve intercultural skills and attitudes (Ward & Masgoret, 2008, p. 243) and could in time lead to more extensive community initiatives for social change (Ferdman & Brody, cited in Ward & Masgoret, 2008).

In a study by Spoonley et al. (2007, p. 18), more than half of the respondents thought that New Zealanders should be more tolerant towards immigrants and that the government should develop multicultural policies. Nearly 60% believed that the government should provide assistance to immigrants after arrival, but mainly supported settlement services that would benefit economic development, such as centres for learning English, finding employment and obtaining information about programmes and services, as well as mentoring programmes for business migrants (Spoonley et al., 2007, pp. 22-23). Despite this apparently positive view of immigration, nearly 80% of people in this study wanted more public consultation about New Zealand’s immigration policies (Spoonley et al., 2007, p. 21). A large percentage believed that immigrants should be screened for hepatitis and tuberculosis, and that those with HIV/AIDS should be refused entry (Spoonley et al., 2007, p. 27).
According to Spoonley et al. (2007, p. 30), to date, three of the six immigrant Settlement Strategy goals of the Department of Labour have not been achieved, namely (1) forming supportive social networks and establishing a sustainable community identity; (2) feeling safe to express their ethnic identity and be respected and accepted, and become part of the wider community; and (3) participation in civic, community and social activities. Achieving these goals has been hampered by substantial resistance from New Zealanders to the perceived negative impact immigrants have on New Zealand society and culture, discrimination against immigrants, and opposition towards multiculturalism and government funding for more comprehensive settlement programmes (Spoonley et al., 2007, p. 30).

Spoonley et al. (2007) therefore caution that the reported positive attitudes towards immigrants may at best indicate a “fragile racial tolerance” (p. 29) in response to the multicultural reality of immigration trends, but reflect an underlying sense of unease about the inflow of non-English-speaking people from Asia and the Pacific. They express concern that people may rationalise their negative attitudes as “realism” (Spoonley & Trlin, 2004, p. 23) or invoke “freedom of speech” (p. 19) to justify racially derogatory comments. They conclude that if New Zealanders are basically racist this would challenge the view they have of themselves as a tolerant, multicultural society (Spoonley et al., 2007, p.29). In line with their public image as a racially sensitive nation, New Zealand recently signed an international document to acknowledge the rights of indigenous people. Assertions by the previous Māori party leader, Hone Harawira, that their ultimate goal was sovereignty and taking their country back, could make South African immigrants wonder if they should once more keep their eyes on the life rafts.
Attachment style

Immigration is a journey of exploration, requiring a separation from the family of origin, extended family, culture and country (Van Ecke, Chope, & Emmelkamp, 2005, pp. 657, 660). It involves the disruption of attachment relationships (Van Ecke, 2007, p. 435) and various authors, including Levenbach and Lewak (cited in Van Ecke et al., 2005, p. 660), have described immigration as a traumatic, ongoing process of loss and grief. According to Bowlby’s (cited in Van Ecke et al., 2005, p. 658) theory of attachment, we develop internal working models about the reliability, responsiveness and attentiveness of others early on in life, based on the relationship with our primary caregivers. Bowlby (cited in Bakker et al., 2004, p. 388) believes that these attachment styles or mental frameworks determine our willingness to form emotional bonds with people, and direct our perception of events and behaviour in subsequent relationships. Smith, Murphy and Coats (cited in Bakker et al., 2004, p. 391) suggest that attachment styles also affect people’s psychological affinity to groups and intergroup attitudes.

Attachment styles are not as stable as personality traits, but they tend to become progressively more entrenched after adolescence (Hofstra, Van Oudenhoven, & Buunk, 2005, p. 616). Later on in life, when we experience attachment threats, such as separation or loss of significant others, these attachment models are reactivated, causing mental distress and influencing our behaviour (Van Ecke et al., 2005, p. 658). Emigration is a transition process, involving separation from the “mother” (p. 402) land and exposure to novel physical and social environments in a strange country, which invites exploration for adaptation and development (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, cited in Bakker et al., 2004, p. 402). Owing to the fact that attachment frameworks determine the way people experience and relate to others in new situations, they may be an important predictor of intercultural adaptation (Bakker et al., 2004, p.388). Arredondo-Dowd (cited in Van Ecke et al., 2005, p.
660) posits that attachment theory could also provide an explanation for the sense of loss and grief experienced during immigration.

Based on Bowlby’s model, Bartholomew and Horowitz (cited in Bakker et al., 2004, p. 388) identified the following four attachments statuses, based on the perceived worthiness of the self and the dependability or trustworthiness of others in terms of care and protection: (1) secure or autonomous attachment; (2) insecure or dismissive attachment; (3) preoccupied attachment; and (4) unresolved, fearful or disorganised attachment (Van Ecke et al., 2005, p. 658). The first three forms constitute “organised” (p. 433) attachment patterns because they provide rules for meeting attachment needs (Van Ecke, 2007). Secure attachment is a result of consistent and sensitive caregiving, and results in a positive self-image, interpersonal flexibility and the belief that other people are generally trustworthy and responsive (Bakker et al., 2004, p. 388; Van Ecke et al., 2005, p. 658). These individuals approach new situations and social interaction with confidence and are better able to express their personal needs, seek support and resolve problems (Van Ecke et al., 2005, pp. 658-659).

Dismissive attachment develops when the caregiver ignores, rejects or disapproves of the child's needs, fears or anger, and as a result the child learns to suppress these feelings to keep the bond with the caregiver intact (Van Ecke et al., 2005, pp. 658-659). Individuals with a dismissive attachment style have a positive internal model of the self, but view others as unreliable or unresponsive (Bakker et al., 2004, p. 388). They therefore tend not to share their emotions (Van Ecke et al., 2005, pp. 658-659) and avoid relationships as a self-protective mechanism against rejection and disappointment (Bakker et al., 2004, p. 388). Preoccupied attachment is the result of inconsistent responsiveness, caregiving and boundaries (Van Ecke et al., 2005, pp. 658-659), and is associated with a sense of not being worthy of love, coupled with a desire for close relationships to gain acceptance and maintain a sense of positive self-regard (Bakker et al., 2004, pp. 388, 391). Fearful or unresolved attachment results from
threats of being abandoned, hurt or ignored by caregivers during early childhood and stems from caregiving that is frightening, erratic or unpredictable (Van Ecke et al., 2005, pp. 658-659). The consequence is loss, fear and confusion, a perception of being unworthy and unlovable, and an expectation that others are untrustworthy, rejecting or dangerous (Bakker et al., 2004, p. 388; Van Ecke, 2007, p. 434). This leads to a sense of vulnerability, abandonment and helplessness during periods of stress (Van Ecke, 2007, p. 434; Van Ecke et al., 2005, p. 661).

Van Ecke et al. (2005, p. 670) found that immigrants had higher rates of unresolved or disorganised attachments than nonimmigrants, and these were unrelated to time in the host country, the reason for immigration or marital status. According to Van Ecke (2007, p. 434), adults with unresolved attachment may have a history of loss, confusion, fear or isolation in important emotional relationships. Immigrants with unresolved attachment perceive the world as more dangerous; view themselves as more helpless and vulnerable; and are less able to manage perceived threats than those with resolved attachment (Van Ecke, 2007, p. 439). According to Bowlby (cited in Van Ecke, 2007, pp. 439-440), when individuals cannot resolve an attachment threat, they suppress it so that they do not become overwhelmed. Because this temporary defense mechanism prevents the processing and integration of threatening cues, George and Solomon, and George et al. (cited in Van Ecke, 2007, p. 440) believe that it weakens the ability to manage threats in the long term. Hence, immigrants with unresolved attachment may eventually become overwhelmed by successive stressors, such as interpersonal conflict, job-related stress or financial difficulties, and would be unlikely to seek help or therapy (Van Ecke, 2007, p. 440).

Van Oudenhoven and Hofstra (2006, pp. 787, 794) comment on the parallels between attachment styles and Berry’s acculturation attitudes or strategies because both involve people approaching others in new situations, and comprise fourfold models based on two sets
of attitudes, namely the model of self versus trust in others, and preference for one’s own cultural group versus contact with the host group. Immigrants with secure attachment find it easier to establish meaningful relationships in their own and host culture groups, and usually prefer an integration acculturation strategy (Van Oudenhoven & Hofstra, 2006, p. 794). They thus experience better psychological and sociocultural adjustment and report greater life satisfaction (Bakker et al., 2004, pp. 396, 398-400). Those with dismissive attachment primarily adopt a separation acculturation attitude (Van Oudenhoven & Hofstra, 2006, p. 790, because of high levels of desired independence and wariness to approach others (Bakker et al., 2004, pp. 398-400). This stems from a lack of motivation to have contact with people from their own group or with the host culture, and it hinders sociocultural adjustment (Bakker et al., 2004, pp. 398-400). Immigrants who are ambivalent or avoidant about social contact, as observed with preoccupied and fearful attachment, wish to have contact with members of their own cultural group, but experience difficulties establishing close relationships with their own, as well as host cultural groups owing to fears of rejection or a sense of distrust (Bakker et al., 2004, pp. 394, 400). Immigrants with preoccupied attachment endorse a marginalisation, separation or assimilation acculturation style and those with fearful attachment prefer separation (Van Oudenhoven & Hofstra, 2006, p. 790). Hence ambivalent or avoidant attachment can result in separation from others and has a detrimental effect on psychological adjustment and life satisfaction (Bakker et al., 2004, pp. 396, 400).

Bakker et al. (2004, p. 401) concluded that a pre-migration assessment of attachment styles may provide useful information to determine which immigrants are at risk of experiencing post-settlement difficulties. They suggest that older emigrants may be at particular risk as they tend to be more dismissive and less inclined to approach others, possibly as a result of age-related losses in interpersonal relationships (pp. 395, 402). According to Diehl et al.
(cited in Bakker et al., 2004, p. 402), they are also inclined to emphasise their self-reliance and value their independence.

Van Oudenhoven and Hofstra (2006, pp. 793-794) found that a secure attachment style in members of the host society was related to positive attitudes towards the integration of immigrants, whereas individuals with dismissive and fearful styles did not endorse integration because of a sense of distrust. Those with dismissive attachment may prefer separation of immigrants to avoid social contact, and those with fearful attachment may endorse assimilation to reduce risk (Van Oudenhoven & Hofstra, 2006, pp. 793-794). They reported that host society members with preoccupied attachment were not supportive of immigrants who desired separation because they viewed it as a form of rejection (Hofstra et al., 2005, p. 614; Van Oudenhoven & Hofstra, 2006, pp. 793-794). Van Oudenhoven and Hofstra (2006, p.796) therefore recommend that societies and cultures create conditions for the development and reinforcement of secure attachment styles because this provides the best foundation for interaction between immigrants and host societies, based on a positive view of their own culture, as well as trust and acceptance of other cultures.

**Personality style**

Bowlby (cited in Bakker et al., 2004, p.389) views attachment models as a theory of personality development in close relationships because the interactive nature of attachment between infant and caregiver gradually becomes a stable characteristic of the person (Hazan & Shaver, cited in Bakker et al., 2004, p. 389). Changes in the personality structure occur throughout life as people actively select and shape their environment, and are in turn affected by their environment (Bakker et al., 2004, p. 402). According to Srivastava et al. (cited in Bakker et al., 2004, p. 402), these ongoing person-environment transactions often reinforce earlier dispositions.
Personality traits can be conceptualised by a framework, based on the Big Five basic factors, namely extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability-neuroticism, and openness to experience (Costa & McCrae, cited in Bakker et al., 2004, p. 389). The latter is also referred to as intellect or autonomy by Goldberg (cited in Bakker et al., 2004, p. 389). In this research, significant correlations were found between attachment styles and the Big Five dimensions in relation to interpersonal behaviour, particularly extraversion, agreeableness and emotional stability (Bakker et al., 2004, pp. 389, 399). Attachment style and personality traits affect the quality of relationships, psychological ties to groups (Smith et al., cited in Bakker et al., 2004, p. 391) and intergroup attitudes (Mikulincer & Shaver, cited in Bakker et al., 2004, p. 391). Since emigration is a major life event involving a range of challenges that have to be managed successfully, attachment style and personality structure will influence both sociocultural and psychological adaptation (Bakker et al., 2004, pp. 390-391).

Individuals with secure attachment are more extraverted, agreeable (Bakker et al., 2004, pp. 389, 396, 399) and resilient (Kobak & Scerey, cited in Bakker et al., 2004, p. 389). Their socially outgoing nature and self-confidence allow them to form relationships with members of the host, as well as native cultures, which promote psychological and cultural adjustment (Bakker et al., 2004, pp. 391, 396). Preoccupied and fearful styles tend to be less extraverted, less autonomous, have lower emotional stability and are ambivalent about interpersonal relationships (Bakker et al., 2004, pp. 393, 396, 400). They avoid relationships with the host culture because they find it difficult to approach strangers and fear rejection, which is detrimental to their psychological and sociocultural adjustment (Bakker et al., 2004, p. 391). Since they depend on others for their self-esteem, they may seek out members of their own culture because they feel safer with them (Bakker et al., 2004, pp. 391, 400). However, these relationships may not be successful since individuals with preoccupied
attachment tend to have a dependent-controlling interpersonal style and constantly seek reassurance, while fearful attachment is characterised by social inhibition and a lack of assertiveness (Bartholomew & Horowitz, cited in Bakker et al., 2004, pp. 389-390, 400). According to Bartholomew and Horowitz, and Onishi, et al. (cited in Bakker et al., 2004, pp. 389, 390-391, 393), dismissive attachment is associated with low extraversion, low sociability and a narrow range of emotional experience. Their negative stance towards others and lack of interpersonal warmth inhibit social interactions with both cultural groups (Bakker et al., 2004, p. 391). As a defense mechanism, dismissive individuals tend to report low levels of psychological distress to regulate affect (Onishi et al., cited in Bakker et al., 2004, pp. 389, 400) and their level of psychological and cultural adjustment is thus uncertain.

Various authors have speculated whether immigrants have a particular personality type or configuration that distinguishes them from nonmigrants (Akhtar, 1999, p. 15). Grinberg and Grinberg (2001, p. 24) concluded that a predisposition to emigrate is present to a greater or lesser degree in all individuals and may interact with various internal and external motivations and circumstances, compelling the person to emigrate at a particular time. Unfavourable conditions in the country of origin, emigration and immigration policies that provide opportunities for migration, supportive ethnic networks in the receiving country, and other environmental factors in the sending and receiving countries interact to create the conditions for migration. However, the desire to emigrate is associated with a specific set of personality characteristics, based on individual values and motives (Boneva & Frieze, 2001, pp. 477-478, 483). They (2001, p. 477) identified a migrant personality pattern across six cultures, and found that emigrants tend to be more work oriented and have higher achievement and power motivation, but have lower affiliation motivation and family centrality than those who prefer not to emigrate. Individuals with a migrant personality pattern may also be willing to migrate more than once (Kupiszewski; Neuman & Tienda;
Sakkeus; cited in Boneva & Frieze, 2001, p. 480). Richardson, as well as Kolp (cited in Boneva & Frieze, 2001) concluded that in individuals with high achievement motivation, emigration is often driven by “dissatisfaction in attaining goals” (p. 480), which leads to a constant search for better opportunities. These individuals are committed to their jobs and careers, enjoy a sense of competency and mastery, are energetic and enterprising, seek out new challenges and are willing to take risks, and desire social recognition and having an impact on others (Fersch; Glazer; McAdams; McClelland; Suarez-Orozco; Winter; cited in Boneva & Frieze, 2001, pp. 482, 486).

Individuals with high affiliation motivation seek social acceptance and maintaining interpersonal relationships via strong social networks, and their emotional response to separation may prevent migration, despite adverse conditions in the homeland (Emmons; McClelland; Mehrabian & Ksionzky, cited in Boneva & Frieze, 2001, p. 482). However, they may be motivated to leave their homeland to be reunited with their immediate family who have relocated to another country (Boneva & Frieze, 2001, p. 485). They (2001, p. 483) conclude that this self-selection process of potential immigrants due to dispositional motives takes place in the country of origin. They (2001, p. 486) propose that their model may not be applicable to individuals who are forced to leave their country of origin, but question why some of them wish to return to their country of origin as soon as conditions stabilise, while others are happy to remain in the receiving country, despite improvements in their home country.

Akhtar (1999, p. 15) and Grinberg and Grinberg (1989, p. 22) contend that individuals with schizoid personality traits, who seem to lack a sense of rootedness, have a greater tendency to emigrate than other personality types. They also suggested that those with paranoid or insecure personalities continuously look for places they believe will be safer (Akhtar, 1999, p. 15; Grinberg & Grinberg 1989, p. 22). Those who are highly ambitious,
such as narcissistic individuals, or crave novelty in life, such as antisocial individuals, may also be predisposed to migration (Akhtar, 1999, p. 15). Another interpretation is that only persons with a strong ego and the ability to face risks will be willing to emigrate (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 22). Character organisation plays a key role in the adaptation of a person to the new country, and persons with limited capacity for individuation are less able to tolerate loneliness, experience more homesickness and are at risk of maladjustment (Menges, cited in Akhtar, 1999, pp. 15-16). “Ocnophilic” (Balint, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 16) persons who value close relationships, personal belongings and security (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 21) may experience greater difficulty leaving their country of origin than “philobatic” (Balint, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 16) persons who are independent and adventurous, and enjoy new experiences. However, Akhtar (1999, p. 16) maintains that although “ocnophils” may initially experience more difficulties, they will gradually form new attachments in the host country, which will encourage settlement. The “philobat”, however, will enjoy the excitement and stimulation of the new environment, but may become restless and dissatisfied after a while (Akhtar, 1999, p. 16).

Harrison and Nortje (2000, p. 13-9) postulate that South African emigrants are different by nature and are winners in any society; they are risk-takers who are young at heart, and are resourceful, innovative and self-reliant. South Africans are generally perceived as hard-working, entrepreneurial and adventurous (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-9). They have a sense of humour and the wisdom to laugh at themselves, and they appreciate the wonders and opportunities offered by New Zealand (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-9).

**Concepts of home and identity**

A Russian saying states that human beings consist of a body, a soul and a passport (Kelly, cited in Gonsalves, 1992, p. 292). Identity provides a sense of who we are, where we
belong and how we make sense of the world. According to the identity process theory (IPT) of Breakwell (cited in Timotijevic & Breakwell, 2000, p. 355), the structure of a personal identity is the product of an interactive process between the person and society. Self-identity provides a sense of cohesion, stability, self-sameness (Akhtar, 1999, pp. 48, 55) and continuity, but it is continuously renegotiated as part of a self-reflective process to accommodate life transitions, as well as changing environments and circumstances (Giddens, cited in Timotijevic & Breakwell, 2000, pp. 355-356; Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 129-130).

Jung (cited in Ward & Styles, 2007, p. 330) posits that the psyche and soul of a person is a “thing of the earth” (p. 330), and the significance of this link may be triggered when a person migrates. Based on Bowlby’s attachment theory (cited in Ward & Styles, 2007, p. 319), interactions with the non-human environment are biologically imprinted (Lorenz, cited in Ward & Styles, 2007, p. 323) to establish an ecological sense of self (Niesser; Spizform, cited in Ward & Styles, 2007, p. 319). This ecological self develops during Piaget’s (cited in Ward & Styles, 2007, p. 321) sensorimotor stage, when the child interprets the world according to physical experiences, and this is an unconscious process (Lucquet, cited in Ward & Styles, 2007, p. 321). The ecological self contributes to the development of emotional security and developing a sense of personal identity, and is important for mental health and adjustment to new environments (Searles; Spizform, cited in Ward & Styles, 2007, p. 321). Searles (cited in Ward & Styles, 2007, p. 322) contends that familiar sensory experiences of the nonhuman world can provide a sense of comfort during periods of loneliness and despair. Ward and Styles (2007, p. 319) found that migrants maintain a strong, emotionally charged bond or “residual link” to human as well as nonhuman elements of their homeland, which may explain some of the adverse reactions immigrants experience when these ties are severed. Loss of the familiar environment of the homeland, in conjunction with the multiple
losses of migration, can induce grief reactions that are often experienced as nostalgia or “homesickness” (p. 319) and a sense that part of the self has been left behind (Ward & Styles, 2007, p. 328). New Zealand’s strict biohazard laws prevent immigrants from importing objects from the natural environment that could serve as reminders of South Africa. Immigrants reported a sense of loss regarding the sounds, smells and sights of the countryside and built-up environment as well as the weather, seasons and wildlife because these provided a sense of connectedness and formed an intrinsic part of the self (Ward & Styles, 2007, pp. 326, 329). South African immigrants have found that incidental stimuli that remind them of their homeland, such as the sound of a turtle dove during a television broadcast, are experienced as a nonverbal, “visceral” sensation that elicits strong emotional reactions, even in long-term residents.

Identity consolidation is a process that begins before birth (Ahktar, 1999, p. 50) and continues throughout the life span, involving various stages of differentiation, separation and individuation (Ahktar, 1999, p. 48). These evolving processes of individuation are characterised by periods of ambivalence, identity diffusion and temporary regression (Ahktar, 1999, pp. 52-53). Identity formation relies heavily on the emotional and cognitive support provided by the person’s social milieu, consisting of parents, extended family, other significant adults, siblings and peers (Ahktar, 1999, p. 56). The first major individuation occurs during the separation-individuation phase in childhood (Mahler, cited in Ahktar, 1999, p. 179) when the child develops a separate sense of self and an awareness of gender roles. During the second individuation process of adolescence (Blos, cited in Ahktar, 1999, p. 179), a personal and sexual identity is established. Life tasks during adulthood, such as establishing a career, moving out of the parental home, marriage and parenthood, provide opportunities to revisit identity-related issues, which can strengthen a person’s identity and sense of continuity (Ahktar, 1999, p. 60). Middle age and old age provide opportunities for a
broadening and deepening of the core self-concept, which promotes self-acceptance and emotional maturity (Akhtar, 1999, p. 61). Migration profoundly affects people at an individual and collective level - it threatens their sense of identity and challenges their values, emotions and interpersonal relationships (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 129; Timotijevic & Breakwell, 2000, p. 359). Akhtar (1999) thus coined the term “third individuation” (p. 179) to describe the reformulation of identity during the mourning-liberation process of immigration.

Cognitive and attribution processes are involved in the construction, maintenance and change of identities (Howard, 2000, p. 370). A well-integrated identity consists of many subsets of self-representations (Eisnitz, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 64). An identity consists of cognitive self-schemas, which include individual characteristics, such as cognitive styles, values, attitudes, preferences, goals and behaviour patterns, as well as group schemas that determine social position in terms of gender, sexuality, age, ethnicity, race, social membership, class and roles (Howard, 2000, p. 368; Timotijevic & Breakwell, 2000, p. 356). Social psychologists refer to the sum of these parts of our identity as our self-concept (Sussman, 2002, p. 4). According to Moore and Fine (cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 62), a sense of identity is derived from the prevailing self-concept, while an enduring identity over time is derived from supra-ordinate self-schemas, which integrate various subordinate self-concepts and personal roles for relating with others. Identity comprises a strategic self-presentation (Howard, 2000, p. 371), consisting of a structural dimension, which includes components of a personal and social identity, as well as a procedural dimension, which comprises evaluative and affective components (Timotijevic & Breakwell, 2000, p. 356). The content and relative value and symbolic meaning of these elements are constantly evaluated in response to changes in societal norms and the person’s position in society (Timotijevic & Breakwell, 2000, p. 356).
A cohesive identity is characterised by “contextual fluidity” (Akhtar, 1999, p. 64) that permits a comfortable transition between various self-representations in response to the psychosocial requirements of a particular situation. “Temporal fluidity” (Akhtar, 1999, pp. 65-66) prevents the identity from remaining stuck at a particular developmental stage, and permits cumulative and distinct transformations over the life course without compromising authenticity. A person with a consolidated identity has a realistic body image, experiences contextual and temporal continuity and subjective self-sameness, exhibits consistent attitudes and behaviour, has clarity on his or her gender identity, and is grounded by his or her ethnic roots (Akhtar, 1999, pp. 62-68). A consolidated identity provides an individual with the ability to modulate his or her thoughts, feelings and behaviour across diverse social situations without losing his or her authenticity and core of self-sameness (Akhtar, 1999, p. 63). These individuals demonstrate congruent personal values, interests, attitudes and behaviours to maintain a sense of internal consistency across contexts (Akhtar, 1999, p. 64). A consolidated identity also provides a person with a “self-history” (Stern, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 64) that allows a sense of a continuation of his or her past, present and future.

Self-history is embedded in the person’s cultural and ethnic background, which includes values, child-rearing practices, modes of expression and patterns of interpersonal behaviour (Hughes, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 67). Ethnicity is transmitted to children by exposure to cultural customs and the use of ethnic language in the family (Akhtar, 1999, p. 67). Identification with parental figures, teachers, groups, peers, religious authorities, community and national leaders results in a feeling of generational continuity and belonging to a historical community (Akhtar, 1999, p. 67). An ethnic identity therefore provides an internalised value system and “ethnic roots” to the adult identity (Akhtar, 1999, p. 68). At the age of three or four, children develop an awareness of ethnic, cultural and language differences, and between the ages of four and eight, they develop an ethnic orientation that is
solidified as part of identity consolidation by the end of adolescence (Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 585). During adulthood, gender, marital, parenting and occupational roles help to reinforce their ethnic identity orientation (Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 585). Ethnic identity is woven into the individual’s life history, and he or she becomes the caretaker of family and cultural knowledge and traditions by passing them on to subsequent generations (Lin, cited in Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 585).

According to Ramanajum (cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 62), to maintain a sense of belonging and continuity, it is necessary to have exposure to familiar symbols, such as dress, language and food, as well as participation in rituals to reinforce a sense of identity. In the interest of self-preservation, immigrants often cling to familiar objects, music, food and memories of their country of origin to “feel like themselves” (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 129). However, ethnicity is a dynamic, fluid, multilayered, overlapping concept that allows multiple “possible selves” (p. 375) to be activated at different times and in different social contexts (Nagel, cited in Howard, 2000). Howard (2000, p. 386) challenged the concept of a unified, stable identity and proposed a multiplicity of identities that can be described in terms of hybrid identities or Diaspora. The postmodernist stance is that authenticity does not imply being true to the self in a permanent manner, but rather being true to the self in relationship (Howard, 2000, p. 387)

Identity is a psychological construct that is manifested through thought, affect and behaviour (Timotijevic & Breakwell, 2000, p. 355) and is communicated via language (Howard, 2000, pp. 371-372). Language is a set of signs and meanings that is used to communicate with others and determines the way its speakers perceive and interpret reality (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 99). It is one of the most traditional elements of culture and is the most resistant to change (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 99). Language is used from a young age to build an image of the world, themselves and other people, and memories of
childhood are therefore embedded in a particular language (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 99, 108-109). Adult immigrants find it harder than children to adjust to a new environment and adopt a new language because children are more receptive to imitating and identifying with the local population (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 109-110). Adults are able to acquire the vocabulary and grammar of the new language, but not the accent, intonation and rhythm as a child does (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 110). Conflict between the parents and the child can arise when the parents feel criticised by a child who is ashamed of his or her lack of fluency in the new language (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 110). Adults may also be resistant to use a new language as they feel “in disguise” or “inauthentic” (p. 112) when they use it to express themselves, or they feel guilty about being disloyal to their “mother tongue” (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 110). Even in countries where the same language is spoken, a given word or expression can carry different meanings, which leads to confusion and misunderstandings (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 112). For instance, in New Zealand, when a person is invited over for a meal and asked to “bring a plate” (pp. 2-25), it means he or she is expected to bring a plate of eats to share and not an empty plate to save on dishwashing chores, as some South Africans have found out to their embarrassment (Harrison & Nortje, 2000).

The 2006, New Zealand census showed that of the 41,676 people born in South Africa, 21,609 (52%) indicated their ethnic group as South African, 1,341 (3%) as Afrikaner and 201 (0.5%) as South African Coloured (Statistics New Zealand, 2006a). The 2013 New Zealand census indicated that of the 54,279 people born in South Africa, (28 656) 53% stated their ethnic group as South African and 1,197 (2%) identified with being Afrikaners (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). Census 2013 results for those who identified with being South African Coloured were not yet available at the time of study. The 2013 census results indicated that about 8.5% of those in the South African group and about 13% of those in the
Afrikaner group identified with two or more ethnic groups (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). In New Zealand, a person’s ethnicity is a product of social construction and individual choice, and some South Africans may also choose to identify themselves as “European”, “African” or “New Zealanders”.

According to Barkhuizen (2006, p. 74), there is a “mutually constitutive relationship between language and identity”. Afrikaans is one of South Africa’s 11 official languages, and is the home language of about 80% of the Coloured population and about 60% of the white population (Barkhuizen, 2006, p. 65). According to Statistics South Africa (Census 2001), there are 5.9 million people who speak Afrikaans as a home language, which constitutes about 13% of the population (cited in Barkhuizen, 2006, p. 65). The 2006 New Zealand census indicated that 21,123 respondents were Afrikaans speakers and 1,134 spoke Zulu (Statistics New Zealand, 2006b). Between the 2001, 2006 and 2013 New Zealand censuses, the percentage of Afrikaans speakers among the South African immigrant group remained constant at about 50% (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). For English-speaking South Africans, immigrating to New Zealand does not involve significant linguistic adjustments, but for Afrikaans speakers the move to a foreign country where Afrikaans is seldom used in official or social contexts leads to significant changes in their lives (Barkhuizen, 2006, p. 66).

Changing one’s language not only affects one’s everyday life, but also one’s sense of self and internal representations of close family members, friends and other significant people who were part of the immigrant’s life while growing up (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989; Tannenbaum & Howie; Tannenbaum, cited in Tannenbaum, 2007, p. 149). In leaving the homeland, if immigrants are unable to anticipate, translate gestures and read faces, tones and voices, they lose their inner compass (p. 149) that provides them with the cues they need to function in social contexts (Alsop, cited in Tannenbaum, 2007). Some immigrants also find it
difficult to express emotions in a second language because some terms are not translatable (Tannenbaum, 2007, p. 163).

Barkhuizen (2006) found that Afrikaans-speaking children who immigrated to New Zealand exhibited a language shift to English and as a result were experiencing Afrikaans attrition, which included the loss of vocabulary and a simplification of language structure. Barkhuizen (2006, pp. 70-71) reported that bilingual speech patterns commonly occurred, for instance, mixing languages in one sentence (codemixing), between sentences or between speakers (code switching). Parents had to make a difficult choice between loyalty and emotional connectedness to Afrikaans, and English fluency that would allow their children to integrate and achieve success in New Zealand. Most parents took steps before emigrating to improve their children’s English skills, for instance, enrolling them in an English-medium school (Barkhuizen, 2006, pp. 67-68). Some parents tried to maintain Afrikaans in the home and social environments to preserve their linguistic and cultural roots (Barkhuizen, 2006, p. 63), but inevitably found that their child understood them better if they used English. Parents resign themselves to the fact that the language shift to English will be accompanied by a loss of Afrikaner culture for their children as they become fully fledged New Zealanders (Barkhuizen, 2006, p. 74). At best, they will regard themselves as South African New Zealanders (Barkhuizen, 2006, pp. 74-75). According to Barkhuizen (2006, p.75), some Afrikaans immigrant parents expressed sadness about the loss of Afrikaans, while others rationalised that the positive outcomes of emigration outweighed the linguistic negatives.

Most people are unaware to what extent their individual identity is shaped by cultural norms, but their cultural identity becomes more prominent when the person moves to another country and encounters different values, behaviours and ways of thinking (Sussman, 2002, pp. 4-5). According to Sussman (2002, p. 6), immigrants have to be flexible enough to achieve a balance between the comfort of their home culture and effectiveness, as required by
host country members. Temporary migrations, such as multinational company transfers and international scholarships, provide the security of a return home that allows the person to view the experience as an adventure (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 178). Consequently, even though these individuals are separated from friends and family, they do not experience the same sense of uprootedness and loss of their sense of identity (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 178).

A threat to identity occurs when personal efforts or social pressure to incorporate new elements into the identity structure are contradictory, incompatible or in conflict with the principles of distinctiveness, continuity, self-efficacy and self-esteem (Timotijevic & Breakwell, 2000, pp. 356-357). Ethnocultural identity conflict is more problematic when migrants originate from countries where the culture, language and ethnic composition differ markedly from the host society, coupled with infrequent contact with national peers, poor intergroup relationships, perceived discrimination and threats to cultural continuity (Ward, 2008b, pp. 107-108). The reason for migration can affect the perceived threat to identity, but the personal explanatory “narrative” may be a means of coping with the threat that has been created by migration (Timotijevic & Breakwell, 2000, p. 538). The different ways in which threats are experienced and responded to involve awareness of the content of groups, which provides a framework on the basis of which people interpret novel situations and evaluate the relative threat of the experience (Branscombe et al., cited in Timotijevic & Breakwell, 2000, p. 359). It is thought that people with a strong ethnic and national identity will go to greater lengths to protect their collective identity (Timotijevic & Breakwell, 2000, p. 359).

Immigrants use an identity reconstruction process, which depends on the way they define their identity, in an attempt to re-establish continuity in their self-identity narrative (Timotijevic & Breakwell, 2000, p. 368). Maintaining a sense of self-control despite social influences and restrictions can help the person to maintain self-esteem and a sense of self-
efficacy (Timotijevic & Breakwell, 2000, p. 368). Being part of a minority group can enhance the migrant’s perception of distinctiveness, but the way people derive their sense of distinctiveness will depend on the contents and subjective meaning that an identity category holds for an individual, and it may be developmentally, culturally, contextually and historically specific (Timotijevic & Breakwell, 2000, pp. 367, 369). To survive the assault on their identity, migrants must “re-invent” themselves, but Garza-Guerrero (cited in Ward & Styles, 2007, p. 320) caution that the residual emotional tether to the human and nonhuman elements of the homeland will never be completely severed. During this process of identity reconceptualisation, threats to the identity are partially managed, but not eliminated, and many threats to the viability of the identity become chronic (Timotijevic & Breakwell, 2000, p. 370).

Sayad (cited in Oboler, 2006, p. 117), believes that “the emigrant is destined to continue being present even when he is absent and never being totally present where he is physically present”. In the immigrant’s host country, the country of origin and cultural background of the emigrant are often discounted as superfluous “cultural baggage” (Oboler, 2006, p. 120). Oboler (2006) posits that social status and acceptance depend on the extent to which the emigrant’s past can be “forgiven and forgotten” (p. 123), and swept under the carpet, coupled with the immigrant’s ability to be perceived as an “empty slate” (p. 122) in the new society. In the societal hierarchy, immigrants are often assigned to a labour-market position of dispensable foreigners without a relevant or valid past, with the result that their presence and future in the host society become a disrupted or disjointed narrative (Oboler, 2006, pp. 120-122). Stripped of the right to belong and to have a sense of existential meaningfulness, this creates the illusion of a temporary or partial presence in the host county, subject to ongoing scrutiny by the natives to determine the legitimacy of presence and personhood (Sayad, cited in Oboler, 2006, pp. 122, 125).
In times of societal distress, this double absence or conditional presence can be reinterpreted as “the enemy within”, with resultant harassment, rejection or even deportation (Oboler, 2006, p. 124). Park (cited in Pedraza-Bailey, 1990, pp. 46-47) refers to this human condition of living simultaneously in two cultures, without fully belonging in either, as the “marginal man”. This person is often regarded as an outcast and stranger, but this cultural duality may also increase a person’s emotional awareness and creativity (Park, cited in Pedraza-Bailey, 1990, p. 47). Sayad believes that emigration not only causes rips in the fabric of the society of origin, but it also signifies pre-existing fractures of the core structures that used to provide a sense of coherence in this society (cited in Oboler, p. 124). Oboler (2006, pp. 124-125) adds that in some instances, the host country plays a major role in this disintegration process. Oboler (2006, p. 125) concludes that transnational immigration is a drama in which the immigrant is caught up and enacts societal “history on the move”.

*Return migration and transnationalism*

Life is a continuous becoming (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 176). Migration requires a person to recreate the basic things that took effort to establish, such as another work environment, a new circle of friends and finding a new home (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 176). These activities demand considerable effort, sacrifice and acceptance of profound changes over a short period of time (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 176). Managing these tasks successfully gives the person a sense of inner strength and the capacity to connect with others and to build a new life (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 176). External achievements are usually mirrored by internal gains, experiences and feelings (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 176). With time, the new country and new society slowly become part of the immigrant’s life; he or she fills it with meaning and memories, and achieves some sense of belonging again (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 176). Yet immigrants often discover that
integration has its limitations and that they will never be fully accepted as “one of them” (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 176). They start toying with the idea of going back to their home country to reconnect with their roots, and make sporadic visits or devise more concrete plans to return home (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 176, 179). Some feel excited about renewing social contacts and rediscovering what was left behind, but others have concerns about starting over again, that the country that “once was” (p. 180) is no more, or that family and friends may not provide a warm welcome (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 178, 180-181). Every migration in some way leaves its mark on the person who has lived through the experience (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 147). However, if the grief for others and oneself can be worked through a second time, the visit home can be a meaningful experience (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 183). For some, the return trip awakens the desire to return home permanently, but for others it provides the reassurance that they have found another place that they can call “home” and that anchors them in the reality of their life in the adopted country (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 182).

The reasons for returning to the homeland or one’s Heimat vary, and may relate to the original reasons for migrating (Tannenbaum, 2007, p. 149). For instance, some South Africans, who lived in political exile, returned to South Africa after the democratic elections of 1994. A return migration is sometimes as difficult to work through as the original emigration, and the former may involve the same level of vulnerability for migrants and their families (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 185). Return migrants usually expect that returning to familiar surroundings will be uncomplicated and may not recognise that the return trip is yet another migration; they do not realise how much they have changed and expect to find people and places just as they left them (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 182, 186-187). They may also find it surprisingly difficult to say goodbye to colleagues and friends in the host country (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 185). Upon their return, some people feel
disorientated and that everything has changed, yet at the same time feel as if they have never left (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 182). Return migrants are often shocked to find considerable discrepancies between their idealised memories of the homeland and the changes that have occurred during their absence (Tannenbaum, 2007, p. 166). They are disappointed that some of their close friends have moved on with their lives, and they are often unaware how much their own cultural identity has changed as they acclimatised to the culture and customs of the host society, with the result that they feel like strangers or quasi-foreigners in their home country (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 187-188; Sussman, 2002, p. 7). They end up having a sense of not belonging in either country, and it may even feel as if they are seeing the world from the perspective of the dead (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 183-184).

With the exception of extremely strong and enduring relationships, a reorganisation of values and attachments occurs during return visits. One may feel like a stranger to an old friend or feel close to someone who had not been a cherished friend before (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 182). Return migrants also find that the value of the belongings they left behind have changed, and it becomes difficult to decide what to throw away and what to take with them (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 182). They may feel that treasured belongings have been scattered like parts of the self that have split off, which they are unable to reassemble (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 183). Torres (cited in Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 185) coined the phrase of “the wound of return” to describe the sense that the person who has left the country of his or her birth cannot be resurrected, and that his or her sense of “home” is irretrievably lost (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 183, 185; King, 2002). Anwar (cited in King, 2002) describes the problem of long-term migrants who are torn between the forces that compel them to stay and the myth of returning (p. 93). Chambers (cited in King, 2002, p. 93) highlights a more insidious condition where the person remains in a state of
“migrancy”, where a true home does not exist anywhere and “being a migrant” (p. 93) becomes part of the identity.

The relationship between acculturation in the host culture and the remigration experience is complex (Tannenbaum, 2007, p. 150). Cui and Awa reported a positive association between overseas adjustment and the remigration experience, whereas Brein and David, Brislin, and VanBuren, and Suda postulate that migrants who have adapted successfully to the host country will experience more distress upon their return to the home country (cited in Tannenbaum, 2007, pp. 150-151). According to Adler, as well as Howard, adjustment upon returning is more difficult than the initial overseas adaptation, but Martin, as well as Wilson, report a greater awareness and acceptance of cultural differences among return migrants (cited in Tannenbaum, 2007, p. 151). Despite the discomfort of cultural adjustment, Sussman (2002, pp. 7-8) emphasises the fact that cross-cultural experiences can enhance cultural sensitivity, and this can be an enriching experience because it introduces us to other ways of interpreting the world.

According to Sussman’s (2002, pp. 7-8), cultural identity model (CIM), remigration involves a cultural transition process that triggers four types of shifts in cultural identity; subtractive, additive, affirmative, and intercultural. With subtractive and additive identity shifts, the migrant becomes aware of the discrepancies between the host culture and home culture, and experiences a sense of not belonging or not fitting in, resulting in high levels of repatriation stress (Sussman, 2002, p. 7). Persons with an additive identity response have integrated some aspects of the host culture in their self-concept and behavioural repertoire, which may clash with the home country’s values and expectations (Sussman, 2002, p. 7). Those with a subtractive identity shift perceive the two countries as culturally and behaviourally dissimilar, and experience feelings of alienation or a loss of cultural identity (Tannenbaum, 2007, p. 150). Migrants with a subtractive identity shift prefer to interact with
other return migrants, while those with an additive identity shift seek out members from the
former host culture, and both result in a sense of isolation and estrangement from co-
nationals, which correlates with Berry’s marginalisation strategy (Tannenbaum, 2007, p.
150). The “grateful repatriate” (Sussman, 2002, p. 8) ignores cultural gaps and experiences an
affirmative identity shift, which is characterised by the maintenance and strengthening of
home-culture identity and relationships, accompanied by low migration stress and positive
affect (Tannenbaum, 2007, p. 150). “Global citizens” (Sussman, 2002, p. 8) adopt an
intercultural identity shift and embrace multiple cultural representations simultaneously,
which allows them to interact comfortably in a variety of cultural contexts (Tannenbaum,
2007, p. 150).

If there is one factor that clearly distinguishes one migration from another it is
whether there is a possibility of returning to one’s homeland in the future (Grinberg &
Grinberg, 1989, p. 146). Knowing that it is possible to return, the pressure on the emigrant
diminishes; the anxiety about being trapped in the new country decreases and the person can
enjoy the experience (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 146). When returning is impossible, the
person embarks on a journey of exile from which there is no turning back (Grinberg &
Grinberg, 1989, p. 146). However, King (2002, p. 93) points out the pitfalls by making
arbitrary distinctions between temporary and permanent migrants, since the intention of the
migrant may not correspond with the eventual outcome of the migration. In addition,
countries differ in their definitions of a “permanent migrant”, “settlement” and “return
migrant” (King, 2002, p. 93). King (2002) adds the “shuttle migrant” (p. 98) or “transnational
migrant” (p. 93) to describe those who have settled in the host country, but maintain social,
economic or political links with the country of origin and move back and forth between the
two countries. Espin (cited in Howard, 2000, p. 382) identifies a “spatial identity”, which is
linked to geographic and virtual space, based on our definition of “home”. The concepts of
“home” and “away” and “abroad” (King, 2002, p. 102) have become blurred as members of transnational communities may feel at home in more than one place, or may not feel entirely at home anywhere. Some families are scattered over different continents as a strategy to maximise opportunities and security (Johnston et al., 2006, p. 1249), and in these astronaut families, one or both parents may live in a different country from their children. King (2002, p.102) asserts that “nations attempt to confine migrants to particular categories and geographical areas, but people with multiple affiliations who live within broad networking spaces and have hybrid or cosmopolitan identities do not wish to fit into the ideology of one national identity”.

Phases of the migration process

Gonsalves (1992, p. 383) emphasises the fact that immigration is a complex psychological and sociocultural process. It is not a single event, but occurs over an extended period of time (Ben-Sira, Bochner, Sluzki, & Taft, cited in Van Coller, 2002, p. 19). Migrants go through different stages during resettlement and some of these stages carry a higher mental health risk. Most researchers view adaptation as a multistage (Brink & Saunders; Herz, cited in Hener, Weller, & Shor, 1997, p. 252), “U-shaped” process (Lysgaard, cited in Sussman, 2002, p. 6), where immigrants initially experience feelings of elation, followed by an extended period of distress and crisis (Rumbaut; Sluzki, cited in Ritsner & Ponizovsky, 1999, pp. 125-126), which gradually improves as they adjust to the new society (Leherer, cited in Ritsner & Ponizovsky, 1999, pp. 125-126). Herz (cited in Hener et al., 1997, p. 247) includes a pre-migration phase in his model of acculturation and Sluzki (1979, p. 1) cautions that migration also has a transgenerational component. Berry and Kim (cited in Ritsner & Ponizovsky, 1999, p.135) believe that because of cultural and psychological changes,
migration stress will linearly increase from the pre-contact to the crisis phase, and will then vary according to the outcome of the particular acculturation strategy used.

Pernice and Brook (cited in Pernice et al., 2000, p. 24) do not endorse an initial distress-free period, followed by a mental health crisis, but suggest an alternative pattern of adaptation where immigrants progress through periods of distress, and experience improvement in mental health over time. In their research, Ritsner and Ponizovsky (1999, p.126) also did not report an initial “euphoric period”, but found that distress followed a fluctuating temporal pattern that peaked at 27 months, and then gradually decreased to reach a normal level at five years. Likewise, Khawaja and Mason (2008, p. 237) found that South African immigrants in Australia experienced more distress during the first year than those who had been living in Australia for more than three years. In contrast, Ward and Kennedy (cited in Sussman, 2002, p. 6) found that migrants who decided to return to their homeland experienced low satisfaction in the beginning and end of their stay in the host country, with a period of higher satisfaction in the middle. Conflicting and controversial research results about the level of distress, the phases and duration of the adaptation cycle, and the ultimate outcome of the settlement process leave immigrants who are “fresh off the boat” with troublesome questions: When will the tsunami hit the sun-drenched beach? How much of the village will be swept away? What must they do to survive? How long will it take to rebuild their home? Who will help them? Will life ever be the same afterwards?

Based on research results, the migration process can be broadly divided into the following six stages: preparation, the act of immigration, overcompensation, decompensation, adaptation and growth (Sluzki, 1979, p. 1). Each phase has distinct characteristics, stressors and conflicts, involves different practical and emotional tasks, symptoms and coping strategies, and offers points for assessment and intervention. The potential migrant often spends a lengthy period collecting and sifting through information on potential immigration
destinations, examining the motivation behind the decision, and revisiting personal expectations and goals. The preparation phase involves the decision and commitment to migrate, obtaining information about the immigration process, and finalising the practical elements, such as applying for visas (Sluzki, 1979, p. 2). Migrants who feel that their decision to migrate is not entirely voluntary often experience inner turmoil, apprehension, guilt, anxiety, or that nobody cares about their fate and the experience of being uprooted can have a negative impact on the subsequent phases (Gonsalves, 1992, p. 383). During this anticipation phase, the person may use splitting as a defense mechanism to devalue the homeland and idealise the new country to minimise attachments to “home and hearth” and assert independence (Mirsky & Peretz, 2006, p. 52). Shin and Shin (1999, pp. 606-608) term this the “naive dream stage”, where immigrants believe that the new country will offer more opportunities and their children will receive a better education, but that other aspects of their lives will not be much different as people all over the world are basically the same. The time span of this period is highly variable, and the person’s mood and level of efficiency may fluctuate between competent euphoria and feeling overwhelmed.

The act of migration involves a temporary or permanent relocation and includes practicalities such as packing up belongings, finalising financial matters, saying farewell to family and friends and arriving in the host country. It may also involve disruption of the family system and the temporary separation of family members, often because of occupational or commercial commitments or delays in visa approvals. In the initial stages of adaptation to the new country, pre-migration defense mechanisms temporarily sustain the psychological balance of immigrants and make it possible for them to master the challenges of orientating, learning and adapting to a new environment (Mirsky & Peretz, 2006, p. 52). The new migrant is in the overcompensation or “honeymoon” phase (Brink & Saunders, cited in Ritsner & Ponizovsky, 1999, p.126), which is characterised by heightened task-oriented
efficiency, a sense of curiosity, adventure and freedom to explore the new environment and opportunities, coupled with anxious optimism or even euphoria that could last a from a few weeks to a year (Hulewat, 1996, p. 130; Mirsky & Peretz, 2006, p. 52; Van Coller, 2002, p. 22).

There is a narrow focus of attention on practical matters to ensure that the basic needs for physiological survival are met, such as securing housing and employment, and finding schools for the children. Migrants have a sense of achievement as they master new challenges. There is a tendency to view cultural differences as “quaint” or “fascinating” (Gonsalves, 1992, p. 384), to ignore frustrations and to cling to the customs of the country of origin as a protective shield against the dissonance that results from a mismatch between their culture-bound expectations and the new environment, which may threaten their sense of reality (Sluzki, 1979, p. 3). Reyneke (2004, p. 209) found that South Africans were inclined to construct an overly pessimistic image of South Africa by emphasising all its negative aspects to rationalise the losses, loneliness and adaptation difficulties of immigration. The new migrant is in a “state of concussion” (Sluzki, cited in Van Coller, 2002, p. 22) or denial; conflicts are dormant and he or she lacks awareness of the effects of accumulative stress. Families must be flexible enough to adjust to the roles, rules and values of the new society, and estrangement can occur because of different rates and levels of acculturation of family members. Marital disputes may result from different spousal expectations of the new country, child-rearing practices, gender role changes or role reversals (Gonsalves, 1992, pp. 385-386).

The relative calmness and containment of this “moratorium” (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 85) eventually crumble in the face of the full implication of immigration, the culture shock (Oberg, cited in Hener et al., 1997, p. 247), the daily hassles (Hener et al., 1997, p. 252), the realities of living in a new country and the lack of familiar sources of support (Mirsky & Peretz, 2006, p.53). Cognitive distortions are no longer effective, and during this
“confrontation” (Gonsalves, 1992, p. 385), “rebound” (Herz, cited in Ritsner & Ponizovsky, 1999, p.126) or “disenchantment” (Hener et al., 1997, p. 247) phase, the migrant experiences confusion, disorientation, disappointment, disconnectedness, anxiety and helplessness, which evoke frustration, irritation and anger towards the devalued, new country, as well as a sense of loneliness and longing for the idealised, homeland and the “old” self (Mirsky & Peretz, 2006, p.53).

According to Reyneke (2004, p. 209), owing to nostalgia and cultural pride, South Africans are inclined to overestimate their own moral fibre, skills and work ethic and become highly critical of New Zealanders and their way of doing things, as well as the temperamental New Zealand climate. In an attempt to recapture what they have lost, the immigrant keeps ties to the homeland, withdraws from the host society (Hener et al., 1997, p. 248), favours relationships with other immigrants, or travels back for a visit to the homeland (Mirsky & Peretz, 2006, p.53). For some, this tangible step assists separation from the homeland as they realise that the past cannot be recreated and what was lost cannot be recouped (Mirsky & Peretz, 2006, p. 53). The immigrant has to surrender the dream of going home as a viable option and enters the “renunciation” (Shin, 1999, pp. 613-614) or letting-go phase. The habit of New Zealand customs officials at international New Zealand airports to greet migrants with valid work or residency visas, who return from overseas visits, with a “welcome home” greeting helps to affirm where the future of the migrant will lie.

The migrant now enters a phase of mourning of what has been left behind, relies on coping mechanisms and problem-solving skills and learns new behaviour to accommodate the norms and expectations of the host society (Hener et al., 1997, p. 247). However, if the tempo or extent of changes exceeds the person’s capacity to cope, overwhelming tension and conflict during this crisis or disintegration phase may result in medical or psychiatric disorders, family violence, substance abuse, behavioural and identity problems in children.
and adolescents or juvenile delinquency (Berry, 1997, p. 13). Cumulative stress may lead to extended periods of destabilisation and crisis (Gonsalves, 1992, pp. 385-386; Herz, cited in Hener et al., 1997, p. 248; Sluzki; 1979, p. 4). According to Gonsalves (1992, pp. 387-388), decompensation can occur anywhere from a few weeks to many years after arrival, and may be triggered by personal problems that were already present in the homeland, failures in personal adaptation, family disintegration, environmental isolation and an identity or existential crisis. This period peaks from six months to two-and-a-half years, and can last up to six years after arrival (Nguyen; Sluzki; Tyhurst, cited in Ritsner & Ponizovsky, 1999, pp.126, 135; Pernice et al., 2000, p. 24).

The person attempts to reshape his or her reality in an effort to achieve harmony with the new environment, while maintaining continuity in terms of personal identity (Sluzki, 1979, p. 4). The geographical distance from the safety of the “motherland” causes conflicts and fears regarding dependence-independence needs from childhood and adolescence, based on similar separation-individuation processes, to resurface and provides new opportunities to rework and resolve aspects of the previous environment and identity, reconcile them with external losses and develop a more balanced view of the home and host countries (Mirskey & Peretz, 2006, pp. 53-54). The person enters an ongoing, open-ended phase of exploration, learning, adaptation and resolution, where an intrapsychic reorganisation occurs simultaneously with the integration of interpersonal elements from the host country, to develop a more mature self-concept and undergo lasting personality changes (Gonsalves, 1992, p. 385; Mirsky & Peretz, 2006, pp. 53-54). According to Gonsalves (1992, p. 385), this restabilisation or reintegration phase usually occurs from the third (Mirskey & Kaushinsky, cited in Hener et al., 1997, p. 253) to the fifth year (Koranyi, cited in Hener et al., 1997, p. 253) after arrival, and the immigrant’s life is likely to return to normality after five to seven years, which allows him or her to function more effectively and independently (Hener et al.,
Immigrants become more accepting and tolerant towards cultural differences, their self-esteem and confidence grows, they feel more in control of their lives, and their productivity and involvement in the host society increases.

Owing to conflicting research results about the onset, pattern and outcome of psychological distress, it is important to view individual trends in the adaptation process to assess mental health risk in immigrants (Ritsner & Ponizovsky, 1999, pp.126-127). Ritsner et al. (cited in Ritsner & Ponizovsky, 1999, p.127) identified a “normal pattern”, with enduring low levels of distress, a “positive” pattern, with persistently moderate or decreasing levels of distress, and a “negative” pattern, characterised by persistently high or increasing levels of distress. Gonsalves (1992, p. 387) cautions that even after returning to normal life, delayed grieving and depression may occur and the person may struggle to come to terms with long-lasting personality changes. Ritsner and Ponizovsky (1999, p. 137) also highlight the possibility that psychological distress may follow a recurrent pattern, on the basis of the moderate elevation found in their study at the end of five years of settlement. They recommend that practical assistance and resources to strengthen immigrants’ coping strategies should be offered for at least the first two-and-a-half years after arrival (Ritsner & Ponizovsky, 1999, p. 137). Any unresolved issues during this adaptive process may remain dormant for years, but may resurface during family transitions (Gonsalves, 1992, p. 387), and these may be transmitted to the second generation in the form of intercultural and intergenerational conflict (Hulewat, 1996, p. 131; Sluzki, 1979, p. 6). The 2006 census indicated that approximately 27% of South African immigrants had been in New Zealand for less than ten years (Statistics New Zealand, cited in Ministry of Social Development, 2008, p. 16). The implication is that a large number of South African immigrants may require assistance for mental health problems to enhance their sense of well-being, as well as that of future generations.
Factors that influence the migration process

The migration process can be viewed from an ecological standpoint (Al-Baldawi, 2002; American Psychological Association, 2012; Bronfenbrenner, 1994, 1999; Deaux, cited in Awad, 2007; Johnson, 2007; Meares, 2007; Roer-Strier, 1996; Yakushko & Chronister, 2005): at the micro level (individuals and families), meso level (intergroup attitudes and immigration agencies), mega level (sociocultural and physical environment), macro level (economic factors) and exo level (government and political).

Migration is superimposed on the life journey and developmental processes of individuals, families and generations, and is embedded in the sociocultural processes and historical contexts of the places of origin and destination countries (King, 2002, p. 101). Rogler (1994, pp. 701-703, 707) provided a framework for directing research on international migration to include factors in the sending and receiving societies, such as the sociocultural and economic contexts, components of the migration experience, such as social networks, socioeconomic status and acculturation, as well as individual sociodemographic factors, such as age and gender. According to Rogler (1994, p. 702), migration involves three fundamental transitions: the dismantling and reconstruction of interpersonal social networks, removal from one socioeconomic system and insertion into another, and movement from one cultural system to another.

Acculturation involves changes in the immigrant’s inner and outer worlds, and occurs at a biological, psychological, sociocultural, economic and political level (Berry, 1997, p. 15). Hence, physical, sociocultural, socioeconomic and political contexts in the original and host countries, as well as the immigration policies, employment prospects and supportive networks in the host country, will affect the adjustment process (Berry, 1997, p. 15). In their study, Berry and Sam (cited in Berry 1997, p. 15) concluded that the process of acculturation
was similar for all groups, but that the course, level of difficulty and long-term psychological consequences for individual migrants could be highly variable. Each migrant’s unique acculturation experience was influenced by individual and social factors in the countries of origin and settlement, conditions that existed prior to migration and occurred during the process of acculturation, psychological reactions to perceived problems and cumulative stress, as well as the person’s perception of moderating influences, such as coping strategies and social support (Berry, 1997, p. 15; Ritsner & Ponizovsky, 1999, pp. 136-137; Van Coller, 2002, pp. 19-20). Hertz (cited in Hener et al., 1997, p. 252) contends that immigrants are at significant risk of developing adjustment-related psychosocial problems owing to the interpersonal and intrapersonal conflicts associated with immigration.

**Individual factors**

Patterns of acculturation and adaptation differ as a function of a person’s history in the home country and the living context in the host country (Coatsworth et al., 2005, p. 170). Individual pre-migration and post-migration moderating factors for acculturative stress include demographic variables, such as gender, birth order, age, ethnic, cultural and racial group, religion, language proficiency, level of education, marital, socioeconomic and health status, as well as the life stage or developmental stage of the immigrant (Berry, 1997, p. 15; Johnson, 2007, p. 1430; Kristal-Andersson, 2000, p. 19; Van Coller, 2002, pp. 28, 73). Important pre-migration factors to consider are the role and position the person held in society, childhood and traumatic experiences, migratory preparation, the motivation for immigration, legal migration status and the selection of the new country (Berry, 1997, p. 15; Johnson, 2007, p. 1430; Kristal-Andersson, 2000, p. 19; Van Coller, 2002, pp. 21-22). Personal needs, values, attitudes, perspectives and expectations, as well as temperament, personality traits, attachment, identity development, self-concept, self-esteem, intelligence,

Existing physical health problems, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse or other psychopathology pose a risk for successful adaptation, while language proficiency (Johnson, 2007, p. 1430, optimism, subjective well-being, life satisfaction (Davydov et al. 2010, pp. 9, 13) interpersonal trust (Nesdale et al., cited in Kristal-Andersson, 2000, p. 52), and an existential, evaluative worldview (Koltko-Rivera, 2004, pp. 5, 38) promote a positive settlement experience in the host society. Post-migration factors, such as social support, interaction with and the attitude of the receiving society can modulate immigrants’ level of distress (Ritsner & Ponizovsky, 1999, pp. 136-137). If there is a marked difference between the physical characteristics and body image of the immigrant and that of the majority of the population in the adoptive country, acceptance by the host society is slower and can lead to discrimination and a sense of inferiority and shame for the immigrant (Akhtar, 1999, pp. 27-28).

Ritsner, Ponizovsky, Nechamkin & Modai (2001, p. 151) asserted that gender is an important mediating factor in the evaluation of risk for the development of post-migration stress. Ritsner et al. (2001, pp. 151, 157) found that because of greater exposure to psychosocial stressors, Russian-born Jewish immigrant women in Israel, reported more family problems, uncertainty about their present life situation, anxiety about the future, dissatisfaction with climatic conditions and poor health status. They therefore experienced significantly higher levels of psychological distress, as well as depression, anxiety and obsessive symptoms than men (Ritsner et al., 2001, p. 151). Conversely, Akhtar (1999, pp. 29-30) maintains that women adapt better to immigration and their adjustment is more
grounded and satisfactory because they are more inclined to share their emotional experiences and thus receive more psychological support from their native counterparts than men. Motherhood transcends ethnic and national boundaries, which enables immigrant mothers to obtain information and assistance from local mothers (Akhtar, 1999, p. 30). Children also bring the culture of the adopted country into the family home, which helps to bridge the cultural gap (Akhtar, 1999, p. 30). According to Akhtar (1999, p. 30), a woman’s greater sense of commitment to relationships, her “nesting instinct” (Bowlby, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 30) and greater capacity for contentment also lead to acceptance and better adjustment in the new country. Russian-born Jewish immigrant men to Israel reported stronger motives for leaving their country of origin than women, resulting in greater commitment to the host country and higher levels of career competence (Ritsner et al., 2001, pp. 151, 158). Ritsner et al. (2001, p.158) suggest that these are stress-protective factors that increase resilience, which lowers the stress load and improves the sense of well-being in these immigrant men.

Because immigration is a destabilising process, the degree to which psychological structures have matured influences psychological adjustment (Akhtar, 1999, p. 11). Doghramji (cited in Akhtar, 1999, pp. 14-15) maintains that the best time to immigrate is when one is either young or old, but not in between. For the young child, parents and siblings play a more important role than society, and Doghramji (cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 14) contends that as long as the family emigrates together, the child’s primary support structure remains intact. During latency and early adolescence, the new culture can be assimilated into the identity structure in the same way as one would alter the foundations of a new house to accommodate last minute changes to the architectural plan (Doghramji, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 15). Transition for the older person occurs in the context of a stable cultural, religious and social identity, which allows some refurbishment, without altering the foundations of the ego.
structure (Doghramji, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 15). During middle and late adolescence, the cultural ego is in the construction phase, and emigration creates a situation similar to building a new house on an old foundation, which leads to confusion and a potentially poor fit (Doghramji, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 15).

Infants and toddlers rely heavily on their parents for support and are indirectly affected by their parents’ level of anxiety and destabilisation (Akhtar, 1999, pp. 11-12). Children usually have little control over the decision to emigrate, or to return to the country of origin, and may feel that the parents support each other in this decision without considering how it is affecting them (Akhtar, 1999, p. 12). Despite logical explanations being offered, the young child is generally at a loss to understand adult motives for relocating to a foreign country (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 113). According to Erikson (cited in Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989), the first task of the ego is to establish a sense of “basic confidence” (p. 114), which is highly dependent on the child’s relationship with the mother and her sense of personal confidence within her cultural framework. The migrating mother may lack self-confidence, or she may be in crisis because of the lack of sociocultural support structures (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 114).

Nevertheless, migration is likely to be less traumatic for a young child because the immediate environment consists of only a few people, and if the family unit emigrates simultaneously, the parents can act as a buffer in the new society (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 113). Children are inclined to imitate others, are more open to learning, and are better equipped than adults to assimilate a new language and customs (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 113). Children up to the age of 12 years seem to fit most easily into the new society by interacting with peers at school and on the sports field (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-9). They do not yet have preconceived ideas of what to expect and usually take things as they come (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-9). However, they are highly sensitive to the emotional
state of their parents and will react accordingly (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-9). A child’s principal needs are love, security and safety, but parents may find that their capacity to attend to their child’s needs is limited because of their own stress and worries (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-9).

Youth is generally regarded as the best and the worst age for migration, and studies have indicated that the greatest incidence of mental illness occurs in this age group (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 126). During this stage of life, the central problem is the consolidation of one’s identity, and factors such as whether migration was desired, whether it is undertaken alone or with the family, as well as the relationship of the young person with the family, should be taken into account (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 126-127). The adolescent immigrant is faced with the “second individuation” (Blos, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 12) developmental task, which involves a gradual disengagement from the parents to achieve independence. This process is often accompanied by dysregulation and confusion about identity, which is compensated for by an enduring peer group that can provide a context for trial identifications and developing autonomy (Akhtar, 1999, p. 12). The sudden loss of this cultural stage confronts the adolescent with a process of “double mourning” (Van Essen, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 13). According to Harrison and Nortje (2000, p. 13-11), South African teenagers seem to be the age group most at risk during immigration because they often resent the move and want to return to South Africa to resume their old lives. They have more difficulty settling down than parents or younger siblings because they place great value on friendships and find it difficult to leave those behind with whom they have formed strong bonds (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-11). However, once they settle down and establish a new circle of friends, they are usually the ones least likely to want to return to South Africa (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-11). Grinberg and Grinberg (1989, p. 127) confirm that adolescence makes it possible to undertake migration as part of a life adventure, allowing one
to discover new personal truths or to achieve admirable goals. It is best undertaken with others who can serve as a peer group and help to anchor the adolescent’s drifting sense of identity by offering camaraderie and containment (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 128).

Research on migrant youth in New Zealand, including South African immigrants, indicated that they experience more discrimination on the basis of ethnic or cultural background than their national peers, which has not decreased significantly over generations (Ward, 2008a, pp. 5, 21). According to this study, despite this disadvantage, the psychological adaptation of migrant youth was as good, or better, than their national peers and there were no significant differences in life satisfaction (Ward, 2008a, pp. 5). Migrant youth reported fewer symptoms of psychological distress, exhibited fewer behavioural problems and had better school adjustment (Ward, 2008a, pp. 22-24, 26). Psychological symptomatology did not vary across generations (Ward, 2008a, p. 5). Migrant youth had better social adaptation than their national peers, which gradually diminished over successive generations, but second-generation migrant youth still had better school adjustment and fewer behavioural problems than their national peers (Ward, 2008a, pp. 5, 26).

Young, adult immigrants are more flexible, have a more open attitude towards acculturation and integration, and experience less difficulty with a new language and adapting to the host society than older individuals (Ritsner & Ponizovsky, 2003, p. 139). Harrison and Nortje (2000, p. 13-9) believe that South Africans who emigrate in their twenties to mid-thirties will settle without much difficulty in New Zealand, because they find it easier to adapt to new ways of living and taking the risk of starting a new career. However, where young adults emigrate on their own, leaving their families behind in the belief that it will solve their problems, the lack of containment and support may precipitate psychosis, delinquency or drug use (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 127). Beiser (cited in Ritsner & Ponizovsky, 1999, p. 136) found higher levels and a longer duration of depression in
unmarried or unattached immigrants. Homosexual individuals may have a greater tendency to migrate owing to discrimination in their home country (Akhtar, 1999, p. 34). Some who have kept their homosexuality a secret because of sociocultural and family pressures may become more overt in their sexual preferences after settling down in a more accepting culture (Akhtar, 1999, p. 34). An increase in divorce may occur after immigration in homosexual individuals who have entered into heterosexual marriages in their homeland to meet social expectations (Akhtar, 1999, p. 34).

Some migrations can be regarded as manifestations of a so-called “midlife crisis” (Akhtar, 1999, p. 13). It may be a vain attempt at rejuvenation, to develop a latent talent, fulfil a postponed aspiration or discover new interests and creative outlets (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 128). Middle-aged migrants may have an acute awareness of diminishing physical capacities and their failure to achieve valued goals in the homeland, and may have a sense of urgency to “take the big step” before it is too late. According to Harrison and Nortje (2000, p. 13-9), South African immigrants in their late thirties to mid-fourties may find it more difficult to adapt because they have invested many years in building their careers in South Africa and may be overqualified for the New Zealand job market. Ritsner and Ponizovsky (1999, pp. 136-137) reported elevated levels of distress in immigrants over 40, which could be caused by adjustment difficulties, higher expectations and an inability to find suitable employment. According to Ritsner et al. (2001, p. 151), unemployment and the loss of professional and socioeconomic status may lower self-esteem and cause distress, depression and anxiety. Harrison and Nortje (2000, p. 13-9) add that this sector of the immigrant population is possibly more at risk of relationship breakdown and the disruption of family ties.

Bakker et al. (2004, p. 401) postulate that with increasing age, people become less extraverted, which can make social integration difficult, but they also become more
conscientious, agreeable, emotionally stable, mature and resilient. However, if it is true that every time we say goodbye we die a little, the older person who makes an involuntary migration dies a great deal (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 128). The elderly sometimes feel forced to migrate because of adverse circumstances or to accompany their children, but may find it difficult to give up everything that provided a sense of security and may be more vulnerable to stressful life events (Akhtar, 1999, p. 13; Ritsner & Ponizovsky 2003, p. 135). Their options and potential for growth and achievement are diminished, and they may find it humiliating to be dependent on their children in the new country (Akhtar, 1999, p. 13; Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 128). The elderly person faces a long list of problems: feeling isolated from lifelong friends; experiencing problems making new friends; decreasing independence and mobility; feeling useless and unappreciated; difficulties learning a new language; facing disapproval by children and grandchildren; experiencing medical problems; and having concerns about dying and being buried on foreign soil (Akhtar, 1999, p. 14). Hence another type of migration that occurs in old age is a return home by emigrants who have lived far from their native land for a long period, as a prelude to and acceptance of their impending death (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 128).

**Family factors**

The migratory unit may consist of a single person, a person with a companion or partner, a marital couple or a family. Migration causes ruptures between emigrants and their extended family network and, depending on the respective family system and individual perceptions of the move, these conflicts have varying repercussions (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 95). Some individuals rebel against social or family structures, and the decision to emigrate could be an act to assert their independence (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 95). While such a decision may be liberating, the disapproval of the family may cause
ambivalence about returning to the homeland owing to feelings of guilt or helplessness, and may affect the eventual outcome of the migration (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 95).

A sound marriage can help to alleviate migration stress, whereas a bad marriage contributes to the problems of immigration, and it is also affected by the temporal relationship between marriage and immigration as well as the ethnic and national origins of the marital partners (Akhtar, 1999, p. 31). A marriage that occurred long before migration can ease the turmoil of loss and adaptation, as long as the decision to migrate is mutual (Akhtar, 1999, p. 31). Marriage during the immediate pre-immigration period could be a hasty decision to avoid separation and loss from the partner, and can operate as a defense against mourning (Akhtar, 1999, p. 31). A marriage within 18 months after immigration may also be an attempt to ward off mourning and can put the marriage at risk (Akhtar, 1999, p. 31). A post-migration marriage that occurs after the mourning process and identity transformation have occurred has a more favourable outcome owing to a deeper knowledge and acceptance of self (Akhtar, 1999, p. 32). Marriage in one’s own ethnic group can be beneficial because it provides ongoing ethnolinguistic “refuelling” (p. 32), but it may keep the hope alive of returning to the home country one day, which impedes the mourning process (Akhtar, 1999, p. 32). Marriage to someone who was born in the adopted country can be enriching if both partners learn to appreciate each other’s cultural habits and rituals (Akhtar, 1999, p. 32).

Immigrant marital partners from two different cultures can utilise their new country to form a mutual bond (Akhtar, 1999, p. 32).

Trauma and separation of the family before and during migration, the stage in the life cycle of the family, support systems, the relationship and communication between the spouses, parenting methods, family dynamics and cohesion, rules, roles and boundaries, as well as norms and values in the family system are significant mediating factors in the adaptation process (Hulewat, 1996, p. 131; Johnson, 2007, p. 1430; Van Coller, 2002, pp. 38-
Families may vary in their hierarchical structure and the way in which power is distributed in terms of employment, income, authority and decision making (Berry, 2001, p. 627; Dion & Dion, 2001, p. 513). Age- and gender-based role behaviours and expectations are core ingredients of personal identities, and they shape and are shaped by the transitions of the migration experience (Rogler, 1994, p. 703). The conditions associated with immigration and settlement challenge gender-related expectations, responsibilities and behaviour, necessitating the renegotiation of roles in immigrant families, which could affect the marital relationship and family functioning (Berry, 2001, p. 627; Dion & Dion, 2001, p. 511). Boyd (cited in Dion & Dion, 2001, p. 512) found that unemployed women with lower levels of education and fewer labour market skills were vulnerable to negative psychological outcomes. Gore and Mangione (cited in Dion & Dion, 2001, p. 513) believe that employed women have better mental health, whereas Noh et al. (cited in Dion & Dion, 2001, p. 513) suggest that “role overload” can be stressful and lead to depression in employed women if they were also expected to fulfil their traditional roles, such as household and child care responsibilities.

Reyneke (2004, p. 213) describes New Zealand as a “feminist” society, in contrast to South Africa’s traditional patriarchal society, with the result that South African men are sometimes perceived as chauvinistic (p. 214). According to (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-6), South Africans tend to have a hierarchical family structure, and the man is accustomed to being the head of the household and making major decisions for the family. In New Zealand, South African families therefore have to establish new structural boundaries and ways of maintaining connectedness (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-8). Social pressure and employment opportunities in New Zealand require spouses to renegotiate the power balance and roles in the marriage, which may lead to marital conflict if they lack flexibility (Reyneke, 2004, p. 214). Reyneke (2004, p. 2) highlights the difficulties of South African men to
negotiate a new partnership role when their authority in the family is challenged by the more emancipated position of women and children in New Zealand society. After a few months in New Zealand, the man may feel that his power base is being eroded: his authority is challenged by his family and they are becoming corrupted by the New Zealand lifestyle (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-6). He may attempt in vain to re-establish traditional rules and norms, which compounds the problem and leads to feelings of despair and a conviction that emigration was a mistake (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-6). By this time, the children have usually become accustomed to their new-found sense of freedom and have settled into their new environment (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-6). When the possibility of returning to South Africa is raised, the father may be faced with a family rebellion that only exacerbates his sense of isolation and emotional turmoil (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-6). Feeling insecure, discontented and overwhelmed, men may react with stubborn bravado or aggressive behaviour in an effort to re-establish their position as head of the household, with escapism via hobbies, alcohol or sexual encounters, or by renouncing their marital relationships and responsibilities (Reyneke, 2004, p. 2). If the relationship with the spouse or children was somewhat tenuous beforehand, it could be rocked to its foundations by the emotional turmoil of emigration and integration in a new society (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-8). The pressures of adapting to a new culture can erode the marital relationship and lead to verbal and even physical abuse (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-8). South African men appear to be more prone to develop stress-related physical illnesses, such as heart disease, because they often lack the emotional skills to manage these challenges, and cultural norms make it difficult for them to request psychological assistance (Reyneke, 2004, p. 2).

According to Berry (2005, pp. 710-711), immigrant family members may adopt different acculturation strategies, leading to acculturative stress, estrangement, disengagement and alienation between family members, domestic violence or even
disintegration of the family structure. Immigrant parents may become anxious about their diminished authority in a more liberal society and may resort to autocratic rule or scapegoating, or encourage children to become autonomous at a very young age (Akhtar, 1999, p. 142). These parenting styles and lack of understanding may lead to difficulties during adolescence, when children start exerting their autonomy, rebel and strive to individuate from their parents (Akhtar, 1999, p. 142). First-generation adolescents face a double burden (Martinez; Mehta; Phinney et al., cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 143). They need to disengage from their parents and negotiate life’s challenges, but they are often not equipped to manage the cultural complexity of society and are reluctant to rebel against their parents because of their cultural vulnerability (Akhtar, 1999, p. 143). They feel too assimilated within the culture at large in comparison with their parents, but they are regarded as too ethnic by their peers (Akhtar, 1999, pp. 143-144). The conflicting values of parents and peers place an additional burden on the adolescent’s ego, making identity consolidation more difficult (Akhtar, 1999, p. 144). The identity of children who belong to minority groups and who do not have a strong sense of belonging to their parents’ country of origin can become fractured (Akhtar, 1999, p. 143). Sometimes, these adolescents create a “third reality” (p. 144), which is neither of the parents’ homeland nor of the adopted country, in an effort to bridge conflicting inner and outer realities (Akhtar, 1999, p. 145). Two problematic outcomes are the development of ethnocentric or alienated identities, since both cause considerable psychosocial turmoil during adolescence (Akhtar, 1999, p. 145).

Owing to changes in family structure and dynamics, children may also experience a loss of their childhood if they have to take on multiple roles, or where a reversal in traditional parent-child roles occurs, allowing little time to socialise with peers and leading to social isolation (Yeh, Kim, Pituc, & Atkins, 2008, pp. 40, 43). Immigrant youth may have to take on financial responsibility for their families, forcing them to be self-reliant and independent at an
early age and sometimes putting their own career plans on hold (Yeh et al., 2008, pp. 42-43). Changes in socioeconomic status may require parents to work long hours in low-wage jobs, which limits time for interaction between family members and leads to emotional distancing that impedes the cultural transition process (Qin, cited in Yeh et al., 2008, p. 42).

Marginalised parents may direct their energies towards community life in their ethnic group, focus on the academic and economic success of their children and rationalise their isolation and disconnection from the mainstream culture as their “sacrifice” for the next generation in the adopted land (Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 586).

However, their children have to master the mainstream culture in school and social activities, and departure from the values of their ethnic enclave is often regarded as familial and cultural betrayal (Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 586). Intergenerational conflict or conflict of loyalties towards family values, and the retention of their ethnic language and cultural traditions, lead to ethnocultural identity conflict in migrant youth (Barkhuizen, 2006; Lin; Stuart, cited in Ward, 2008b, p. 108). Children born in the new country usually have the right of citizenship, which can be a motivating factor for the family to make a commitment to a future in the adopted land (Akhtar, 1999, p. 26). However, if the children’s “local origin” (p. 26) and behaviour are experienced as threatening, the resulting ethnocultural conflict at home hinders mutual understanding and communication (Akhtar, 1999). The child who is born in the adopted country, and is raised without much of the parents’ original culture, can experience separation and detachment from the parents, as well as from their familial country of origin (Akhtar, 1999, p. 143). These children may not understand the culturally defined habits and traditions of their parents, such as issues involving respect and the nuances of their language (Akhtar, 1999, p. 143). This may result in conflicts between youth and parents that can only be resolved once the cultural gap has been bridged (Akhtar, 1999, p. 143).
According to King (2002, p. 97), women are the glue that holds an ethnic community together, which may consist of extended family, friends and neighbours. Young women from immigrant families are regarded as central figures for the continuation and transmission of traditional values and practices, which may lead to the monitoring and restriction of peer and romantic relationships (Dion & Dion, 2001, pp. 516-518, 520). These young women often feel torn between two competing socialisation demands: the need to achieve educational and career goals, versus the need to adhere to traditional values, customs and behaviour (Lee & Cochran, cited in Dion & Dion, 2001, p. 518). This is often a source of tension in immigrant families, and can lead to enmeshment of boundaries and isolation of the family from the culture at large as a protective strategy (Dion & Dion, 2001). Despite young women often wanting to disengage from their ethnic culture, there is also a longing for it (Akhtar, 1999, p. 144). However, a desperate search for ethnicity is often the result of deeper, unresolved conflicts and may indicate a need for parental love and approval (Akhtar, 1999, p. 144). However, it can foster a sense of pride in ethnocultural heritage for young women, leading to an increase in ethnocultural participation and enhancing ethnic identity and self-esteem (Dion & Dion, 2001, p. 518).

A secure attachment style, family cohesion and congruence, as well as the ability to problem solve and adapt are protective factors against identity conflict (Lin; Stuart, cited in Ward, 2008b, p. 108; Johnson, 2007, p. 1430). Effective parenting provides an emotional sanctuary for children, and promotes the development of a sense of belonging, self-esteem, and emotional well-being (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2003, p. 7). Parental competence in terms of sociocognitive abilities, stress management skills, impulse control and problem-solving abilities provide a supportive milieu (Johnson, 2007, p. 1430). Parents and peers play a vital role in fostering academic engagement and achievement (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2003). Parents support positive educational outcomes by valuing
the role of education, and having expectations for certain standards of behaviour and achievement (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2003). Parents with higher education levels and incomes are often in a position to provide their children with more opportunities and resources for education (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2003). Members of the extended family in the host country are also important sources of support (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2003).

Research on migrant youth in New Zealand indicates that family values remain largely unchanged over generations, although first generation migrants view parental obligations as more important than the second generation (Ward, 2008a, pp. 4-5, 25). According to this research, all migrant groups are less likely to endorse children’s rights, and more likely to endorse parental obligations than national youth (Ward, 2008a, pp. 4-5, 25). New Zealand provides a safer environment in which young people enjoy a lot more freedom than they had in South Africa (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 2-28). In contrast to the more authoritative or autocratic parenting styles of South Africans, New Zealand society encourages children to question, debate, explore and make their own decisions, instead of merely complying with the directives of authority figures (Reyneke, 2004, p. 217). South African parents find that their parenting style and child rearing practices are not congruent with the cultural norms of New Zealand. The anti-smacking law makes physical punishment illegal, and parents are often at a loss of how to effectively discipline their children or rebellious teenagers. Most South African children are accustomed to an education system that emphasises values, standards, diligence and discipline, and initially experience difficulties with the New Zealand school system, which is based on self-discipline, creativity and an enquiring mind (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, pp. 10-1, 10-2, 10-7). Generally, there is no religious or moral instruction in schools, unless the school is affiliated to a particular church or religion (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 10-9). It is commonplace for children to call adults
by their first names, and because of the lack of societal hierarchical structures respect for adults and authority has to be earned. Young people have access to “adult” privileges at an early age: at 16 they can leave school, marry, obtain a restricted driver’s licence and smoke cigarettes, and at the age of 18 they can vote and buy alcohol. Hence bullying and school truancy, unemployment, juvenile delinquency, “boy racers”, binge drinking, substance abuse, sexual promiscuity, unplanned pregnancies, depression, self-harm and suicidality among youth have become a source of considerable concern in New Zealand society.

Sociocultural factors

The greater the difference between the country of origin and the host country, the more difficult it is for the immigrant to adapt, for instance, moving from a sociocentric (collectivist) to an egocentric (individualistic) society (Akhtar, 1999, p. 20). Superficial similarities between cultures do not preclude psychological difficulties because the losses and disruption experienced by “invisible immigrants” are more subtle and disguised, which make them harder to acknowledge and manage (Akhtar, 1999, p.21). The ethnic attitudes, attitudes to immigration and cultural diversity, as well as support networks in the host country affect the adjustment process (Berry, 1997, p. 15).

Sociocultural differences between societies include clothing, food, language, music, humour, political ideologies, levels of autonomy and self-assertion, subjective experience of time and space, sexuality and communication between the sexes and generations. A cultural identity is a tapestry of meaning based on shared values, moral and ethical codes, attitudes, customs, beliefs and rituals. It involves implicit rules and agreements for behaviour, and provides a sense of self-worth and self-esteem. For instance, the degree to which body parts are allowed to be exposed, especially in public, differs between cultures and traditional clothing like the hijab worn by Muslim women can appear oppressive and restrictive to
Western societies (Akhtar, 1999, pp. 28-29). In many third world countries, a greater amount of physical contact between friends, say, hand-holding among young males, is commonplace without being mistaken for homosexuality (Akhtar, 1999, p. 35). Refraining from this source of support because of societal sanctions is an additional loss for these young, immigrant males (Akhtar, 1999, p. 35). Hence acceptance of multiculturalism by the host society, resources to facilitate accommodation, and the level of discrimination, prejudice and racism will play a key role in the acculturation strategy employed by the immigrant. Ethnic support networks, and the immigrant’s cultural intelligence or cross-cultural experience will facilitate integration into the new society.

Social relationships develop psychosocial and cultural competencies, and promote academic adaptation of immigrant youth by providing a sense of belonging, emotional support, practical assistance and information, cognitive guidance and positive feedback (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2003). Peers can support or discourage academic achievement by establishing norms for academic engagement and modelling particular academic behaviour (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2003, p. 8). Supportive relationships with other adults in the community, such as community leaders, teachers, church members or coaches, are important in the academic and social adaptation of immigrant adolescents, who are undergoing profound shifts in their sense of self, and are struggling to negotiate changes in their relationships with parents and peers (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2003, p. 8).

Reyneke (2004) describes New Zealand as a “classless” (p. 219) society where occupational roles and residential communities are not linked to a specific gender, socioeconomic status or ethnic group. The social interactional style is informal and first names are usually preferred over formal titles (Reyneke, 2004, p. 219). New Zealanders have a more relaxed attitude towards their work ethic and those who strive for excellence are confronted with the “tall poppy” system of disapproval (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 2-22). In
contrast to South Africa, where introductions are usually followed by questions about career, residential neighbourhood and motor vehicles, in New Zealand, the most common question for native citizens as well as immigrants is: “Where are you from”? In Māori culture it is common practice to introduce oneself via a “mihimihi”, which expands on one’s genealogy (whakapapa), geographic origins and social connections to assist others with establishing common bonds. New Zealanders’ dress sense is simple, comfortable and practical and they frown on a “too flash” wardrobe (Reyneke, 2004, p. 221).

In New Zealand, people are less suspicious and paranoid in their social and business lives because people generally interact with greater trust and integrity, for example, the “honesty boxes” at farm stalls where payment for goods is left in the absence of the vendor (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 2-26). New Zealanders are generally accommodating and avoid confrontation and conflict, and they therefore often misinterpret the more direct and assertive style of South Africans as arrogant, aggressive or pushy (Reyneke, 2004, p. 220). For instance, a South African employee who reacted with “I’m going to kill him” after a colleague had deleted an important document from her computer was met with consternation and desperate pleas from colleagues not to do anything irresponsible. New Zealanders also find South Africans’ “dark” sense of humour somewhat unpalatable. For instance, a well-known Tai Chi instructor had a little stoneware pot, labelled “ashes of problem students” on prominent display at his school, which elicited chuckles from fellow South Africans and horrified gasps from New Zealanders (Hennie Barnard, personal communication).

**Spiritual factors**

Hagan and Ebaugh (2003, p. 1159) hypothesise that migrants rely more on their spiritual beliefs when they have little control over a situation and the risks are high.
Spiritual beliefs influence various stages of the immigration process, including decision making, preparation, arrival, settlement and establishing transnational networks (Hagan & Ebaugh, 2003, pp. 1145, 1159). Spiritual resources, such as church attendance and religious practices, including prayer and the reading of sacred literature, can guide the decision to migrate and provide a sense of protection, as well as the psychological resilience to endure and find meaning in the hardships of migration (Aranda, 2008, p. 18; Hagan & Ebaugh, 2003, pp. 1146, 1150, 1159). Research has indicated that religious involvement improves life satisfaction by lowering psychological distress and decreasing symptoms of depression and anxiety (Aranda, 2008, p. 11). It also lessens the incidence of alcohol and drug abuse and dependence, and other high-risk behaviours (Aranda, 2008, pp. 11-12). Religion establishes a supportive network and provides opportunities for social interaction that can offer sources of comfort and affirmation (Aranda, 2008, pp. 11, 19). Spiritual and religious groups assist the settlement of new migrants by providing the opportunity for religious practice and interaction with more established residents who can link them to various social networks that can provide guidance and practical assistance, such as employment and housing, as well as health services (Hagan & Ebaugh, 2003, pp. 1156-1157).

A survey among New Zealanders determined that faith and church attendance was 21st on their list of “leisure activities” (Spoonley et al., cited in Reyneke, 2004, p. 222). The 2013 New Zealand census indicated that about 42% of the population do not have any religious affiliation, and youth are more likely to report having no religion (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). Reyneke (2004, p. 223) posits that the majority of New Zealanders focus on living their lives according to traditional religious norms, without feeling the need to endorse a formal religion. Greeff and Holtzkamp (2007, pp. 195, 198) reported that nearly 60% of South African migrant parents view religious beliefs and activities as a valuable family stress-buffering resource. Reyneke (2004, p. 322) concludes that for South African families
in New Zealand, an active religious faith provides a sense of continuity to maintain a stable identity, which contributes to a meaningful and successful adaptation to a new environment.

_Environmental factors_

Environmental factors that influence the migration process can be divided into biological, physical and contextual factors. Environmental conditions such as floods, droughts and famine can play a role in the decision to migrate (Afolayan, 2001). Immigration can involve the exposure to infectious diseases, such as malaria or tuberculosis, and nutritional imbalances can accentuate the vulnerability to autoimmune and psychosomatic disorders (Akhtar, 1999, p. 29). The country of origin and the host country can differ considerably with regard to physical factors, such as climate, seasons, landscape, wildlife, pollution levels, as well as exposure to natural disasters, for instance, earthquakes and tsunamis. New Zealand, also referred to as “Godzone” (Reyneke, 2004, p. 208), is portrayed as a country where the environment, air and water are clean and pure, population density is low and traffic congestion is less than in most developed countries (Reyneke, 2004, pp. 193). It has the unique geography of an island in the Pacific, characterised by an isolated locale, a fragile ecology, blue-green oceans, rapidly changing weather patterns, riveting cloud formations and rainbows, as well as frequent earthquakes, geothermal activity and active volcanoes (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 2-8; Reyneke, 2004, pp. 193-194). It is a “world within one country”, offering subtropical beaches, vineyards, fern forests, glaciers, snow-frosted mountains and ski slopes with easy accessibility from most cities and towns (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 2-8).

Social contextual factors, such as differences in population demographics, ethnic density, geographic mobility, lifestyle, community size, housing, living conditions, residential characteristics and safety of neighbourhoods may require considerable adaptation.
Public amenities such as roads, public transport, schools, banks, shopping malls, recreation and healthcare facilities and social services are crucial issues for immigrant settlement. Most studies on immigrant housing in industrial nations have focused on individuals and households from the lower socioeconomic strata of society (Johnston et al., 2005, pp. 402, 417). However, skilled, professional and business immigrants also have to adapt to a new housing system and may have little official or family assistance available in the new country (Johnston et al., 2005, p. 417). According to Johnston et al. (2005, p. 402), owning a house assists integration into the host society and is facilitated by a higher socioeconomic status and education level. Cultural background can affect a person’s housing experience and how he or she responds to the new environment (Johnston et al., 2005, p. 402). According to Johnston et al. (2005, pp. 406-407, 411), most South African immigrants start off in a hotel or motel, in temporary rental accommodation, or stay with friends or relatives before moving to a privately rented house, or buying their own property after about four years of residency. Most are fairly satisfied with their accommodation, but more than half report that it is not as good as what they had prior to immigrating to New Zealand (Johnston et al., 2005, p. 408). Some are concerned about the draughty, wooden houses that are commonplace in New Zealand and their predilection for the “leaky home syndrome”, but are unaware of their relative resilience to earthquakes (Johnston et al., 2005, p. 419). Over time, South Africans made structural changes to their houses to suit their needs and become more content with their homes and neighbourhoods (Johnston et al., 2005, pp. 418). After about four years in New Zealand, the majority feel that they have settled successfully and that they have made the right decision to immigrate to New Zealand (Johnston et al., 2005, p. 418).
Economic factors

Migration involves the movement from one socioeconomic system to another, exposing immigrants to a new hierarchical distribution of power, privilege and prestige, which has major effects on occupational, employment and socioeconomic status, as well as social class (Kohn et al., cited in Rogler, 1994, p. 705). Economic factors, such as gross national product per capita, income distribution, structural transformation and the human development index play a part in emigration dynamics (Afolayan, 2001). Intervening variables such as the world economy, regional economic cooperation and member country agreements are significant mediating factors (Afolayan 2001). According to Harrison and Nortje, 2000, p. 2-10), New Zealand has a strong sense of social justice, equal education and work opportunities for all, and an expensive, “cradle to the grave” social welfare system to provide for those who are unable or unwilling to work, resulting not only in low levels of abject poverty and crime, but also in a culture of dependency and a lack of self-responsibility. New Zealand is often referred to as the “nanny state” owing to the sense of entitlement of residents that the government should provide the essentials for daily living, as well as what many perceive as government interference in the way people manage their social and private lives.

For immigrants, occupational integration and participation at levels consistent with pre-migration training and employment permit incorporation into larger networks of social relationships (Rogler, 1994, p. 705). Today’s immigrants arrive at a time of widespread economic insecurity and a paucity of employment prospects, and may become targets for national hostility and discrimination owing to institutional systems (Rogler, 1994, p. 703). This can result in unemployment, underemployment and financial hardship. On arrival, immigrants often experience a downward shift in employment status, and must sometimes undertake employment that is qualitatively different from their educational background.
The bureaucratic processes faced by professional migrants constitute an institutional barrier that prevents them from utilising their professional qualifications and diverts human resources away from the goals of migration (Rogler, 1994, p. 705). Lerner, Kertes, and Zilber (2005, p. 1808) reported a downward mobility trend in immigrants with a high level of education and professional backgrounds, particularly for females. Some immigrants become “reluctant entrepreneurs” by downgrading from professional positions to set up small businesses (Rogler, 1994, p. 705).

According to Coates and Carr (2005), in New Zealand, job selection bias favours Australian and British immigrants over South African immigrants. They (2005, p. 590) propose that the reasons for this bias are the “recruit in own image” phenomenon - in other words, a higher perceived similarity between New Zealand and these two source countries, as well as the relative dominance of Australia and Britain owing to their socioeconomic position in the world (Coates & Carr, 2005, pp. 592-593). They (2005, p. 594) highlight the lack of research into more covert forms of selection bias, as well as post-selection bias or so-called “treatment discrimination”, which affects performance appraisals and internal promotions.

There is an inverse relationship between low socioeconomic status and mental health, partly because it amplifies the impact of social stressors (Rogler, 1994, p. 705). In their study, Lerner et al. (2005, p. 1812) reported that after five years, a gap still existed between immigrants’ hopes of occupational and financial success and their actual material conditions, resulting in disappointment and low self-esteem. By contrast, for those moving from a country where the large majority live in poverty, achieving financial gains in a more prosperous country can be accompanied by feelings of guilt about the hardships of those who stayed behind (Akhtar, 1999, p. 16).
Political and government factors

Significant factors in the host nation are the level of democracy, political freedom, human rights and the rights of minority groups (Afolyan, 2001). Migration is governed by political and historical forces, the changing structure of migration laws and the changing climate of public opinion and policy, interwoven with partisan political processes (Rogler, 1994, p. 703). The attitude of the host society towards immigrants, integration and immigration policies, the behaviour of government officials, as well as the waiting periods for work or residency visas affect the level of distress experienced by the immigrant. Migration laws that value the integrity of family networks endorse family reunification, and affect the size and demographic composition of international migrations (Rogler, 1994, p. 704).

The psychological outcome of immigration is improved by entering the host country with a legal migration status and the appropriate documentation. Persons regarded as illegal aliens often resort to surreptitious and often dangerous methods to enter a country, and as a result live with constant feelings of threat, unworthiness and shame, which make them vulnerable to exploitation (Akhtar, 1999, p. 33). Overstayers, whose visas have lapsed, as well as asylum seekers and refugees, who are allowed temporary shelter, frequently enter the underground labour force and remain underpaid and overworked, resulting in low self-esteem and anger (Akhtar, 1999, p. 33). Those who have left politically or territorially unstable countries often experienced violence, trauma and discrimination, and may continue hoping that their homeland will one day be liberated (Akhtar, 1999, p. 17). A marriage of convenience to obtain permanent residency can lead to feelings of exploitation, inferiority and shame (Akhtar, 1999, p. 33). An immigrant who marries someone from the homeland and brings his or her new partner to the host country creates the potential for exploitation or even abuse in the marriage while the new partner awaits permanent visa status (Prathikanti,
cited in Akhtar, 1999, pp. 33-34). Unfamiliarity with the local health and legal systems may limit the ability of vulnerable migrants to utilise police and medical services effectively and may increase their sense of isolation and helplessness (Gelfand, Remennick, & Ottenstein-Eisen, cited in Lerner et al., 2005, p. 1812).

New Zealand issues short-term work visas and permanent residency visas, uses a points system, and has four profiles for migrant selection, namely the skilled category, the business, investor or entrepreneur category, the family category and the humanitarian category (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, pp. 5-8, 5-9). Coming to grips with the complexity of New Zealand’s immigration policies and completing the documentation for permanent residency can be confusing and frustrating, despite assistance by immigration service personnel. Reputable and experienced immigration consultants, who are able to provide the correct guidance, submit comprehensive documentation and are in good standing with immigration officials, are worth their weight in gold. The legal and judicial systems in New Zealand are efficient and strive to ensure peace and stability, allowing South Africans to regain a sense of safety and personal freedom (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 2-11). However, disruptive and disorderly behaviour by youth, petty crime and gangs and a lucrative drug trade are becoming a cause for concern.

In chapter 3, the literature review is continued to explore migration-related stressors and their impact on migrant well-being, risk and protective factors, as well as coping strategies and resilience. Migrant settlement needs and international service provision are narrowed down to settlement programmes for migrants in New Zealand to guide pre- and post-migration assessment and intervention for South African immigrants in New Zealand.
CHAPTER 3

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF MIGRATION, COPING MECHANISMS
AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

In the greedy flim-flam
For two worlds, we have lost the one in hand ...
Like the fish who chose to live on a tree
We writhe in foolish agony ...
Our poets, mute, pace in the empty halls of our conversation.
The silk of our mother tongue banned from the fabric of our dreams ...
Proudly we mispronounce our own names,
And those of our monuments and our children.
Forsaking the gray abodes and sunken graves of
Our ancestors, we have come to live in
A world without seasons.
(Akhtar, 1999, p. 105)

Psychological impact of migration

In the first part of chapter 3, the psychological impact of immigration, migration-related stressors and their effect on mental health, coping strategies, and risk and protective factors are reviewed. Stress adaptation and resiliency models are also discussed. In the latter part of chapter 3, migrant settlement needs and international service provision are narrowed down to settlement programmes for migrants in New Zealand to guide the development of theoretical pre- and post-migration assessment (figure 1) and intervention frameworks (figure 2) for South African immigrants in New Zealand. The process of developing the theoretical immigration assessment and intervention frameworks is further discussed in chapter 4. In this
chapter, frequent reference is made to Grinberg and Grinberg (1989) as this publication provides a comprehensive overview of pre-migration stressors and the trauma of emigration, immigration and acculturation, as well as migration-related anxieties and the resultant emotional states. The authors pay attention to sociocultural contexts and explore the immigration process within a developmental framework. They differentiate between normal and pathological mourning, and focus on aspects of immigration that are often neglected, such as relationships with those who remain behind in the country of origin, threats to the identity, and personal transformation of the immigrant. Google Scholar listed 243 citations for this influential work by Grinberg and Grinberg (1989) in the field of immigration research. Poetry, mythology and metaphor, cited by Akhtar (1999), Gibran (1996), and Grinberg and Grinberg (1989), as well as traditional Maori concepts (Bowden, 2003; Department of Labour, 2008) resonated with the personal experiences of the researcher and eloquently put the core concept of a particular section in a nutshell.

A universal theme in myths and legends is of the intrepid traveller, who embarks on a mysterious, arduous and treacherous voyage to satisfy his curiosity, and is eventually bestowed with great powers and wealth (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 5). Classic migration narratives, such as Eden, Babel and Oedipus, illustrate the conflict between the human desire to migrate in search of knowledge and the prohibition of this quest (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 4). This conflict transforms the “search migration” (p. 4) to gain the deepest and most vital knowledge into a “punishment-expulsion-exile migration” (p. 4), which elicits confusion, pain, and isolation (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 5). The parable of Eden symbolises a birth process, which brings about differentiation, separation and loss, as well as anxiety, vulnerability and helplessness as a result of the loss of vital support structures (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 5). Abraham, who migrated in search of the Promised Land, was asked to give up what was most precious to him: to sacrifice his only son (Grinberg &
Grinberg, 1989, p. 6). Columbus, despite the importance of his discovery of the New World, died in poverty; abandoned and grief-stricken (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 7). It can be concluded that if the major life shifts of migration are worked through and mastered, they can provide opportunities for growth and development, but occasionally the migratory experience ends in tragedy for the emigrant or those left behind (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 70).

Immigration always involves a certain amount of culture shock and the consequent confusion and anxiety challenge the newcomer’s psychological stability (Akhtar, 1999, p. 77). Newcomers to a foreign land lack the “inner template” they had in the home country, as they do not have the same personal history and cultural experiences as the local inhabitants (Boesch, cited in Tannenbaum, 2007, p. 148). This unfamiliar and seemingly unstructured environment inhibits the person’s ability to anticipate and interpret events (Tannenbaum, 2007, p. 148). Grinberg and Grinberg (1989, p. 70) posit that as a result migration demands major psychological reconstruction, and this process of reinvention is associated with periods of disorganisation, frustration and pain. Mourning over the losses inherent in immigration, coupled with culture shock, causes a serious disruption in the individual’s identity (Akhtar, 1999, p. 77). This discontinuity of identity arises because the newcomer can no longer rely on the affirmation and validation of the home environment to sustain it (Akhtar, 1999, p. 77). The severity of the threats to an individual’s identity is analogous to the severity of concomitant mourning for what has been lost (Garza-Guerrero, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 77). Akhtar (1999) distinguishes four “metaphoric journeys” (p. 78) or interconnected tracks of identity change, involving an emotional (from love or hate to ambivalence), a spatial (from near or far to optimal distance), a temporal (from yesterday or tomorrow to today) and a social dimension (from yours or mine to ours).

Integration in a new cultural setting is painstakingly hard work, and is the culmination of successive and complementary steps in a developmental process (Grinberg & Grinberg,
At the outset, the predominant feelings are intense pain for all that was left behind or lost, deep-rooted loneliness, fear of the unknown and helplessness (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 97). Disorienting, paranoid and depressive anxieties may alternate, leaving the person prone to periods of disorganization (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 97). After a period of time, the immigrant starts to recognize feelings that were previously dissociated or denied because they were unbearable, and experiences nostalgia and sorrow for what was left behind in the homeland (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 97-98). Allowing themselves to mourn enables immigrants to slowly start incorporating elements of the new culture, and the interface between the inner and outer worlds becomes more permeable (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 98). Eventually, the immigrant rediscovers the pleasures of setting new goals and makes plans for a realistic future instead of yearning for a “lost paradise” (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 98). The past no longer interferes with living fully in the present, even though mourning for one’s native country is never altogether completed (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 98). By accepting both cultures, without having to renounce either, consolidation of an enriched, “remodelled identity” is achieved (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 89).

**Dislocation and uprooting**

There are few who have been so cursed
To wander all one’s life and never arrive at home.

(Aarif, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 86)

Since the 1990s, South Africa has undergone significant social changes that have caused fear because of the threatened loss of established social structures, personal values, living conditions and parts of the self which have been affected by these changes (Grinberg &
This has produced feelings of insecurity, increased feelings of isolation from the broader society and a weakened the sense of belonging (Grinberg & Grinberg 1989, p. 19) to the Rainbow nation. People’s resistance to such changes leads to migration to countries that may be geographically far away, but offer social conditions and characteristics similar to the country of origin, before the changes took place (Grinberg & Grinberg 1989, p. 19). This results in a “sedentary migration” (p. 9), namely breaking away from unwanted conditions in an attempt to recreate and preserve what is familiar and valued: to leave a place to be able to remain in the same place and be the same person (Grinberg & Grinberg 1989, p. 19).

Mandela (cited in Crush, 2002, p. 156) stated that South African emigrants were unpatriotic cowards - in other words, leaving the country was seen as a form of betrayal rather than responding to new opportunities in the global market. Friends, family, neighbours and colleagues may share this sentiment and regard emigrants as deserters or traitors. A person who decides to emigrate often elicits varying responses from those who are left behind: some congratulate, encourage or envy the person, others dissuade, oppose and criticise the person, and others again feel bewildered, depressed or anxious (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 62). Family members may accuse the emigrant of deserting or breaking up the family (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-3). The family may resort to emotional blackmail, such as subtle reminders of their age, vulnerability or ill health in an effort to manipulate the prospective emigrant to stay (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-3). South African emigrants often go through painful and wrenching farewells, and feel saddened at the thought that they may never see South Africa or their loved ones again (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-3). The resulting pain of separation may be experienced as a depressive mood or feelings of persecution, where the departure condemns the person to be a refugee or exile who is no longer loved and is being expelled from home (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 64). Some
attempt to counteract the pain of separation, or guilt for abandoning vulnerable relatives by denying their sorrow, or taking a superior stance and judging those who stayed behind as being in denial and lacking courage (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 64).

Upon arrival in a new country, the individual has an overriding need for a person or group in the new environment to provide connection and containment, to ease anxieties and enable the person to survive and reorganise from the state of ineptitude and confusion, similar to that of a child who is left alone and desperately searches for a familiar face in the crowd (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 76-77). To be met at the airport by a relative or friend provides a sense of familiarity and comfort, but newcomers who are left to their own devices will quickly experience the onset of confusion, disorientation and the fear of being all alone in a foreign land where they do not know anybody (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-3). First impressions have a lasting impact: a person, who shows interest, is polite or helpful makes the new migrant feel welcome, but any rebuff can make him or her feel insignificant, unwanted or rejected by the new country (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 77). Depending on the quality of the immigrant’s attachment to caregivers during early childhood, he or she may resort to defense mechanisms, such as denial and idealising certain aspects of the self, to manage conflicting and paranoid reactions (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 78). The new arrival must incorporate new, unfamiliar communication codes, which increase the ambiguities and contradictions in the information he or she receives (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 78), and he or she may feel perplexed and overwhelmed by the “jumbled messages”. However, according to Boesch (cited in Tannenbaum, 2007, p. 148), this lack of transparency may also lead to a sense of excitement and a willingness to explore and immerse oneself in another culture in order to expand one’s identity. New arrivals may live with friends for a while, but feel guilty about the intrusion into their lives and routine (Harrison & Nortje, 2000,
They may opt to “camp out” (p. 13-4) in a rental property until the container with their furniture arrives two or three months later (Harrison & Nortje, 2000).

Most immigrants experience a mixture of anxiety, sadness, pain and nostalgia, but they also have a sense of hope and expectation (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 9). Emotions tend to be expressed in relation to items needed for survival because this symbolises the earliest links with caregivers (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 79), and persons may nostalgically seek out the foods of their own country in the international section of supermarkets. The immigrant may take refuge in familiar food to ease anxiety, eat with co-nationals as a type of memory rite or eat compulsively in private in an attempt to fill the void of what has been lost (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 79). In the immediate post-migration period, dissociative mechanisms or splitting, such as idealising the new society and devaluing the home country, or vice versa, provide temporary protection against intolerable emotions and hopelessness in the face of overwhelming losses (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 9).

Immigration is a developmental crisis that brings about rupture, separation and uprooting (Kaes, cited in Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 13) - hence the term “transplant” (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 17) befits the sense of rootlessness, disconnection and dislocation experienced by new migrants. Durkheim (cited in Rogler, 1994, p. 705) postulates that a cohesive identity is a function of group cohesion, and that the interpersonal dislocation resulting from cross-cultural migrations challenges group cohesion by dismantling and rebuilding social bonds. These ruptures in sociocultural relationships pose a threat for the immigrant’s continuity of self (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 14; Rogler, 1994, p. 701), and according to Stonequist (cited in Rogler, 1994, p. 701), some immigrants experience adaptation to these changes as a “second birth”. The immigrant needs a “transitional period” and a “transitional place” where the “game” of migration can be explored and mastered (Grinberg, & Grinberg, 1989, p. 14). If the person fails to create this potential space, the
continuity between the self and the surroundings breaks down and the capacity to symbolise and be creative is diminished, which inhibits the capacity to overcome loss (Grinberg, & Grinberg, 1989, p. 14). The person reverts to more primitive defense mechanisms, resulting in diminished cultural awareness that inhibits adaptation and development (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 14).

Johnston et al. (2006, p. 1243) found that 43% of recent South African immigrants in New Zealand had experienced culture shock and 77% had experienced homesickness. South African immigrants bring different values, world views, belief systems and experiences, and attempt to fit them into the New Zealand environment (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-7). South Africans tend to arrive with a lot of emotional baggage as a result of the terrifying or life-threatening events they have experienced or because of vicarious exposure to trauma (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-7). They have a different and often tragic past, and find that New Zealanders are not interested or do not understand that they have taken enormous risks and made huge financial and other sacrifices to emigrate (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-7). South African immigrants are defensive about the political history of South Africa, and are resentful because they feel that circumstances have “driven” them out of the land of their birth (Harrison & Nortje, 2000p. 13-7). They find that New Zealanders have a poor grasp of the complexity of South Africa’s internal problems, and that they are unable to comprehend the fear, anger and despair that has been an integral part of their everyday life back home (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-7). In addition, they are accused of being spoilt opportunists, who are reliant on domestic workers and cannot cope with losing their privileged lifestyle as a result of the political changes in South Africa. According to Harrison and Nortje (2000, p. 13-7), the negative emotions experienced by South African immigrants are exacerbated by the erosion of their expectations after arrival, resulting in fears of “not making it” and having made a huge mistake in emigrating to New Zealand (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-7).
The immigrant’s difficulty separating from the home country is characterised by international phone calls, e-mails, frequent trips back home, taking gifts and returning with cultural mementos in an effort to “tether” himself or herself to the home country during the process of transition (Akhtar, 1999, p. 86). Immigration leads to consequences for a person’s sense of connectedness to a human and nonhuman environment, and people and places can differ so markedly that it may no longer be possible to have certain kinds of relationships or experiences (Denford, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 83). Because a person’s identity is constructed and grounded in these sociocultural and environmental relationships, the implication for the immigrant is that the person he or she used to be is no longer viable.

Loss and mourning

You will not depart, brother

Though you may leave.

(Díaz-Perez, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 95)

For many South Africans, emigration presents a roller coaster of emotions made more difficult by the traumatic emotional baggage, and concerns for the safety and well-being of loved ones left behind (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-1). Often they are so engrossed in the practicalities of organising their emigration that they do not have time to consider the emotional cost (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-2). Initially they experience a sense of euphoria or emotional numbness, but when the reality dawns on them that they are living in a foreign country among strangers, a profound sense of loss and disbelief sets in that elicits a shock wave of emotions (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-2). They may experience melancholia and an intense longing for contact with their homeland (Alsop, cited in
Tannenbaum, 2007, p. 148). They often become critical of New Zealand and begin to wonder if South Africa was really as bad as it had seemed (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-2).

The country of one’s birth has a special meaning because it provides one’s first experiences of the physical environment, social relationships and one’s sense of self (Alsop, cited in Tannenbaum, 2007, p. 148). Because all childhood experiences, memories and feelings are embedded in one’s own culture and language, they shape a person’s life and symbolic universe (Daschke, cited in Nikelly, 2004, p. 194; Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 90). Leaving’s one’s country of birth involves profound losses, such as loss of control, security, competence, familiarity, social status, an internal sense of harmony, cultural roots and historical continuity (Akhtar, 1999, pp. 5, 8; Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989). The person has to give up family and friends, social networks, lifestyle, familiar food, native language and music, traditional values, practices and social customs (Akhtar, 1999; Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989). His or her cultural identity is further challenged by labels assigned by the host society, such as minority, alien, refugee or immigrant (Alvarez, cited in Henry, Styles, & Biran, 2005, p. 110). The custom in some countries, such as the Unites States of America, to assign Western names to Chinese students represents a further loss of culture and identity (Yeh et al., 2008, p. 42).

According to Winnicott (cited in Tannenbaum, 2007, p. 148), the physical and cultural transitions of immigration, as well as the loss of the containment provided by the homeland, deprive the person of a sense of safety and connectedness to others. Immigrants lose their familiar patterns of being and relating to people (Marlin, cited in Henry et al., 2005, p. 110) and are required to relinquish parts of the self to facilitate integration in the host society (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 90). This loss of one’s “inner compass” may lead to feelings of anxiety, bitterness and anger, as well as losing a sense of purpose and direction in life (Berry; Ritsner & Ponizovsky, cited in Tannenbaum, 2007, p. 148). Immigration can also
alter people’s psychosocial relationship with animals, for instance, moving from a rurally based society to an industrialised nation, or having to leave a beloved pet behind (Akhtar, 1999, p. 38). Animals also play a prominent role in cultural metaphors, myths and literature (Akhtar, 1999, p. 38). The new country presents an unfamiliar landscape, new food, strange expressions, different political concerns, and unknown disasters and heroes (Akhtar, 1999, p. 5).

Splitting of the self occurs in response to external changes, where the immigrant is triangled between the idealised country of origin and the devalued new culture, and as a result loses the sense of continuity or self-sameness, consistency and coherence until a synthesis of these two self-presentations develops over time (Akhtar, 1999; Garza-Guerrero, cited in Walsh & Shulman, 2007, pp. 356, 366,). Grinberg and Grinberg (1989, pp. 87-88) equate the ambivalence an immigrant experiences regarding the home country and the adoptive country with the conflicting and shifting alliances experienced by a child whose parents are divorced. Culture, language and memories become superimposed and create confusion and anxiety (Akhtar, 1999, p. 79). For a considerable period after arrival in a new country, the immigrant resorts to a split between “mine” and “yours” in terms of customs, food, language, moral values and so on (Akhtar, 1999, p. 96). The person is inclined to idealise the country of origin and devalue the new culture the one day, and believing the opposite to be true the next day (Akhtar, 1999, p. 80). Splitting also affects the immigrant’s self-presentation, and what was once idealised can become devalued or shameful, and vice versa (Akhtar, 1999, p. 81).

Splitting acts as an adaptive defense in the early post-migration phase when attempts to integrate conflicting internal and external objects are too overwhelming, and early attempts at assimilation to avoid the distress of mourning may lead to lower mental health outcomes in the long term (Walsh & Shulman, 2007, pp. 367-368). However, if this temporary regression continues for extended periods, it may indicate an inability to cope, and can lead to symptoms
of psychopathology (Walsh & Shulman, 2007, p. 367). Pre-existing vulnerabilities, coupled with underlying guilt and excessive frustration, can lead to feelings of hatred for the country of origin as well as the country of adoption (Akhtar, 1999, pp. 81-82).

After the initial shock reaction, the ego tries to reorganise itself by gradually working through these losses (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 96). It requires a cognitive reorientation towards loss to fully acknowledge the changed reality (Bowlby; Main & Hesse, cited in Walsh & Shulman, 2007, p. 368). Processing loss is an active, conscious, “restitutive” process (Jacobson, cited in Walsh & Shulman, 2007, p. 369), based on a dialectical movement between regression and progression (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 96), resulting in a more mature, integrated and balanced self, a healthy adaptation and a reorganisation of a person’s life in a new culture (Walsh & Shulman, 2007, p. 369). It shares themes of deprivation, loss and vulnerability that are characteristic of other developmental crises, such as birth or adolescence (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 14). The extent to which the person is able to accept and mourn these internal and external losses will determine the degree of adjustment to life in the new country over time (Volkan, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 6). It is a long and arduous process that commences at the moment of loss, but it may start prior to emigration when the person contemplates the inevitable losses (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 96). Immigrants simultaneously mourn for lost people, places and belongings, as well as lost aspects of the self that was left behind, and they may not like the person they have become (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 96; Walsh & Shulman, 2007, p. 367).

Mourning is a complex, dynamic process involving all personality structures to overcome denial and other defensive mechanisms, and to experience the pain of loss and confront the challenges of the new environment, while maintaining contact with reality (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 67-68, 96.). During this process, the person may experience dreams that help to defuse anxiety and guilt (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 97). This
transition period provides opportunities for growth, but also increases the risk for mental
illness due to sudden imbalances brought about by significant losses (Grinberg & Grinberg,
1989, pp. 14, 96). Failure to complete the mourning process leads to a continuation of
multiple, conflicting, internalised models that indicates a lack of resolution (Walsh &

Migration losses usually stem from the trauma of being uprooted through involuntary
or voluntary removal from primary networks in the society of origin (Rogler, 1994, p. 704).
The pain and distress over these losses, coupled with anxiety and confusion owing to the
external and internal effects of culture shock, give rise to homesickness, nostalgia, grief,
mourning and bereavement (Akhtar, 1999, p. 6; Baskauskas; Furnham & Bochner, cited in
Rogler, 1994, p. 704). According to Grinberg and Grinberg (1989, pp. 64-65), the pain of this
psychic wound is difficult to describe: it has elements of anxiety, depression, sorrow and
anguish. They (1989, p. 65) describe it as a “primitive “ experience that lies on the border
between physical and mental, without being hypochondriacal or psychosomatic, and Joseph
(cited in Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 65) maintains that it contains the seeds for the
grieving process.

Hofer coined the word “nostalgia” from the Greek words nostos (return) and algos
(pain) to describe the sorrow from the unfulfilled wish of Swiss mercenaries to return to their
idealised homeland (Anspach, cited in Nikelly, 2004, p. 183). In the 18th century, nostalgia,
homesickness or “nervous prostration” was an acute physical illness, which in severe cases,
could result in the person physically “wasting away”, in insanity or even death (Rosen, cited
in Nikelly, 2004, p. 183). However, returning home resulted in a dramatic recovery of those
afflicted by this mysterious illness (Hofer, cited in Nikelly, 2004, p. 183). In the 20th century,
nostalgia was redefined as a psychological condition caused by the loss of established
patterns of relationships that sustain self-esteem, coupled with the psychological burden of
acculturative stress (Berry; Fisher; Howland, cited in Nikelly, 2004, p. 185). Nostalgia is characterised by psychological symptoms and somatic complaints (Berry & Kim, cited in Nikelly, 2004, p. 185) and may best be classified as an adjustment disorder with mixed anxiety and depressed mood, or as an acculturation difficulty (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

The immigrant is expected to make a determined effort to endure devastating feelings of sorrow for what was lost, while making equally resolute efforts to respond effectively to prevailing demands in the new society (Calvo, cited in Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 90). Personal integration is sustained by a stable environment and a sense of inner connection with significant others (Nikelly, 2004, p. 190). The disruption of separation and loss can be tolerated by internalising aspects of previous relationships, but lingering ambivalent feelings towards the loss of parents and the home country can destroy a person’s sense of community and the ability to cope with present demands (Gaines, cited in Nikelly, 2004, p. 190). Selective memories of life in the home country, however, can provide a thread of continuity, consistence and coherence that reaffirms personal identity, preserves self-worth, and provides a buffer against loss and disappointment, and the strength to cope with challenges (Howland; Wyatt, cited in Nikelly, 2004, p. 189).

Lax (cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 91) distinguishes between a lack of nostalgia or denial of loss, healthy nostalgia that facilitates adaptation, and poisoned or pathological nostalgia in those who live in exile. Bowlby (cited in Walsh & Shulman, 2007, p. 369) also identifies chronic mourning, which involves an intense and prolonged emotional response to loss and an inability to reorganise one’s life. Avoidance of nostalgia for lost elements of the home country initially protects new immigrants, who are unable to acknowledge the full extent of their loss, from being overwhelmed (Klein, cited in Henry et al., 2005, p. 111). Nostalgic yearning for an irretrievable past provides the temporary solace of an emotional security
blanket, and may serve as an adaptive strategy against loss (Nikelly, 2004, p. 185; Volkan, cited in Walsh & Shulman, 2007, p. 357). However, the person who clings to nostalgic memories of a “lost paradise” (p. 94) to deny his or her losses, ruminates about “if only” (p. 90) or fantasises about “someday” (p. 94) becomes frozen in time, resulting in a “temporal fracture” (p. 94) or discontinuity of the psyche that blocks development and growth (Akhtar, 1999; Walsh & Shulman, 2007, p. 357). Prolonged defensive attempts to avoid the pain of conscious grieving (Bowlby, cited in Walsh & Shulman, 2007, p. 369) prevent effective coping with the emotional impact of loss, and may lead to an artificial adjustment to the host country (Marlin, cited Henry et al., 2005, p. 111). A “false self” (p. 364) may develop, where a thin veneer of superficial resolution covers inverted splits in the self (Walsh & Shulman, 2007, p. 369). The lives of these individuals appear to be organised, but they may experience physiological symptoms and interpersonal difficulties because the cognitive and emotional aspects of mourning have become disconnected from causative losses (Bowlby, cited in Walsh & Shulman, 2007, p. 369). These individuals cling to unchanged models of themselves and the world that are not in line with reality, and this may precipitate more serious psychological problems such as social isolation and depression (Henry et al., 2005, p. 110) or anxiety and obsessive tendencies (Walsh & Shulman, 2007, pp. 364, 366).

The trauma associated with migration can cause pathological alterations in self-experience, where damage or shattering of the self can lead to symptoms of mental disorders (Arlow; Ulman & Brothers, cited in Walsh & Shulman, 2007, p. 357). The experiences encountered during the mourning process are painful and may lead to anxiety, depression, hostility and paranoia because of a subjective feeling of damage to the self (Walsh & Shulman, 2007, pp. 362, 368). However, Walsh and Shulman (2007, p. 362) found that premature attempts to resolve splits in the self in the first year after migration result in more symptomatic behaviour, instead of being a protective factor. They conclude that the
regressive defense mechanisms of splitting allow the person to experience pain and
disappointment in the new country and to mourn the lost parts of the self, which allows better
reflection and integration of these splits (pp. 362, 367). Initially this person may experience
relatively high levels of psychological symptoms, but these symptoms decrease significantly
after one year and may be more beneficial for the individual in the long run (Walsh &

The country that is left voluntarily is usually idealised and the loss can be mourned,
while the one from which one was banished is often devalued and remains unmourned in the
mind (Akhtar, 1999, p. 9). Immigrants may experience “separation guilt” or “survivor’s
guilt”, especially when emigrating from socioeconomically disadvantaged and politically
unstable countries (Akhtar, 1999, p. 83). Refugees or exiles may be cynical about the country
of origin and experience feelings of guilt, anger and shame about being discarded by their
own people, which contaminate positive memories of the past (Akhtar, 1999, p. 91). This
lack of retrospective idealisation of the homeland deprives the person of a buffer against the
frustrations of life in the new country (Akhtar, 1999, p. 92). A sudden departure deprives the
person of a “rite of farewell” (Grinberg and Grinberg, 1989, p. 157) and precludes
anticipatory mourning and “emotional refuelling” (Akhtar, 1999 p. 92) via contact with the
homeland, which complicates subsequent adaptation. According to Akhtar (1999, p. 92),
individuals who leave their home country involuntarily find themselves in a state of
intrapsychic exile or “poisoned nostalgia”, where the sweet element of nostalgia is lost,
leaving nothing but bitterness. Pathological mourning may result from persecutory guilt,
resulting in somatisation, melancholy or psychosis (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 68).

South African immigrants may feel angry about being “forced” ((Harrison & Nortje,
2000, p. 13-2) to leave their country of birth, and experience guilt about leaving friends and
loved ones behind to face a situation of fear and insecurity. They may feel overwhelmed by
the acute pain of their dislocation, and as a result develop clinical signs of depression (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-2). Pain and anger about lost parts of the self can aggravate or derail the mourning process (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 68). Accepting a lower-paid job or doing tedious work, such as cleaning homes just to make ends meet, or being unemployed, can be devastating to the ego and place huge demands on the inner strength of the individual (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-5). Because women find social networking easier than men, they may be more capable of tolerating the stress and pain of immigration (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, pp. 13-5, 13-6). However, if they are resentful about immigrating, pine for friends and family back home and make little effort to integrate, they may find the “immigration blues” (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-6) harder to endure than their husbands.

The reactions of those who remain behind when friends and family emigrate depend on the quality and strength of their relationships, but there is an inevitable sense of loss, betrayal and abandonment (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 67, 70). They may negate or underestimate the impact of separation, or feel annoyed about the departing person’s lack of consideration towards them (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 70). They may be overcome by a sense of emptiness and sorrow, or may experience hostility and blame the departing individuals for the suffering they caused (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 67-68). Friends, who may also secretly contemplate leaving the homeland, may use the emigrant as a scapegoat for their hostility, envy, fears and guilt (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 69). Sometimes children temporarily remain behind when their parents emigrate, and may develop somatic complaints or nightmares after the parents’ departure or upon their return (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 71-72).

When adult children emigrate, parents and older members of the family may view themselves as the “orphans” who were left behind (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-3). Hypochondriacal and psychosomatic symptoms that appear shortly after a significant
person’s departure may be an attempt at controlling the absent person (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 70). If circumstances preclude a rapid return trip, the separation is experienced as the death of a loved one and the person may also fear that his or her own death is imminent (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 68). Sometimes returning home is necessitated by the sudden illness or death of a family member, which adds to the distress and guilt the emigrant is experiencing. Immigrants may feel that they have died in the eyes of those with whom they had close and longstanding bonds, because attempts at ongoing contact may be ignored or rebuffed, or practical support may suddenly be withdrawn (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 67). This creates feelings of abandonment, betrayal and humiliation, and emigrants may start to doubt their perception of reality in terms of the reliability of sociocultural support and the quality of their interpersonal relationships. If trusted bonds with family and valued friends in the home country prove to be so tenuous, the new immigrant becomes distrustful and may be reluctant to make an effort to build relationships with co-nationals or people from other cultural groups in the adopted country.

Loneliness and alienation

O Ghalib, with what audacity do you complain of being in a strange land?
Have you forgotten the callousness of friends at home?

(Ghalib, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 91)

Immigration triggers childhood feelings of frustration and exclusion relating to parents’ marital relationship or peer group relationships, as the members of the new community have bonds with each other and share a language, memories, experiences and knowledge of daily life from which the newcomer is excluded (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 23). According to Winnicot (cited in Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 22), the ability to
separate from and let go of what is familiar is the most important characteristic of emotional maturity. Developing a sense of belonging is a prerequisite for becoming integrated into a new country and for maintaining a sense of identity (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 23). The person who is able to tolerate being alone is in a better position to deal with the losses of emigration and being regarded as an outsider during the early stages of settling into a new environment (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 23).

The new arrival has been displaced from the world that was left behind and is still regarded as a foreigner by the new society (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 23). The person, who is confronted with the fear of losing established structures and familiarity with prescribed rules for social behaviour, experiences feelings of insecurity, vulnerability, loneliness and alienation (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 59). Individuals with a predisposition for loneliness will find that their problems become exacerbated during migration, because the migratory experience accentuates feelings of estrangement and isolation (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 23). Klein (cited in Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 23) notes that the feeling of loneliness is based on an experience of incompleteness, which originates from a lack of personal integration, and a sense that some dissociated and projected parts of the self are irretrievably lost. This contributes to a sense of having “something missing inside” and not fitting in anywhere or with anyone, which creates feelings of perpetual homelessness (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 23). Lerner et al. (2005, p. 1811) found that among immigrants, feelings of being uprooted and alienated can last longer than five years and they may experience an ongoing sense of being lost or adrift.

A major problem confronting the immigrant is how to find a place in the new community, acquire a new social position and regain the previously held professional status (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 90). The newcomer may be regarded as an unwelcome intruder or invader who deprives the natives of economic opportunities and scarce life
resources, resulting in prejudice, discrimination, hostility and xenophobia (Akhtar, 1999, p. 23). Being an “outsider” or a “stranger” who is regarded as an unequal member of society without social support, the immigrant feels small, powerless and subordinate, and that he or she faces a bleak future (Nikelly, 2004, p. 185). The person may feel intimidated, fearful, isolated and alienated, and may perceive the new environment as repulsive, sinister and hostile (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 62-63). A failure to resolve the differences between the ethnic self-representation and the new self-presentation as a resident of the adopted country may result in ethnocentric withdrawal or counterphobic assimilation (Akhtar, 1999, p. 87). The person becomes suspicious of the motives of others, viewing himself or herself as an innocent victim or target, and others as the persecutor or the enemy (Akhtar, 1999, p. 89). The response is mistrust, fear, rage or callousness and the person may become a social recluse or hermit (Akhtar, 1999, p. 89). Being excluded and becoming anonymous exacerbate feelings of insecurity, loneliness and isolation, and as the person cannot depend on the supportive milieu of the homeland during the grieving process, feelings of depression may result (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 90).

In the early stages of migration, the new arrival’s mind is more occupied with the people and places left behind than with what confronts him or her in the new country (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 79). Gradually the person engages in a new lifestyle and with new people, and those who stayed behind also move on with their lives (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 79). The lengthy and frequent phone calls and e-mails slow to a trickle, which signifies mutual distancing (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 79). As a result, friends and family in the homeland, as well as the person who emigrated, may feel neglected, forgotten or discarded.
Doubt and disillusionment

The pinnacle of inhumanity is to strip a man of his identity, to delete his history, to invalidate his culture, to nullify his wisdom, to silence his voice, to ignore his presence, and then to condemn him to a perpetual existence of being an invisible guest at your table, as the hallmark of your tolerance and hospitality.

The initial conflict and splitting between the “good” and “bad” elements of the old and the new country eventually break down, resulting in ambiguity, confusion and anxiety. Individuals cannot distinguish between friends and adversaries, where they may succeed or fail, how to separate the useful from the harmful, and what they love or hate (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 9). Owing to the lack of stability and significant losses of migration, immigrants may respond with disorientation and disorganisation when they are faced with challenges in their new environment (Henry et al., 2005, pp. 110, 117). Losing their cultural “safety blanket” threatens their sense of security because the world becomes an unpredictable place. Since they can no longer rely on their culturally based assumptions, this interferes with their ability to make decisions, resulting in uncertainty and procrastination (Murray, cited in Henry et al., 2005, p. 110). The person feels incompetent and experiences feelings of guilt and shame about their perceived failure, which causes an injury to their sense of pride, self-respect and self-esteem (Walsh & Shulman, 2007, pp. 361, 368). Feeling confused, unwanted, different or not understood gives rise to a lack of belonging, helplessness and sometimes depression (Walsh & Shulman, 2007, pp. 361, 368).

The reaction of members of the new community towards the new immigrant will have a huge influence on how well he or she settles in and adapts (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 81). Not only is the identity of the emigrant endangered, but the receiving community may
also feel that its cultural and group identity, beliefs and the purity of its language are compromised (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 81). Newcomers can destabilise existing group structures, and their presence may raise questions about the community’s moral and political guidelines (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 81). The natives will thus scrutinise the “rebel” and the “leper” in their midst to make an evaluation of the potential threat in an effort to neutralise or expel the hazard (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 81). Excessive rigidity or fearfulness owing to perceived threats will impede healthy adaptation, but if each side has sufficient flexibility, it will allow incorporation of the “new element” into society (Bion, cited in Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 82).

The immigrant’s attitude, personality and conduct may confirm or modify the group’s expectations and first impressions (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 83). The immigrant gains confidence to approach others if they treat him or her with dignity and respect, but if they reject his or her presence, the immigrant will view the natives as opponents (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 83). The immigrant may then conclude that he or she is an unwanted stranger, who is a nuisance and a trouble maker (Kafka, cited in Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 83). The other message to the newcomer is: “Never forget that you are the most ignorant person in the village” and that you have to be forever vigilant (Kafka, cited in Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 84). Hostility may manifest in subtle ways, such as disregard, disrespect, disdain, contempt or ostracism: avoiding communication with foreigners or ignoring them when they speak; pretending not to understand them; accentuating linguistic differences; laughing at them or telling them off when they make errors; using local expressions that they do not understand; excluding the foreigner from conversation by referring to events and people that belong to the host’s history and tradition; or using denigrating names or nicknames for foreigners (Grinberg, & Grinberg, 1989, p. 84).
Some South African children may be confronted with unexpected prejudice from their New Zealand peers and teachers, for instance, being called “Japies” or “racists” (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-11). In the workplace, they face the paradox of having to prove themselves to a new employer, but their ambitious and diligent work ethic is often interpreted as arrogance, confrontation or aggression. South Africans may encounter accusations that “no South African can be trusted”, allegations that they will be more prone to abusive behaviour or violent crimes owing to their political history, or they may have to contend with labels such as “thick-necked Boer” (pronounced Boor), with proclivities that are “just part of that Germanic thing”. When attending employment-mandated workshops relating to the Treaty of Waitangi or cultural awareness, marches against apartheid and the 1981 Springbok tour are brought up, and the South African immigrant may find that he or she is singled out among the attendees as the “token racist offender”. Immigrants may react with an increased sense of persecution, anger, cynicism and bitterness because many have emigrated to escape from a dangerous and violent environment, but ironically they are now confronted with new forms of interpersonal violence. After making considerable sacrifices, South Africans often do not experience the reception they had hoped for and that is required for successful adaptation (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 84). Even though people are usually able to maintain internal consistency, despite changes in the external environment, if the changes occurring in everyday life become intolerable, the view of the outside world and the person’s identity are thrown into disarray, causing high levels of distress and anxiety (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 59).

The extent to which a person’s original psychosocial roles can be resumed after immigration affects the integration process and psychological adaptation (Akhtar, 1999, p. 25). Maintaining one’s professional identity, when other aspects of the self are challenged, provides a sense of “inner continuity” (Lichtenstein, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 25). If the
immigrant cannot resume the vocation practised in the homeland or has to accept employment of a lower status or remuneration, low self-esteem, self-doubt and cynicism are frequently experienced (Akhtar, 1999, p. 25). In the workplace, immigrant employees may be perplexed about the lack of validation and respect for their experience, abilities and contributions, putting their academic qualifications and competence in disrepute. Owing to a dismissive stance by people in the workplace, the person may end up feeling inferior to colleagues, resulting in a sense of dis-ability, shame, unworthiness and uselessness. The result is that an individual starts doubting his or her previous abilities and feels like a fake and a fraud, who has been disgraced and is in danger of being evicted. According to Akhtar (1999, p. 25), feeling competent and valuable are essential elements for a meaningful life, but the person who becomes vocationally disabled will perish psychologically.

Immigrants’ paranoid anxieties (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 87) can give way to a depressive stance, where they have to recognise their shortcomings and failures in the new environment, and hence experience a sense of disillusionment about their own abilities and significance. The immigrant turns to friends and family in the home country for solace and support, only to be snubbed with a “cold shoulder” and “I-told-you-so” attitude. The person ends up feeling like a fool for emigrating and striving for a better future. The excommunicated emigrant has now become an outcast that has been renounced and forsaken by his or her last source of comfort, and realises how utterly dispensable he or she is in the world (Akhtar, 1999). To prevent being overwhelmed by catastrophic anxiety, the person may experience somatic complaints, phobic symptoms or nightmares (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 11). The accumulated traumatic events of migration may breach the psychological barrier to overstimulation, which threatens the integrity of the personality, and its effects run deep and are long lasting (Freud, cited in Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 11-12).
Despair and identity crisis

You are not from the Castle,
you are not from the village,
you aren’t anything.
Kafka, cited in Akhtar (1999, p. 23)

According to Blos (cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 77), the psychological turmoil of immigration is comparable with the “second individuation” process of adolescence and contains elements of the first individuation phase, namely the separation-individuation phase of childhood (Mahler, et al. cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 78). However, the transformation and adaptation that result from immigration in those who migrate after adolescence are more subtle and complex because significant psychic structuralisation has already occurred (Akhtar, 1999, p. 78). Migration is one of life’s emergencies that exposes the individual to a state of disorganisation because of anxiety resulting from this stressful situation, and the person’s capacity to reorganise fairly quickly can predict the success or failure of the migration journey (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 15). However, Bowlby cautions that the disorganisation resulting from these losses may persist for a considerable time (cited in Henry et al., 2005, p. 111). Immigrants coping with immigration-related losses may experience chronic grief reactions, without a reduction in the intensity and range of emotions experienced during the initial period following the loss (Rando, cited in Henry et al., 2005, p. 111). This prolonged grief may result in feelings of discouragement, helplessness, defeat and despair, which could trigger clinical depression that could paralyse the immigrant and jeopardise his or her adjustment to the new country (Henry et al., 2005, pp. 111, 115).

Owing to the fact that the immigrant loses most of the roles he or she played in the community as a member of a profession, the work force or a circle of friends (Grinberg &
Grinberg, 1989, p. 133), moving to a new country can disrupt his or her sense of continuity, confirmation and consistency, which poses a threat to the identity (Walsh & Shulman, 2007, p. 356). For South Africans, emigrating is a “letting go” process: a relinquishing of the past, a personal history, and dreams of having a future in the new South Africa (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p13-7). The status and reputation they enjoyed in South Africa, and the promise of the land of milk and honey that brought their ancestors to their beloved homeland, have come to an end (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-7). They do not feel that they will ever be New Zealanders and they are no longer South Africans, which then begs the questions: “what are they” and “who are they” (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-7)?

Immigrants often have to relinquish their native language in favour of a new language, and they live in two linguistic worlds that result in “lexical cleavage” (p. 99), namely switching languages between work and home life and pronouncing their names two different ways (Akhtar, 1999, p. 98). For instance, the surname of Irene van Dyk, the South African-born netball player, is still pronounced in the New Zealand media as “vên Dike” despite the fact that she has been in the country for a number of years. It is tiring to converse in a language other than one’s mother tongue, and a new language learnt in later life does not have the emotional connotation of languages acquired during childhood (Akhtar, 1999, pp. 98, 101). Kristeva (cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 99) equates this with trying to express yourself by using algebra, where your mother tongue is “carried within you like a handicapped child, loved but useless”. This polyglottism leads to a linguistically lacerated self (p. 100) and contributes to the splitting of self-representations (Akhtar, 1999, p. 98).

Immigrants’ accents or lack of language fluency often triggers the “perpetual foreigner syndrome” (Wu, cited in Yeh et al., 2008, p. 43), which includes “microagressions” (p. 43), such as everyday slights or insults (Sue et al., cited in Yeh et al., 2008), as well as alienation and feelings of invisibility, where a person’s qualities, talents, abilities and self-
worth are ignored or negated because of prejudice. In an effort to neutralise and eliminate the alien presence that poses a threat to their way of life, local inhabitants end up dehumanising the immigrant by denying his or her status as a person or “someone”, and thereby reducing him or her to an inanimate object or “something” (Kafka, cited in Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 84). They assault and dismantle the newcomer’s identity, and gradually the person’s selfhood disintegrates and dissolves into a state of “non-identity” or being “nobody”. This annulment permits the local inhabitants to react to strangers as if they were “nothing”, to the point of ignoring or negating their existence (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 83-84).

This annihilation of the newcomer’s personal identity leaves him or her in a state of “emptiness” or an existential vacuum, also called the “dark night of the self” (Hale, 1992, p. 66). Immigrants, realising that life continues as if they are obsolete and superfluous, feel dead in the eyes of everyone, including their family and close friends (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 61). The person feels like a wandering ghost who is aware of others, but feels disregarded or invisible to society at large (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 61). The immigrant is exiled to a position of being a faceless castaway who remains adrift on a flimsy life raft on the turbulent oceans of life: redundant, extinct and forgotten. The perception that nobody is able to understand the intensity of this pain, or that people are indifferent to their suffering can drive people to despair or suicide (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 61). These individuals feel “suspended in time” (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 61) while they are treading water to stay alive, stuck in a paradoxical no man’s land where they are unable to go back and lack the strength or ability to move forward.

Throughout a person’s development there are many situations that threaten the integrity of self and expose him or her to painful, harmful experiences or partial losses, which can create feelings of anxiety and depression (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 93). The same defense mechanisms used by the person to fight these emotions can sometimes compromise
the structure and integration of the psyche, leading to debilitating symptoms (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 93). During mourning, a simultaneous loss of parts of the self accompanies the person’s sorrow for other lost objects associated with the homeland (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 93). The desire to make oneself complete by recovering the lost aspects of the self is at the heart of working through the self-mourning process (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 93). One immigrant aptly described his fractured sense of self as follows: “I have the sensation of having moved through life with an open suitcase, scattering things as I went ... Now I’d like to pick up whatever pieces I can” (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 93). If immigrants work through a depression with constructive results, they are more likely to experience and apply reparatory tendencies towards objects (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 97). During this process of self-reconstruction, if individuals work successfully through the period of mourning for themselves and for lost objects, this encourages the progressive reestablishment of their sense of identity (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 97).

Renewal and transmutation

I te kore, ki te po, ki te ao maarama.

“Out of the nothingness, into the night, into the world of light”

(Bowden, 2003, p. 11).

According to Akhtar (1999, p. 106), repairing the splits in the self and the external world via the mourning-liberation process can lead to a rebirth and the emergence of a reconsolidated, hybrid identity, which results in a “contextually resilient confederation of self-presentations”. Gradually, a synthesis of two self-representations occurs, which requires adequate support for growth, several experiences of achieving success and a positive balance
between acceptance and rejection (Casement; Wolf, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 83). The assimilation model (Stiles, cited in Henry et al., 2005, pp. 109-110) provides a framework to explore the disconnected experiences of migration and integrate them into the person’s current thinking and behaviour to provide a sense of continuity. According to the continuing bonds model of mourning (Silverman & Klass, cited in Henry et al., 2005, p. 109), immigrants preserve cultural elements of their home country to facilitate adjustment by incorporating them into the structure of their new lives (Henry et al., 2005, pp. 109-110). The cultural repertoire of immigrants expands as they construct a transcendent identity that contains elements from both host and native cultures, but is not limited by them (Henry et al., 2005, pp. 113). Instead of abandoning their emotional attachment to previous cultural elements, the continuing bond with the lost culture becomes an essential part of the mourner’s experience, where it is a source of comfort and provides resources to facilitate problem solving and adjustment to the realities of the new county (Henry et al., 2005, pp. 109, 111).

This developmental path does not have a clear end-point as the identity changes of immigration continue to evolve throughout the life span (Akhtar, 1999, p. 102). Instead of a love-hate split, a tolerance for ambivalence towards both countries develops, allowing a “hyphenated identity” to emerge, which may lack the depth of historical anchoring, but possesses a great breadth of experience (Akhtar, 1999, p. 83). To the extent that the immigrant has worked through the sorrows of migration, he or she begins to feel like an integrated member of the new environment and lives among others with his or her own particular language, customs and culture (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 97). The person maintains a positive and stable link to the home country, without having to reject the old in order to accept, and be accepted by the new (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 97).
The person gradually ceases over-idealisation of the homeland to achieve a state of healthy psychic functioning, where past and future do not replace today, but enrich it instead (Akhtar, 1999, p. 95). The immigrant moves away from a “mine-yours” duality and develops mutual interests with the residents of the host nation, which includes starting to enjoy the music, movies and literature of the new country. He or she is comfortable to associate with individuals from both cultures, for instance, having a “mixed” guest list for dinner (Akhtar, 1999, p.83). The person experiences a sense of gratitude for the opportunities offered by the host country, and the capacity for understanding and reciprocal relationships return (Akhtar, 1999, p. 89). A structural change in “cultural character” (Blum, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 97) occurs, which enhances empathy for the residents of the adoptive country and facilitates mutuality and deeper social affiliation. Linguistic identity change occurs when the newly acquired language starts to appear spontaneously in humour and during dreams, and some develop a hybrid language to express different self-presentations (Akhtar, 1999, pp. 100-101).

It remains unclear whether the identity that emerges as a result of the mourning-liberation process of immigration, also known as “selving” (Edelman, cited in Ward & Styles, 2007, p. 322), represents a stable hybrid entity, or merely a functional “confederacy of diverse selves” (Akhtar, 1999, p. 103). According to Garza-Guerrero (cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 103), the remodelled identity will reflect the consolidation of selective identifications with the new culture that may be integrated congruently with the cultural heritage. What eventually ensue from the crisis of culture shock and threats to the identity, if adequately resolved, are a productive growth of the self and a sense of renewal. From a postmodernist view, Copelman (cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 103) suggests that instead of belonging to unified, discrete cultures and nations, we are destined to have fragmented allegiances and dissonant voices within ourselves to represent the modern world we live in. Instead of the closure and
solidity offered by the synthesis of a melting pot society, there is an exciting, ongoing process of a multiplicity of partial identities (Copelman, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 103). According to Searle (cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 104), a healthy identity does not possess a unitary solidity. Eisnitz (cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 104) adds that a well-functioning self is made up of subsets of self-representations with variable influence on cognition, affect and behaviour. This may be accompanied by a sense of belonging to multiple places, while at the same time not truly belonging to any of them (Akhtar, 1999, p. 104). According to Winnicot (cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 104), home is “where we come from”, but the immigrant may end up without a stable home anywhere, but feeling at home and having family and friends in many places (Bergman, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 104). A sense of optimism, an entrepreneurial spirit and a continuous calling to explore new shores make these migrants modern-day gypsies or nomads.

Bergman (cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 104) emphasises the “eternal longing to belong, which is never quite fulfilled”. The “homecoming” or resolution of hybrid identities can be symbolised in the Māori culture as going to the Marae or meeting house, which is a place of sharing, connection and healing (Bowden, 2003, p. 7). Traditionally, one takes a koha or gift, and if one is perceived to come in friendship and with good intent, the tangata whenua (people of the land) accept the gift to complete the circle of reciprocity (Bowden, 2003, p. 9). During the powhiri or welcome ceremony, it is customary to introduce oneself via a mihimihi to tell the story of one’s whakapapa, namely one’s ancestry and where one comes from, to establish mutual connections (Bowden, 2003, pp. 7-8). Experiences and emotions are storied and supported by karakia (prayer) and waiata (song) to affirm identity in terms of interconnection and interdependence (Bowden, 2003, p. 10). Trust in the foundations of existence and belonging is reaffirmed by weaving the elements of tinana (body), hinengaro (mind), wairua (spirit), whānau (family), community, cultural history and whenua (the
natural world) together into a *korowai* or seamless cloak of wholeness (Bowden, 2003, p. 5). The *marae* provides a context of *aroha* (loving relationships or attunement) where healing can occur and *mana*, namely personal dignity, prestige, reputation and spiritual sacredness, can be restored (Bowden, 2003, pp. 8-9). While steering your *waka* (boat) through the treacherous currents of migration to unknown shores, the identity threads of the homeland become intertwined with a multicultural sea of meanings to form a *Pikorua* (double-twisted strand) or diasporic identity. South African emigrants are now regarded as an expatriates or “overseas friends” by those who remained behind, and as a *Pākeha* or *Palangi* (European settlers) or sometimes *whānau* (extended family) by New Zealanders.

Through the process of assimilating the experience of migration, and integrating denied and dissociated aspects and feelings, the person develops enough inner resources to permit the experience of growing pains (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 65). This person will not merely have an intellectual knowledge of immigration, but will have insight into its vicissitudes from learning through emotional experience (Bion, cited in Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 65-66). One must “be” an emigrant, fully accepting the storms that accompany such an epic journey and through incisive introspection (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 65) will come to know one’s “true face”. Bion (cited in Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 66) notes that these transformations promote insight that goes beyond knowing reality, to “being what one is” or “embodying one’s own truth” (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 66). Immigration is ultimately an attempt at running away from oneself, only to be confronted by oneself in a different place: it is about understanding that the world is merely a projection of one’s own mind, and one’s sense of self merely a reflection of the world one is living in. It is about allowing one’s “self” to die: inhabiting the world of the living without being “any-one”, to permit “being” present in each moment of life. This ultimate reality or absolute truth of presence and wholeness cannot be “known”; one can only have “been” (Grinberg &
Grinberg, 1989, p. 66). Achieving this transmutation requires courage because one must inhabit mental and emotional states that are unbearable, and it is therefore feared, avoided and resisted (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 66). However, some of the most talented poets, scientists, musicians, painters, professors, actors and writers were immigrants who, enriched by their experiences, trials and tribulations, produced work that transcended the borders of their native and adopted countries (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 165).

This process of adaptation and renewal is more characteristic of immigrants who had the capacity for intrapsychic separateness before immigration, where there was some choice in leaving the home country, and where the host country was relatively welcoming (Akhtar, 1999, pp. 102-103). However, where migration was forced and visiting the home country was impossible, or where the new country did not offer a sufficient holding environment, the mourning necessary for the required psychological development may not have been feasible (Akhtar, 1999, p. 103). For psychotherapists, the intrapsychic meanings of various self-representations and object representations, as well as their resistance and adaptive purposes, are significant points for intervention (Akhtar, 1999, p. 106).

Migration and mental health

How shall I go in peace and without sorrow?

Nay, not without a wound in the spirit shall I leave this city ...

Too many fragments of the spirit have I scattered in these streets, and too many are the children of my longing that walk naked among these hills, and I cannot withdraw from them without a burden and an ache.

It is not a garment I cast off this day, but a skin that I tear with my own hands ...

(Gibran, 1996, p. 1)
Owing to the fact that immigration is a continuous process that takes place over many years, short-term research findings on patterns of adaptation and psychological outcomes may change over time, and may differ between individuals (Walsh & Shulman, 2007, p.369). Since migration has different meanings for people, the perceived level of threat as a result of disruption may vary considerably between individuals (Creed, 1987, p. 190). Immigration is a transition that involves changes in an individual’s inner and outer worlds, and efforts to adapt can lead to psychological distress, which is exacerbated if immigration is perceived to be involuntary and is complicated by a range of psychosocial factors (Khawaja & Mason, 2008, p. 228). Lerner et al. (2005, pp. 1805, 1811, 1813) found that the psychological readjustment after immigration takes longer than other processes of adaptation, and that five years after immigration the psychological distress of immigrants remains high. They (2005, p. 1805 concluded that several years after immigration, social and psychological factors play a more prominent role in the well-being of immigrants than their material circumstances.

Various studies have been conducted to determine why some migrants experience mental health problems, and transition and adaptation difficulties were investigated (Pernice et al., 2000, p. 24). A broad range of factors have been identified that can influence the degree and direction of stress behaviours that affect mental health, and the severity of mental illness that may develop (Hovey, 2000, p. 127; Pernice et al., 2000, p. 24). These factors include the circumstances of immigration, the immigrant group and modes of acculturation, language, social support in the migrant group and host society, immediate and extended family support networks, socioeconomic status, work status changes, education and income, discrimination and prejudice, and congruity between contact expectations and the realities of daily life (Hovey, 2000, pp. 127, 137; Pernice et al., 2000, p. 24). Pre-migration variables such as age at migration, self-esteem, coping ability, psychiatric status, motives for the move, knowledge of the new language and culture, attitudes towards acculturation, expectations of
the future, religiosity and the degree of tolerance of cultural diversity in the host society are mediating factors in the development of depression and suicidality (Hovey, 2000, p. 127).

However, according to Berry (1997, p. 13) and Creed (1987, p. 185) most migrants do not experience serious psychological problems during acculturation owing to the mediating effect of other psychological processes, such as problem appraisal, coping strategies and resilience. Beiser et al. (cited in Berry, 1997, p. 13) postulate that the short-term changes that occur during acculturation are often disruptive, but some long-term constructive adaptation to the new cultural context usually takes place. Psychological adaptation implies a clear sense of personal and cultural identity, good mental health and well-being, and the achievement of personal satisfaction in the new cultural context (Berry, 1997, p. 14). Sociocultural adaptation relies on social skills, and refers to the ability to interact effectively with the host society to fit into the new culture, and to manage daily problems relating to family life, work and school (Berry, 1997, p. 14). For youth, academic processes and outcomes are significant indicators of current and future psychosocial functioning (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2003, p.3). Economic adaptation is the degree to which satisfying and gainful work is obtained (Aycan & Berry, cited in Berry, 1997, p. 14).

Garmezy (cited in Walsh, 1996, p. 4) emphasises three sets of interrelated biological and psychosocial factors in a stress-diathesis formulation of adaptation under stress: (1) those relating to vulnerability or predisposition, (2) triggering events or potentiators of stress, and (3) protective, stress-resistant resilience that helps to maintain competence in distressing circumstances. Many ongoing, recursive processes involving each individual, the family and the larger social environment interact to determine whether vulnerabilities lead to resilience and a successful life course, or whether they intensify, resulting in dysfunction and despair (Walsh, 1996, p. 4).
Stressors, symptoms and behaviour

Hulewat (1996, p. 129) describes resettlement as a “cultural and psychological crisis” that poses risks, but offers many opportunities for growth and development. Immigration involves multiple stressors and requires major adjustments in lifestyle, attitudes and behaviour within a short time frame and it may result in dislocation, culture shock, disorientation, fearfulness, loneliness, vulnerability, diminished competence and self-control, and a loss of social and cultural identity (Bennett et al., 1997). This may affect the biochemical system of the body, which increases the vulnerability to psychological distress (Samarasinghe & Arvidsson, 2002, p. 293) and may have detrimental physical and mental health effects. Nostalgia and homesickness, information overload, lack of skills and emotional stress may result in a wide range of physical, cognitive, emotional and behavioural symptoms, such as heart palpitations, muscle tension, lack of energy, exhaustion, weakness, disturbed sleep, nightmares, nausea, lack of appetite and weight loss, or compensatory eating with resultant weight gain, globus hystericus, fainting and choking sensations, fever, excessive concerns about minor illnesses, as well as sadness, grief, tearfulness, anger, hypersensitivity, irritability, rumination and obsessive thoughts, concentration difficulties and distractibility (Berry & Kim; Hofer; Fisher; McCann, cited in Nikelly, 2004, pp. 183, 185, 187; Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-18).

Stressors may be intrapersonal, such as emotions, interpersonal, such as role definitions, and extrapersonal, such as financial pressures (Samarasinghe & Arvidsson, 2002, p. 293). The stress-distress model of Ensel and Lin (cited in Rogler, 1994, p. 707) has been used to focus on stressors, such as life event changes, distress and the dimensions of mental health or psychiatric disorders, psychological resources, such as self-esteem, and social resources, such as social networks. Rogler (1994, p. 707) suggests that migration trauma stems from a threefold change in life events, namely socioeconomic status, social networks
Ponizovsky, Ritsner, and Modai (2000, p. 290) identify four stress dimensions, namely material, cultural, informational and health-related stressors, and Bennett et al. (1997, p. 160) highlight the psychosocial impact of migration. Material stressors include changes in socioeconomic status, such as lack of financial resources, housing and employment (Ponizovsky et al., 2000, p. 290). Cultural stress is caused by the language barrier, lack of familiarity with host culture customs and beliefs, conflict with the moral standards of the host country, perceived hostility, prejudice or discrimination by the host culture, feelings of personal insecurity, fear of the unknown and anxiety about the future (Cheung & Spears, cited in Abbott, 1997, p. 254; Ponizovsky et al., 2000, p. 290). Informational stressors include bureaucratic obstacles, inadequate information and a lack of familiarity with banks and social insurance systems (Ponizovsky et al., 2000, p. 290). Health-related stressors include poor health status, perception of the climate as harmful and dangerous for health, as well as a lack of familiarity with the medical care system (Ponizovsky et al., 2000, p. 290). Social stressors include the depletion of support networks because of separation from family and friends, lack of help with childcare, loss of close relationships, loneliness and boredom, changes in social status, establishing new secondary relations, such as with a doctor and dentist, loss of lifestyle and roots, and establishing new recreational patterns and community involvement (Bennett et al., 1997, p. 160; Cheung & Spears, cited in Abbott, 1997, p. 254).

Ponizovsky et al. (2000, pp. 289, 291) identify three different distress patterns in the adjustment of immigrants over time, depending on the intensity of perceived stressors and the number, severity and frequency of psychological symptoms, such as obsessiveness, hostility, interpersonal sensitivity, anxiety, depression and paranoid ideation. These patterns may explain the inconsistent results between various research studies on the post-migration course of distress and resultant symptomatology (Ponizovsky et al., 2000, p. 293). A normal pattern is characterised by a stable, low distress level, and a reduction in adjustment difficulties over
time (Ponizovsky et al., 2000, pp. 289, 293). A positive pattern is associated with a persistent, moderate level of distress, where the frequency of distress-related symptoms remains constant, but the overall number and severity of symptoms decreases (Ponizovsky et al., 2000, pp. 289, 293). A negative pattern is associated with persistently high levels of distress and an increase in the total number, severity and frequency of distress-related symptoms over time (Ponizovsky et al., 2000, pp. 289, 293). These authors also suggest a threshold model where a number of symptoms associated with low levels of stress can have an additive affect resulting in distress-related symptoms or an interactive model where the interplay of psychological symptoms may determine the course of distress-associated symptoms over time (Ponizovsky et al., 2000, p. 293). Ponizovsky and Ritsner (2004, pp. 411-412) found that immigrants reported relatively high levels of loneliness, and that loneliness appears to be an integral aspect of general psychological distress. They distinguish between a normal, distress-free psychological response due to dissatisfaction with support by current friends, and the symptomatic distress experienced because of an identity dissonance, identity loss or loss of the relationship with “self” (Ponizovsky & Ritsner, 2004, p. 412). This disconnection from one’s inner self is damaging to self-esteem, self-confidence and self-sufficiency, and the person may experience inadequacy, inferiority and self-depreciation (Ponizovsky & Ritsner, 2004, p. 412). It also lessens trust in others, even when external support systems are present (Ponizovsky & Ritsner, 2004, p. 412). In severe instances, bonds with reality may be severed, and the person may withdraw into a profound distress-related loneliness and experience a wide array of psychological distress symptoms, such as anxiety, panic attacks, depression, suicidality and paranoid ideation (Ponizovsky & Ritsner, 2004, p. 412). These symptoms lead to suspiciousness, avoidance and rejection of others, and feelings of isolation, estrangement, marginality and alienation (Nikelly, 2004, p. 185; Ponizovsky & Ritsner, 2004, p. 412).
The anxieties that appear in the initial stages of migration are of the persecutory, confusional and depressive types, and may vary greatly in intensity, duration and progression (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 87). If the immigrant perceives demands as overwhelming, paranoid anxieties may escalate into panic, and fearing failure, he or she may impulsively decide to return home (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 87). Disorientating anxieties resulting from ambivalence and conflicting loyalties, result in a triangular alliance between the immigrant and the old and new countries, like a child trying to choose between two divorced parents (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 87). Confusion results when culture, language, place, points of reference, memories and experiences become intertwined and superimposed on one another, for instance, believing one sees familiar faces in a crowd (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 88). These phenomena may be accentuated in countries that are similar to the immigrant’s own or where the same language is spoken, and it may feed into the immigrant’s denial that it is a different country (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 88). These fantasies may facilitate a person’s adjustment, but may cause feelings of persecution where people and things are seen in a sinister light, with things appearing to be what they are not (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 88). Depressive anxieties are created by experiencing considerable loss, accompanied by the fear of never being able to recover all that was left behind (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 88). This requires a process of mourning, which is difficult and can become pathological if the person does not have the opportunity to recognise, feel or express the loss and process it (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 88).

According to Zwingman (cited in Nikelly, 2004, p. 188), nostalgia becomes pathological when the person draws greater satisfaction from the past than from the present or the future, and when physical and psychological features are intense, obsessive and longstanding, and prevent effective coping. Mourning a lost past with feelings of guilt, self-devaluation or self-condemnation, shame, a sense of emptiness, a persistent low mood and a
pessimistic outlook, ruminative and despairing thoughts, and with debilitating vegetative symptoms, such as anhedonia, anergia, anorexia and insomnia, indicate a more severe depressive reaction (Zwingman, cited in Nikelly, 2004, p. 188). This becomes more pathological if it is accompanied by hallucinations of the homeland, emotional excitement, physical emaciation and inappropriate acting-out behaviour in an effort to cling to a fantasy life and avoid mourning (Nikelly, 2004, p. 188). Although the development of psychopathology represents extreme situations, one should be cognisant that migration may promote the emergence of latent pathology in individuals who are particularly fragile and may trigger the development of more serious disorders (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 89). According to Garza-Guerrero (cited in Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 89), a distinction should be made between the pathological outcome of migration, with unresolved identity crisis, depression and chronic social maladjustment, and in the more typical response where individuals experience uneasiness about their identity as a result of culture shock (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 89). According to Ticho (cited in Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 89), “culture shock is a self-limiting crisis”.

The ability to deal with the demands of acculturation is influenced by the particular phase of the immigration process, acculturation attitudes and behaviour, life events, reactions to accumulated stress, attachment style, locus of control, self-esteem, problem appraisal, internal coping strategies, knowledge, access and attitudes to external support and resources and the level of prejudice and discrimination in the host country (Berry, 1997, p. 15; Van Coller, 2002, p. 28). The pre-migration period may be riddled with doubts, fears and sorrow, and children may witness family arguments and may share the parents’ anxiety and worries (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 115). The child may become the target of the parents’ conflict and aggression or may be neglected by the parents if they are overwhelmed by their own problems, hardships or sadness (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 115). According to
Cheng and Chang (1999, para. 20), immigrant children are at high risk of psychopathology from direct traumatic exposure, or from being cared for by parents who have psychiatric problems. An anxious child will be unusually tearful, show signs of aggression or bullying, be prone to nail-biting or hair-chewing, experience poor concentration and a limited attention span, have low energy levels and will exhibit a lack of eye contact and communication (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-10).

Upon arrival in the new country, children go through their own process of mourning and are affected by their parents’ mourning because they are dependent on a protective family environment (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 115). They are often deeply affected by the absence of extended family members, friends and teachers, as well the nonhuman environment, such as their house, toys and parks (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 115). The child may not be able to express sorrow and may react with anger towards the parents (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 115). Immigrant children experience shame about being unable to understand language and cultural codes, lack confidence in their own abilities and self-worth, and are unsure who can be trusted and who will support them (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 124-126). The child may struggle at school with being the “new one” (p. 126) or the “different one” (p. 125) and may become clingy, exhibit phobias, retreat or reject school, develop learning problems, become distressed by peers’ teasing or bullying, or become critical and aggressive towards them (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 116). The child may also respond with depressive or regressive behaviour, such as loss of appetite or overeating, nightmares and other sleep disorders, loss of language skills, enuresis and encopresis, changes in bodily functions and a susceptibility to illness or accidents (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 116).

Pre-migration and migration stressors such as traumatic exposure in the homeland, loss and separation from family members, extended family and kinship networks, detention in
refugee camps, waiting for visas and permits, illegal immigration and an undocumented immigration status can lead to an increased risk for emotional disturbance in new immigrants (Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 583). According to Beiser (cited in Rousseau & Drapeau, 2004, p. 852), refugees require different resettlement and mental health programmes than immigrants, owing to the increased incidence of symptoms associated with pre-migration trauma. Involuntary immigrants who were exposed to violence and trauma prior to migration, often suffer the loss of loved ones, loss of home and possessions, humiliation and discrimination, physical injury and attacks on self-esteem and sense of identity (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 148). Involuntary migration evokes feelings of incompetence and isolation, as well as fears of annihilation as a result of a loss of self-image (Samarasinghe & Arvidsson, 2002, p. 293). After migration, any situation that creates a state of personal defencelessness and endangers one’s sense of identity is experienced as an aggressive act, which activates the fear of a recurrence of traumatic events (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 154).

Rousseau and Drapeau (2004, p. 852) caution against the arbitrary distinction between refugees and immigrants, as high levels of emotional distress and PTSD symptoms, comparable to that found in refugees, have been found in a broad range of immigrant groups exposed to political turmoil and violence in their everyday life in their home countries. In their study, Khawaja and Mason (2008, pp. 225, 237) found that immigration-related grief, low levels of self-esteem and the experience of crime in South Africa contributed to the psychological distress experienced by South African immigrants to Australia. The participants reported somatisation, obsessive ruminations and worries, interpersonal sensitivity and depression, even though their symptoms did not fall in the clinical range (Khawaja & Mason, 2008, p. 238). However, the possibility that the participants were being treated with medication or psychotherapy was not considered in this study (Khawaja & Mason, 2008, p. 242).
Exiles, who are forced to flee or are expelled from their country of origin, feel insecure, bitter, resentful and frustrated, and their exile is experienced as a prison term because they are condemned to remain disconnected from their country of origin (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 158). To die far away from home in a foreign land is considered a “double death” because it makes the fantasy of returning impossible (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 61). Exiles, refugees and reluctant immigrants, especially children, may experience disturbing dreams about the traumatic events surrounding the exit from their country of origin (Akhtar, 1999, p. 35). During the pre-migration period, themes such as death and rebirth, going through tunnels, loss of physical possessions and changes in physical appearance tend to predominate, whereas themes around identity conflicts manifest during the early post-migration phase (Akhtar, 1999, p. 35). Recent migrants may revert to their mother tongue during dreams, but as acculturation progresses, the new language will start appearing in dreams (Akhtar, 1999, p. 36).

Owing to financial constraints, immigrants and refugees who are forced to leave their home country often settle in neighbourhoods where rentals are lower, but these environments tend to be overcrowded, lack social cohesion, have higher levels of crime and offer an inferior level of education (Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 584). In order to mix with other cultural groups in the receiving country, they will need to overcome feelings of guilt for being alive and recover their basic trust in human beings (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 154). Some deliberately hide their memories in an effort to dissociate themselves from these experiences, some react with paranoia and accuse others of being responsible for the tragedy, while others dwell on their experiences by repeatedly and in great detail recounting the story of their suffering (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 148-149). Where migrants use suppression as a coping strategy to manage traumatic pre-migration memories, they may sporadically resurface as PTSD symptoms, panic attacks, somatic symptoms and depression (Beiser, 2005,
p. 38). These people may react with extreme apathy, states of depersonalisation, stupor or terror, or after a period of super normality experience symptoms such as anxiety, psychosomatic symptoms, sleep disorders, nightmares, phobias, memory disorders, chronic depression, isolative tendencies, identity problems, and occasionally, psychotic disorders (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 148).

Samarasinghe and Arvidsson (2002, pp. 295-296) identified three qualitative categories of problematic adaptation in involuntary immigrant families: distressed families living under prolonged tension, frustrated families who cannot lead a fully satisfactory life and dejected families who feel deserted. For distressed families, waiting for residency visas to be granted and the resultant temporary separation of family members may lead to fluctuating feelings of hope and despair (Samarasinghe & Arvidsson, 2002, p. 295). Frustrated families are capable and motivated to build a new life, but feel underutilised and discriminated against (Samarasinghe & Arvidsson, 2002, p. 296). They may also feel that it is impossible to return to the home country, and that they have to rely on themselves for emotional comfort and support (Samarasinghe & Arvidsson, 2002, p. 296). These parents, however, work hard to provide a new life for their children, and are proud of their achievements (Samarasinghe & Arvidsson, 2002, p. 296). Dejected families report constant feelings of sorrow and worry, and that they have lost all happiness, humour, creativity, motivation, meaningfulness and hope for the future (Samarasinghe & Arvidsson, 2002, p. 296). One family member may often carry the burden of having to support the entire family, and children worry about the well-being of their parents (Samarasinghe & Arvidsson, 2002, pp. 296-297). These families may be separated for up to two years during the migration process, and feel unwelcome, unwanted, isolated, disrespected, marginalised and even threatened by members of the host society (Samarasinghe & Arvidsson, 2002, pp. 296-297). They are unemployed or underemployed, lack self-confidence, feel disrespected and
powerless, and report loss of identity and loneliness, and that family members have drifted apart (Samarasinghe & Arvidsson, 2002, pp. 296-297).

**Psychological crises and mental disorders**

The chameleon has muted my rowdy scream
to the whisper of a white-boned land.

(Crusz, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 99)

Migration can be regarded as a crisis because it involves “an abrupt and definitive change in the course of a life process” (Thom, cited in Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 13) and results in the temporary disturbance of normal regulatory mechanisms. Pollock (cited in Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 12) suggests that individual responses to traumatic events should be examined in terms of predisposing, precipitating and perpetuating factors. Childhood experiences relating to loss, deprivation, separation and guilt affect a person’s reaction to similar experiences of anxiety and helplessness during migration (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 13). Adaptation after immigration therefore relies on previous developmental gains during the maturation process in terms of loss and separation, facilitated by a supportive environment that encourages exploration and integration (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989). Predisposing factors or a traumatic migratory experience may severely compromise the ego, and the state of disorganisation may lead to physical or mental illness (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 15). However, if the person has sufficient capacity to work through the challenges, the crisis can be overcome and he or she can experience further development, enrichment and regeneration (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 15).

Migration can induce the following different kinds of anxieties: (1) persecution anxieties relating to the new and the unknown; (2) depressive anxieties, which lead to
mourning for what was left behind and the lost parts of the self; and (3) disorienting anxieties because of a failure to distinguish between the old and new (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 2). These anxieties, in conjunction with resultant symptoms and defense mechanisms, form part of the “psychopathology of migration” (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 2) and its evolution depends on how the individual assimilates and integrates anxieties and feelings of uprootedness and loss. Any personal crisis, such as migration that upsets a person’s equilibrium can amplify existing internal conflicts and defense mechanisms, and trigger latent psychopathological processes, resulting in acute decompensation or a slow deterioration towards mental illness (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 135). The particular form of abnormal mental state and the intensity of presenting symptoms will vary according to the immigrant’s personality profile, the complexity of circumstances and the quality and intensity of loneliness and helplessness experienced (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 141-142).

Migration may trigger psychotic aspects of the personality on the basis of the person’s inner disposition, the discontinuity of context and breakdown in communication (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 141). Bion (cited in Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 139) suggests the existence of a “psychotic personality”, characterised by an intolerance of frustration, the avoidance of inner and outer realities, fear of imminent annihilation and fragile object relations (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 139). The new country represents an unfamiliar context that may not provide adequate support and containment, and as a result the initial anxiety and communication difficulties are intensified because the person must confront a new language, and unfamiliar customs and behaviour (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 137). These factors limit the availability of a “transitional space” (p. 136) to facilitate the integration of the inner and outer worlds, and the person becomes trapped in a system of paradoxes, resulting in acute psychosis (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 137, 141). Avoidance of anxiety and frustration by using pathological projective identification
jeopardise contact with reality, and can lead to other psychotic manifestations (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 139).

In paranoia and overt persecutory delusion, the surroundings are seen as hostile and dangerous, enmeshed in conspiracies to hurt or harm the person (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 88). Disorientating psychosis may cause a person to not only lose a sense of identity, but also to become disoriented in time and space (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 88). It is the most commonly observed clinical disorder among hospitalised immigrants (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 88). Profound melancholy can result in intense feeling of ego impoverishment, with a sense of deprivation and an emptying of all one’s content and abilities (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 88-89). According to Bion (cited in Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 3), migration can produce an identity crisis because of catastrophic changes, and can lead to disintegration and dissolution of the self and a blurring of boundaries. A brief, reactive psychosis due to acute migration stressors or a pre-migration susceptibility may occur within three years post-migration, whereas a more prolonged schizophrenic or other psychotic illness may develop many years after migration (Eitinger & Grunfeld, cited in Creed, 1987, pp. 186-187).

Migration status is often regarded as one of the risk factors for developing psychiatric disorders caused by traumas and stressors during the physical and psychological journey, multiple losses, feeling rejected by the host society and confusion about roles, values and identity (Cheng & Chang, 1999, para. 1; Keyes, cited in Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 588). International studies have also found proportionately higher rates of psychiatric hospitalisation among recent migrants, particularly for major depression, paranoid reactions and schizophrenia (Cochrane & Bal; Leff, cited in Abbott, 1997, p. 252). Mortensen, as well as Murphy (cited in Cheng & Chang, 1999, para. 3) suggest that high rates of psychiatric
disorders may be attributed to a negative migration effect, where people in the prodromal stages of illness, such as schizophrenia, migrate because of failing interpersonal relationships.

However, it cannot be assumed that elevated hospitalisation rates accurately reflect the stresses of migration and resettlement, or indicate a greater prevalence of mental illness in migrant and refugee communities (Abbott, 1997, p. 252). In contrast to the earlier hospital studies, approximately half of the community surveys conducted throughout the world have failed to find higher rates of mental disorder among migrants, compared to local-born populations (Abbott, 1997, p. 254). Some reported rates that were lower than the national average (Bhugra; Cantor-Graee & Selten; Kinsie; Swinnen & Selten, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 23). Some studies have suggested that psychiatric diagnostic systems are Eurocentric and fail to capture the reality and diversity of expressions of psychological distress and disorder found in certain ethnic groups (Minas; Mollica; Nguyen, cited in Abbott, 1997, p. 253). Davis, as well as Hsu (cited in Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 588) believe that culture-bound illness expression and syndromes, as well as cultural bereavement due to the acculturation process, may resemble but are distinct from psychiatric symptoms and disorders.

Community surveys of migrant and refugee populations have found that depressive and anxiety disorders were the most common conditions (Jayasuriya; London; Nguyen, cited in Abbott, 1997, p. 253). Among refugees, especially those seeking treatment in out-patient settings or residing in refugee camps, high rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) have been documented, frequently with coexisting affective and anxiety disorders (Boehnlein et al; Gong-Guy; Jayasuriya et al.; Mollica, cited in Abbott, 1997, p. 253). Greater prevalence of paranoid disorders, brief reactive psychoses, culture-bound syndromes, somatoform disorders and organic brain disorders have been found in some surveys (Garcia-Peltoniemi; Silove, cited in Abbott, 1997, p. 253). Dysfunctional behavioural consequences of trauma and loss suffered by immigrants and refugees include addiction disorders (Lustig et al., cited in
Te Pou, 2008, p. 23), domestic violence and pathological gambling (Armentano, Kuoch, Norinth & Smith; Petry; Steele et al., cited in Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 588). However, the country of origin appears to have an impact on alcohol and substance abuse rates, possibly because of cultural practices or religious affiliation (Te Pou, 2008, p. 24).

Length of residence and generational status may also have an impact on the prevalence of physical and mental illness, as well as behavioural outcomes in refugee and migrant communities (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2003, p.4). A “healthy migrant” (Beiser, 2005, p. 33) effect, where new migrants have better mental health than settled and second-generation migrants, has been identified in international research. Some individuals seem to adapt quickly to the demands of their new environment and develop successful social and professional relationships (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 93). Initially, they enjoy an apparently conflict-free period, characterised by psychological and physical well-being (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 145). However, delayed reactions may surface years later when the person gives up the fantasy of returning to the homeland, and it gradually dawns on him or her that the loss and separation are permanent (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 145). The defences required for maintaining the person’s frantic attempts at adaptation become exhausted and he or she may develop a postponed depression, borderline or psychotic states, hypochondriacal fears or somatic manifestations, such as a gastric ulcer, cancer or a myocardial infarction (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 93-94, 145). The person may exhibit a greater propensity for accidents, which may be disguised suicide attempts (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 94). Burvill and Ferrada-Noli (cited in Cheng & Chang, 1999, para. 3) reported that suicide rates among immigrants were higher than in their countries of origin.

Research studies on the post-migration distress patterns of immigrants have yielded inconsistent results (Lerner et al., 2005, p. 1805). Bhugra (cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 24) suggests that refugees are particularly vulnerable immediately after migration, as well as five
to seven years later, if their expectations for resettlement have not been met. For South Asian refugees, peak depression rates were reported by Beiser in the first post-migration year, in the second year by Rumbaut, and after five years by Chung and Kagava-Singer (cited in Lerner et al., 2005, p. 1805). Ritsner et al. (cited in Lerner et al., 2005, p. 1805) found that for immigrants from the former Soviet Union to Israel, the peak distress period had occurred by the 27th month. Westermeyer et al. (cited in Lerner et al., 2005, p. 1806) reported a decrease in self-reported distress after three-and-a-half years, whereas Lie found no change between the first and fourth year. Symptoms of PTSD and depression may continue to increase over the first ten to 12 years after resettlement before it starts to decline (Davidson; Kinsie; Marshall et al., cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 24).

A commonly observed phenomenon among immigrants is a “money hypochondria” which is expressed as a fear of poverty and homelessness, reflecting their inner insecurity and instability (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 94). As long as the family remains in survival mode, they project all their anxieties on the outside world, and appear to experience relatively good mental health (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 168). They withdraw from the outside world as a protective mechanism, and in some cases, grief and mourning are delayed for so long that they are passed on to the second generation (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 168). Hence migration does not only have an impact on those who experience it firsthand, but also on the children of immigrants born in the adopted country who face more chronic stressors, and suffer the consequences of their parents’ postponed mourning or its pathological development (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 166; Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 590). According to Fox, Burns, Popovich, Belknap and Frank-Stromborg, and McKelvey et al. (cited in Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 588), among children and adolescents, the most frequent problems are depression and anxiety disorders, particularly post-traumatic stress disorder, due to exposure and proximity to pre-migration and post-migration traumatising events.
Such disorders can have a significant impact on the academic functioning of youth and the emotional well-being of their parents, and peer relationships can mitigate or aggravate the symptomatic and functional impact of such disorders (Almquist & Broberg, cited in Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 588). Various studies by Rothe and colleagues (cited in Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 589) reported that child and adolescent Cuban refugees who were exposed to prolonged confinement in refugee camps, continued to experience PTSD symptoms after arrival, but because it did not affect their school functioning, it went unnoticed by teachers. Immigrants from a background of economic hardship often encourage their children to obtain a tertiary education, and career choices such as medicine are popular because they embody the idealised aspects of the adopted country (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 167). Owing to a sense of obligation, these individuals are often expected to take care of the somatic and physical complaints of family members, but may experience considerable ambivalence about this role. The family may be envious of their achievements, denigrate their expertise or exploit their status as a professional for personal gain (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 167).

Only a few studies have specifically looked at the prevalence of mental illness or addiction in New Zealand’s refugee and migrant communities (Te Pou, 2008, p. 25). In a Department of Labour survey, a third of refugees reported experiencing emotional problems as a result of previous or current stressful events (New Zealand Immigration Service, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 26). Pernice and Brook (cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 26) noted lower rates of mental illness in British migrants, who, compared with Pacific migrants, share a similar language and culture with most New Zealanders. Lower than average symptoms of mental illness have been reported in Asian adults and youth, relative to New Zealand European residents (Ministry of Health; Ward, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 26). Several New Zealand studies found evidence of depression, anxiety and being subjected to bullying in migrant
youth, which could lead to mental health problems (Rasanathan et al.; Abbott et al., cited in Higgins, 2008, p. 16). However, there is also evidence that many young migrants and refugees in New Zealand adapt fairly well (New Zealand Immigration Service, Rasanathan et al., Watts et al., cited in Higgins, 2008, p. 16). Mason (cited in Higgins, 2008, p. 100) reported that South African immigrant children had a significantly higher state of anxiety than New Zealand children, and had significantly more negative attitudes and perceptions of school and their friends in New Zealand, compared to what their situation had been in South Africa. South African children had a lower state anxiety and higher self-esteem if they were happy about living in New Zealand, and already knew another child at the first school they had attended in New Zealand (Mason, cited in Higgins, 2008, p. 100).

Factors that influence mental health

Immigration policies usually include a comprehensive medical screening process to ensure that relatively healthy migrants enter the country to maximise their human capital potential and minimise the financial burden for the state (Beiser, 2005). Pre-migration factors and personal predisposing biological, developmental, psychological or social vulnerabilities interact with resettlement stressors to create a potential health risk, whereas personal strengths, such as coping strategies, self-esteem and social resources can act as a buffer to reduce risk and promote well-being (Beiser, 2005, p. 30). Some migrants are able to maintain a better health status than the host population owing to the retention of traditional health habits, termed the “healthy migrant” effect (Beiser, 2005, p. 33). However, with acculturation, some migrants’ physical and psychological health status deteriorates to equal that of the host society, and because of resettlement stress, some have a worse outcome than the local population, which is known as “immigrant overshoot” (Beiser, 2005, p. 35). Mental health factors, most of which go unrecognised and untreated, can adversely affect the
immigrant’s successful adaptation and functioning after immigration (Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 590). For the purpose of prevention programmes or treatment services, the circumstances that lead to a higher incidence of mental illness need to be determined (Abbott, 1997, p. 255).

In longitudinal studies there is great variation in long-term risk of developing mental illness, possibly because of variances in pre-migration, migration and resettlement experiences (Te Pou, 2008, pp. 24-25). Other factors, such as sociodemographic characteristics and historical events (Beiser, cited in Abbott, 1997, p. 255), post-migration conditions (Shuval), personal strengths (Kuo & Tsai), social resources (Beiser), the motive for migration and the level of commitment to the new society (Ben Sira), play a mediating role in the occurrence and experience of stressors (cited in Lerner et al., 2005, p. 1806). Treatment outcomes may be improved if practitioners are aware of risk and protective factors when screening, diagnosing and treating refugee and migrant clients (Briggs & Macleod; Briggs et al.; R. Margetic-Sosa, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 31). Knowledge of protective factors can also influence health promotion decisions and interventions (Hermann, Saxena & Moodie; Ho et al., cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 31).

Members of refugee and migrant communities have been exposed to different pre-migration, migration and post-migration risk and protective factors, which may be partially responsible for differences in the prevalence of mental illness between and within refugee and migrant communities (Te Pou, 2008, p. 28). Albee (cited in Abbott, 1997, pp. 255-256) developed a model that links the incidence of psychological disturbance to adverse life circumstances and protective factors in individuals and communities:

\[
\text{Incidence of psychological disorder} = \text{Organic factors} + \text{Stressors} + \text{Exploitation}
\]

Coping skills + Self-esteem + Social support

This model provides a framework within which research findings can be interpreted, and preventive interventions can be identified for the pre-migration, migration and post-migration
phases (Albee, cited in Abbott, 1997, p. 255). Factors above the line increase the risk of mental disorder and those below fulfil a protective or buffering role, and may thus have a beneficial effect on mental well-being and reduce the likelihood of mental illness (Albee, cited in Abbott, 1997, p. 256; Te Pou, 2008, p. 28). Prevention involves reducing the exposure to the risk factors and enhancing the protective factors (Albee, cited in Abbott, 1997, p. 256). Organic risk factors include malnutrition, toxins, alcohol, drugs and trauma (Albee, cited in Abbott, 1997, p. 256). Pre-migration and migration stressors include hardship, war, disasters, social upheaval, family separation, overcrowding, confinement and powerlessness (Albee, cited in Abbott, 1997, p. 256). Post-migration stressors include unemployment and financial hardship, loss of family and social networks, acculturation problems and intergenerational conflict (Albee, cited in Abbott, 1997, p. 256). Exploitation refers to structural and ideological frameworks that disadvantage certain categories of people, such as women and the elderly, or ethnic and religious groups, and may involve hostility, discrimination, racism, marginalisation, violence and persecution (Abbott, 1997, p. 256). Coping skills include communication and social skills, coping style, problem-solving ability, psychological hardiness, self-esteem and perceived control over one’s life (Abbott, 1997, p. 256). Other intervening factors are social resources, such as family, the ethnic community, support groups and access to services (Albee, cited in Abbott, 1997, p. 256).

**Risk factors**

Pre-migration personality structure, mental health, personal and social problems, as well as traumatic events, can affect the level of psychological distress experienced during acculturation (Ritsner, Ponizovsky, Chemelevsky, Zetser, Durst, & Ginath, 1996, p. 17). According to Menges (cited in Grinberg & Grinberg 1989, p. 20) people with insecure attachments, limited individuation or belonging to families with enmeshed boundaries may...
find separation problematic, and experience more loneliness and homesickness owing to their dependency on the family, whereas schizoid individuals tend to distance themselves from family members (Grinberg & Grinberg 1989, p. 20). Philobatic individuals (Balint, cited in Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 21) who avoid ties of all kinds, tend to lead an independent life, enjoy unfamiliar activities, places and customs, and form new relationships. They are able to tolerate a certain level of risk to achieve their goals because they have enough confidence that they will prevail (Grinberg & Grinberg 1989, p. 21). Ocnophiles (Balint, cited in Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 21) have a great attachment to people, places and belongings, and for them it is important to have a large social support structure readily available. It can be argued that ocnophiles are rooted to their places or origin and will find it difficult to leave, whereas philobatics will have a tendency to emigrate in pursuit of undiscovered horizons and new experiences (Grinberg & Grinberg 1989, p. 21). According to Grinberg and Grinberg (1989, p. 22) extreme attitudes in these two categories can activate pathologies: an extreme need to cling to the known and avoidance to leave a dangerous situation while there is still time, versus a compulsive drive for new experiences, resulting in multiple, impulsive migrations.

Ritsner et al. (1996, pp. 19-20) found in their research that immigrants with a pre-migration psychiatric history experienced the same post-migration symptoms of psychological distress as other immigrants, including low self-esteem, anxiety, depression and obsessive-compulsive symptoms, but the severity of distress was higher. Immigrants with existing personality and mood disorders exhibited higher emotional reactivity to the uncontrollable life and environmental changes associated with immigration, and experienced the highest rates of psychological distress (Ritsner et al., 1996, pp. 17, 21). The intensity of distress and the particular symptoms experienced may vary according to country of origin, the cultural background of immigrants and the host society (Ritsner & Ponizovsky, 2003, p. 182).
Exposure to more than three pre-migration traumatic events was associated with a fivefold greater risk of a subsequent mental disorder (Beiser, 2005, p. 38). Proximity to traumatic events, duration of exposure and intensity of the traumatic experience affected psychological responses (Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 590). Trauma, persecution and personal violence shatter a person’s core beliefs about human nature, and may result in persistent distress and disability (Beiser, 2005, p. 38). According to Beiser and Edwards (1994, p. 75), the lingering effects of rape, torture and exposure to other atrocities can lead to high levels of post-migration stress that could compromise mental health because of a reluctance to seek help as a result of shame and a fear of reprisal.

Although involuntary migration, traumatic experiences or prolonged stress during the pre-migration and migration phases have been shown to have an adverse effect on mental health, research with refugees and immigrants has indicated that their experiences after arrival in the host country have a more profound impact on their mental health (Abbott, 1997, p. 257). Prejudice and discrimination, unemployment and underemployment, nonrecognition of qualifications, a decline in socioeconomic status, poor quality housing, separation from family members and isolation are detrimental to the mental health of migrant and refugee populations (Abbott, 1997, p. 257). Isolation is exacerbated by a lack of fluency in the primary languages of the host country, and the absence of a supportive migrant community from the same ethnic and cultural background (Abbott, 1997, p. 257). Other risk factors that affect the degree of symptomatology and impairment include poverty, a low level of education, low self-esteem and poor physical health (Hermansson et al; Hsu, Davies & Hansen; Weine et al., cited in Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 588).

For refugees, turmoil and unresolved conflict in their home country can continue to have a negative impact on their mental well-being after resettlement owing to concerns about the safety of their family members who have stayed behind (Briggs & Macleod; Peterson,
Barnes & Duncan; Porter & Haslam, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 29). Disrupted family structures resulting from separation of family members during migration, long delays in reunification, dealing with immigration officials, overly strict government regulations, a long wait for permanent residency visas and an unsupportive, invalidating, rejecting or hostile reception by the host society are detrimental to mental health (Beiser & Edwards, 1994, p. 79; Cheng & Chang, 1999, para. 7; Samarasinghe & Arvidsson, 2002, pp. 298-299). Beiser and Edwards (1994, p. 79) reported significantly higher levels of depression in individuals who had been separated from their spouses, and to a lesser extent from parents and siblings. Isolation from extended family members and changing gender roles (Bhui, Warfa, Edonya, McKenzie & Bhugra, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 29) can have negative implications for mental health because family is a vital source of social support (Briggs & Macleod; Briggs et al; Ho et al., cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 29). Local ethnic communities can partially compensate for absent family members and lost social networks, and can offer additional support to new arrivals (Abbott, 1997, p. 257).

Poverty, overcrowding, unemployment, poor living conditions, social exclusion and discrimination are universal health risks, and immigration increases the likelihood of exposure to these risks and the magnitude of their impact (Beiser, 2005, p. 36; Creed, 1987, p. 187). Recent immigration, and several years after resettlement are two risk periods for elevated psychological distress, due to drastic life changes in the former, and exacerbation of family difficulties in the latter (Cheng & Chang, 1999, para. 12). The greater the differences between the original and host country cultures, the higher the level of interpersonal stress and culture shock experienced will be (Mumford, cited in Cheng & Chang, 1999, para. 14) Immigrants are at increased risk for psychiatric disorders during the crisis phase of adaptation, when they are prone to feelings of disillusionment and nostalgia (Beiser, 2005, p. 36). Community-based studies have shown that ten to 24 months after arrival is a high risk
period for developing depression (Beiser, 2005, p. 36). Hovey and King (cited in Hovey, 2000, p. 127) and Hovey (2000, p. 125) found that high levels of acculturative stress, perceived family dysfunction, negative expectations for the future, ineffective social support, alienation from the local community, low levels of religiosity, education and income and a lack of consensus about the decision to immigrate significantly increased the risk of depression and suicidal ideation. Changes in traditional roles, loss of control, a low sense of coherence, poor acculturation and financial difficulties affected family functioning, and were risk factors for anxiety and distress (Sundquist, cited in Samarasinghe & Arvidsson, 2002, p. 299). The main risk factors associated with ongoing psychological distress were as follows: adverse life events; discrimination; lack of perceived social support; not having close friends; poor family functioning; an external locus of control; poor physical health status; unfamiliarity with the local health system; nonidentification with the host society; and spending the majority of time with their own ethnic group (Lerner et al., 2005, pp. 1805, 1809, 1812; Pernice, cited in Abbott, 1997, p. 253; Pernice & Brook, 1996, p. 511). Lerner et al. (2005, p. 1805) concluded that psychological adjustment takes much longer than other processes of adaptation, and that several years after immigration, social and psychological factors play a more important role in the well-being of immigrants than material conditions.

Migration intensifies family conflicts and can trigger marital breakdown or problems between parents and children (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 95). The extent to which various family members accept or reject the new country can exacerbate existing conflicts (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 95). Differences between parental and child acculturation levels lead to conflict about family values and role expectations (Gonzales, Deardoff, Formoso, Barr & Barrera, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 29) and can increase the risk of conduct disorders and substance abuse (Szapocnik et al., cited in Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 586). International studies among immigrant youth have indicated that the length of residence was
associated with an increase in risky behaviour, such as substance abuse and delinquency, as well as a decline in academic aspiration and achievement. According to Trovato, as well as Foliaki (cited in Cheng & Chang, 1999, para. 11), cultural assimilation may increase the risk for psychiatric problems among immigrants because of a failure to maintain the extended family structure and religious affiliation, resulting in higher rates of drug abuse, criminal offences and suicide. Immigrant youth who feel alienated from both their families and mainstream peers may respond with passivity, which can lead to depression or substance abuse, or they may take a defiant stance and identify with other marginalised adolescents (Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 586). These adolescents often join gangs because they offer a supportive structure, which provides a sense of belonging, solidarity and protection during a period of psychological turmoil (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco; Vigil, cited in Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 586).

Pernice and Brook (1996, pp. 511, 518) reported in their study that the emotional distress experienced by immigrants in New Zealand was unrelated to demographic characteristics, but was influenced by post-migration circumstances, such as being unemployed, the lack of close friendships and spending most of their leisure time with their own ethnic group. Discrimination in the workplace and by healthcare professionals, as well as negative stereotyping by the public and the media, were reported as the most significant mental health risk factors, which resulted in high levels of anxiety and depression (Pernice & Brook, 1996, pp. 515-516). International and New Zealand research studies have indicated that employment has a significant effect on the level of distress and mental health of immigrants because it not only provides an income, but also affects identity, status and social relationships (Pernice et al., 2000, p. 25). A higher level of education or a professional background can be a risk factor for psychological distress if the immigrant is unable to find equivalent work in his or her chosen profession (Naveh et al. cited in Lerner et al., 2005, p.
1812). Some immigrants accept employment with a lower status, seniority and salary to gain entry to the job market, and after gaining work experience in the host country, attempt upward socioeconomic mobility (Firkin et al., 2004). However, unemployment or underemployment causes financial hardship, loss of social status, social isolation, dissatisfaction, anger and resentment towards the host society (Beiser & Edwards, 1994, p. 78; Pernice et al., 2000, p. 25). The stigma of unemployment causes significant levels of emotional distress (Pernice & Brook, 1996, p. 517) and is associated with higher levels of depression, which in turn make it more difficult for the immigrant to secure or retain employment (Beiser & Edwards, 1994, p. 78). Immigrants to New Zealand are not eligible for a social welfare benefit or student allowance during the first two years in the country, and the resulting anxiety and distress, financial strain and insecurity about the future because of failed expectations may give rise to mental health problems within five months after arrival (Pernice et al., 2000, p. 27).

Johnston et al. (2005, p. 405) found in their study that most middle-class professional immigrants from South Africa eventually secured professional jobs in New Zealand. Pernice et al. (2000, p. 27) reported that South African immigrants, despite a high level of employment success, experienced low levels of mental health. They postulate that the reason for this discrepancy was that South Africans, in contrast to immigrants from countries with similar cultures, were motivated mostly by sociopolitical “push” factors in South Africa, instead of by the lifestyle and cultural “pull” factors of New Zealand (Pernice et al., 2000, p. 27). They suggest that the ambivalence resulting from being “semi-voluntary migrants” and the problems involved with returning to South Africa, contributed to ambivalence and poor mental health (Pernice et al., 2000, p. 27). Khawaja and Mason (2008, p. 239) also found that the psychological distress of South African immigrants in Australia was not related to their
employment status or gender, and they concluded that other factors, such as the experience of violence in South Africa and other “push” factors contributed to their distress.

*Protective factors*

Menges (cited in Grinberg & Grinberg 1989, p. 19) defines “fitness for emigration” as the ability of a person to re-establish his or her equilibrium relatively quickly after relocation, with the proviso that the new environment makes it feasible (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 19-20). Individuals whose personality structure is more robust and balanced, who have more defensive resources, who are patient and accepting towards changing circumstances, and who have the capacity to tolerate guilt, frustration and pain are more able to negotiate the mourning process of migration (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 164). An optimistic outlook, positive affect, self-sufficiency and a sense of personal control can reduce immigrants’ level of demoralisation and allow them to cope better with the stress of immigration (Farley, Galves, Dickinson & Diaz Perez, 2005, p. 214; Westermeyer et al., cited in Lerner et al., 2005, p. 1809). Those who emigrate for ideological reasons are less dependent on the external conditions of their place of arrival (Grinberg & Grinberg 1989, p. 20). Holtz (cited in Cheng & Chang, 1999, para. 8) found that political or spiritual motivation among Tibetan refugees alleviated subsequent mental health symptoms, and finding meaning and rationalising the reasons for pre-migration trauma facilitated positive adjustment. Much lower rates of PTSD and mental disorder were found among Khmer refugees who perceived the world as ordered and predictable, and making emotional sense, which may have been due to their commitment to Buddhism (Cheung & Spears, cited in Abbott, 1997, p. 254).

In general, if immigrants’ personality traits are healthy, the motivation for emigrating is realistic, their expectations are flexible, the conditions of the trip are adequate, the view of the future is positive and the new environment is reasonably hospitable, they can gradually
make a commitment to a new way of life (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 96; Hovey, 2000, p. 127). If their emotional state allows them to accept their limitations without reverting to denial or dissociation, they will be able to learn from the experience and value the positive aspects of the new country (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 96). If they have adequate support to control their anxieties, they can reorganise and become creative and productive in their new surroundings (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 165). This will permit psychological enrichment and a positive adjustment to the new country (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 96).

Occupational success, enduring relationships, a supportive spouse, effective family and social support and a supportive ethnic community can moderate the impact of traumatic memories, contribute to well-being and facilitate adaptation (Abbott, 1997, p. 257; Lerner et al., 2005, p. 1809). Beiser and Edwards (1994, p. 79) found that refugees accompanied by their spouses enjoyed better mental health than those forcibly separated from their family, and this provided a buffer against other settlement stressors, such as unemployment. Stability of the marital couple’s relationship and of the emigrant’s family life supports migration, as well as professional skill and job satisfaction (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 20). Briggs and MacLeod (cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 30) concluded that family reunification has a positive impact on refugee and migrant well-being and serves as a protective factor against mental illness. According to Beiser and Edwards (1994, p. 76), women who stay at home during the early stages of settlement may initially experience fewer stressors and mental health problems than their husbands, who encounter employment difficulties and discrimination in the marketplace. Lerner et al. (2005, p. 1813) nevertheless found that identification with the host society may be a protective factor for women because it can provide a sense of belonging and being part of society. Social support systems, such as family and extra-familial support networks, provide essential information, as well as emotional and material support that serve to reduce the impact of external stressors in the host society (Rogler, 1994, p. 704).
Some immigrant groups appear to have better mental health than subsequent generations, despite significant socioeconomic disadvantages (Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 588). The retention of cultural traditions may provide protection against mental disorders owing to support by family networks and less marital disruption (Escobar, Gara & Compton, cited in Cheng & Chang, 1999, para. 10). Maintaining protective cultural health behaviours and abstaining from the detrimental habits of the host society, such as substance abuse, may also account for the “healthy migrant” effect in terms of improved physical and mental health (Beiser, 2005, p. 33). Beiser (2005, pp. 38-39) reported that migrant children generally experience better mental health and exhibit fewer behavioural problems, possibly because of the strength and support of family life. Research studies have indicated that maintaining immigrant cultural values also promotes educational success in children, because parents are able to maintain social cohesion by protecting their children against negative social influences and harmful peer pressure in the host country, and by utilising family resources to supervise children (Coatsworth et al., 2005, p. 169; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2003). Assimilated youth reported strong peer support, which can be a positive developmental influence or lead to problem behaviours (Coatsworth et al., 2005, p. 169). Szapocznik and Coatsworth (cited in Coatsworth et al., 2005, p.171) contend that patterns of social interactions in the mesosystems and microsystems mediate the relationship between cultural forces and youth maladjustment. Coatsworth et al. (2005, pp. 161, 169, 171) suggest that high levels of involvement in at least one culture in a multicultural context promotes better adaptation, and that parental monitoring and family functioning play a key mediating role between acculturation and problem behaviour.

According to Rothe et al. (cited in Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 590), adolescents are less symptomatic and function better socially than their adult counterparts, which may point to a relative resilience inherent in this developmental stage. Adolescents, who are in the process
of self-examination and identity exploration, may exhibit variable patterns of biculturality owing to a critical evaluation of both cultures and selecting aspects of each that are most suitable for a particular context (Coatsworth et al., 2005, p. 168). Bicultural adolescent groups demonstrate higher levels of peer competence and peer support, and also exhibit greater academic competence and less problem behaviour than other groups (Coatsworth et al., 2005, p. 169). In their research, Ritsner and Ponizovsky (2003, p. 140) found that although young adults scored significantly higher than other age groups on the risk factors for psychological distress, such as current dissatisfaction with their lives in the host country and family conflict, they appeared to be buffered against poor mental health outcomes because of other factors, such as perceived positive overall well-being. For the middle-aged group, improvement in economic status and the ability to master bureaucratic systems in the new country contributed to improved psychological well-being (Ritsner & Ponizovsky, 2003, p. 140).

Social support, regardless of its source, has consistently been found to be a protective factor against the various forms of psychological distress associated with migration (Cheng & Chang, 1999, para. 10). Having a close confiding relationship has been associated with higher levels of mental well-being (Cheung & Spears, cited in Abbott, 1997, p. 254). For refugee and migrant groups, community resources such as cultural, spiritual and religious practices may act as supports for maintaining mental well-being. Perceived social support from their own community has been associated with higher mental well-being in migrants and refugees (Abbott; Briggs & Macleod; Briggs et al; Schweitzer, Meville, Steel, & Lacherez, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 29). Members of ethnic groups with a strong degree of community cohesiveness are less likely to commit suicide (Burvill; Trovato, cited in Cheng & Chang, 1999, para. 9), while links with ethnic migrant and refugee communities can promote well-being and reduce the risk of mental illness. Krupinski (cited in Abbott, 1997, p. 257) argues
that this may be counter-productive in the longer term, and could be particularly detrimental to children and adolescents. It is still unclear whether second-generation migrants who maintain stronger links with their ethnic group in a new culture are at greater risk of mental illness (Jayasuriya et al., cited in Abbott, 1997, p. 257). Abbott (1997, p. 258) emphasises that irrespective of their ethnocultural affiliation, language proficiency is vitally important in securing employment and enabling new settlers to become active participants in the host society, and this has been consistently linked to mental health status.

There is evidence that both home cultural maintenance and host cultural acquisition may be associated with lower levels of psychological disorder (Williams & Berry; Cheung; Liv, cited in Abbott, 1997, pp. 257-258). Benefits appear to be greatest when migrants have contact with people from both their home culture and the host culture (Jackson; Rudmin; Schmidt & Poole, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 29). According to Samarasinghe and Arvidsson (2002, pp. 296, 299), to be met with kindness, being accepted and being involved with the host country and its culture are related to better mental health because this strengthens the coherence and emotional stability of family systems. Despite international research findings on potential risk and protective factors, there is a need to further investigate the relationship between different post-migration experiences and mental well-being in the various refugee and migrant communities in New Zealand (Te Pou, 2008, p. 31)

**High-risk groups**

Knowledge of the prevalence rates of mental illness in migrants and refugees can be used to plan services and lobby for additional medical, mental health and social services for these population groups (Kumar, Tse, Fernando & Wong, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 26). Information on variation in prevalence by country of origin, ethnicity and duration of
settlement in New Zealand can further help to identify high risk refugee and migrant groups to inform service planning (Te Pou, 2008, p. 26).

According to Abbott (1997, p. 257), refugees and asylum seekers are at risk of mental health problems as a result of pre-migration trauma and other stressors. Mollica, Pool, and Son (cited in Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 589) reported a relationship between the level of pre-migration exposure to trauma and psychiatric symptoms. Refugees have frequently been exposed to severe traumatic stress including war, rape, starvation, torture and the loss of close family members through murder or forced separation (Abbott, 1997, p. 257). Physical injuries, including head injuries, are common, and refugees who have been exposed to multiple traumas have high rates of PTSD and major depression (Abbott, 1997, p. 257). Refugees also experience a variety of severe stressors during the migration phase; flight from their home country is usually hazardous and frequently involves loss of property, family members and community (Abbott, 1997, p. 257). Many refugees spend months or years in refugee camps where living conditions may be poor, food and health services are lacking and meaningful employment is unavailable (Abbott, 1997, p. 257). The process of claiming refugee status and lodging multiple refugee claim appeals is often highly stressful (Abbott, 1997, p. 257; Ministry of Health, 2009). Many asylum seekers, including spontaneous refugees claiming refugee status in New Zealand, remain in limbo for lengthy periods of time, facing uncertainty, interrogation by officials, the prospect of deportation and lack of access to health and social services (Abbott, 1997, p. 257).

Research findings by Pernice et al. (2000) and Khawaja and Mason (2008) suggest that “semi-voluntary migrants” (Pernice et al., 2000, p. 27) or “reluctant immigrants” (Khawaja & Mason, 2008, p. 240), or “anticipatory refugees” (p. 240), such as South African immigrants, who were mostly motivated by sociopolitical “push” factors in the home country and who may have been exposed to violence and trauma may also have a higher risk of
mental disorder during and after settlement. The risk to the mental well-being of South African immigrants is increased upon arrival in New Zealand when they face a somewhat frosty reception owing to the negative stereotype of South Africans created by the media. Other migrant groups from countries marred by socioeconomic or political turmoil, who are perceived as the instigators, oppressors or aggressors in the conflict, may also be at higher risk of mental distress because of discrimination and feelings of guilt.

Women, youth, middle-aged and elderly migrants encounter unique and sometimes disproportionate amounts of stress, and may warrant special attention from service providers and researchers (Beiser & Edwards, 1994, p. 76). There are indications that elderly migrants, women and unaccompanied children are more at risk of developing mental disorders (Abbott, 1997, p. 258). Younger immigrants may experience elevated distress about harmful environmental conditions, anxiety about the future, family problems and lack of familiarity with the host culture (Ritsner & Ponizovsky, 2003, pp. 135, 137). Female adolescents from traditional cultures experience increased levels of stress because they have to negotiate competing expectations of their parents and the host society regarding gender roles, values and decision making (Beiser & Edwards, 1994, pp. 76-77). New Zealand studies have indicated that Asian and Indian youth, such as international students, are vulnerable to bullying and may be at particular risk for mental health problems, such as depression and suicidality, and are less likely to access health services (Rasanathan et al., cited in Higgins, 2008, p. 101). Young or female Chinese migrant youth, as well as those who regretted moving to New Zealand or who came without their parents, had higher rates of mental disorder (Abbott, Wong, Williams & Young, cited in Higgins, 2008, p. 91).

Lerner et al. (2005, p. 1813) suggest that men are more distressed by “humiliating” events, such as work-related stress or financial problems, whereas women are more distressed by “interpersonal” events, such as loss of close family members. Women generally
experience higher levels of psychological distress than men, and additional risk factors are a low level of education, limited resources and ongoing unemployment after resettlement (Ritsner & Ponizovsky, 2003, p. 140), as well as lack of language acquisition and integration with the host society (Lerner et al., 2005, p. 1809). According to Cheng and Chang (1999, para. 18), female immigrants have a higher incidence of depression and anxiety, whereas males have a higher risk for alcohol and substance abuse. Women from patriarchal societies and those who migrate involuntarily experience higher levels of depression (De Snyder, cited in Rogler, 1994, p. 703). Female refugees also often have higher rates of mental illness than men from a refugee background (Porter & Haslam, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 24).

Older adults have an increased vulnerability to mental health problems, such as depression, somatisation and culture-bound syndromes, owing to an interaction of cultural inflexibility, linguistic barriers, lack of family and social support, and physical ill-health (Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 590). For middle-aged immigrants, risk factors for elevated distress are being female, a low level of education, ongoing unemployment after resettlement, financial and housing concerns, family problems, uncertainty and a sense of personal insecurity (Ritsner & Ponizovsky, 2003, pp. 135, 137). Risk factors for elevated psychological distress among older immigrants are being divorced, separated or widowed, living alone, unemployment, low income, poor host language proficiency, uncertainty and feelings of personal insecurity, and perceiving hostility from people in their environment (Lerner et al., 2005, p. 1811). Ritsner and Ponizovsky (2003, pp. 135, 137, 139) found that older immigrants experienced higher levels of health-related stressors and a sense of isolation, because younger family members become socialised to the majority culture at a faster pace. They may find that their wisdom is no longer valued, and their feelings of worth are eroded (Canadian Task Force, cited in Beiser & Edwards, 1994, p. 77). The loss of economic and professional status and the failure to maintain economic independence and
security in the host country at an advanced age can be crippling since the prospect of regaining their former status is slim (Lerner et al., 2005, p. 1811). Hinton et al. and Shapiro et al. (cited in Ritsner and Ponizovsky, 2003, p. 135) reported higher depression rates, while Ponizovsky et al. (cited in Ritsner and Ponizovsky, 2003, p. 135) found higher levels of paranoid ideation, anxiety and hostility among older adults. Individuals with serious personal or family problems, low occupational efficiency, schizoid or paranoid personality traits, or who develop a major depressive disorder may not be able to cope successfully with the impact of migration (Grinberg & Grinberg 1989, p. 20).

A personal or family history is an important risk factor for schizophrenia, as well as post-migration stressors relating to social inequality and discrimination, which may lead to the experience of social defeat that fosters a paranoid attributional style, and may facilitate the development of psychotic symptoms (Cantor-Graae & Selten, 2005, pp. 18, 20, 21). Second-generation migrants may also have an elevated risk of mental illness, particularly schizophrenia (Kinsie, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 24; Pumariega et al., 2005). Second-generation children, compared with first-generation immigrant youth, are at higher risk of behavioural problems, such as substance abuse and conduct disorders, as well as eating disorders (Szapocnik et al.; Szapocnik & Kurtines; Miller & Pumariega, cited in Pumariega et al., 2005, pp. 588-589). This increased risk may be the result of chronic stressors created by poverty, marginalisation and discrimination without the buffering effect of a secure identity, based on the traditional values and religious activities of their parents, and not having established a bicultural identity (Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 589).

Stress adaptation models

You have to start by taking control of the streets, the corners, the cafés.

When you feel that a street is not foreign to you,
only then does the street stop looking at you like you’re a foreigner.

(Benedetti, cited in Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 165)

**Stress and coping theories**

Selye’s (cited in Krohne, 2001, p. 15164) research on animals focused on stereotypical, biological response patterns to novel, uncontrollable, stressful stimuli, which he called the general adaptation syndrome (GAS). The GAS consists of the following three stages: the alarm reaction or shock stage, the stage of resistance or apparent adaptation and the stage of exhaustion where adaptive capabilities are exhausted and damage occurs (Krohne, 2001, p. 15164). Based on Selye’s work, Holmes and Rahe (cited in Krohne, 2001, pp. 15164, 15166) argued that the adjustment to changing situational circumstances as a result of critical life events can cause stress-related illness. More recently, Hobfoll (cited in Krohne, 2001, p. 15166) has suggested that distress is only experienced in circumstances when a person’s resources are threatened, lost or do not yield the expected results. Hobfoll (cited in Krohne, 2001, p. 15166) proposes the conservation of four types of resources: physical resources (such as a home, clothing or transportation), condition resources (such as employment and personal relationships), individual resources (such as skills or self-efficacy) and facilitating resources, such as money or knowledge. Stressful circumstances deplete a person’s resource pool, which makes it more difficult to manage additional stressors that tax his or her resources (Krohne, 2001, p. 15166). Stress can have an adverse effect on health owing to changes in physiological processes; it can worsen existing medical conditions, increase the likelihood of maladaptive behaviours and lifestyle choices, and subjective symptomatology, and result in either overuse or underuse of the healthcare system (Farley, Galves, Dickinson, & Diaz Perez, 2005, p. 214).
Resources for coping with stress include five domains, namely physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual or philosophical (Kamya, 1997, p. 158). Stress-coping mechanisms can modify the impact that stress has on health and are defined as deliberate and conscious cognitive, emotional and behavioural efforts to control the stress response and adapt to stressful conditions (Vogel & Romano, cited in Farley et al., 2005, p. 214). Psychological adaptation is influenced by personality variables, coping strategies and social support, while sociocultural adaptation is affected by cultural knowledge, degree of contact and intergroup attitudes (Kosic, Mannetti, & Sam, 2006, p. 142). Coping theories can be classified according to two independent parameters, namely trait oriented (dispositional or personality characteristics) versus state oriented (coping efficiency), as well as micro-analytic (specific coping strategies) versus macro-analytic approaches, which focus on more fundamental constructs (Krohne, 2001, p. 15166).

**Personality and trait theories**

Personality traits are relatively stable, enduring patterns of how individuals feel, think, and behave (Shaffer, Harrison, Gregersen, Black, & Ferzandi, 2006, p. 111). A trait approach to coping focuses on stable personality characteristics, such as locus of control, hardiness, type A behaviour, dispositional optimism and neuroticism, to identify risk factors for poor health outcomes (Donnelly, 2002, p. 718). A number of macroanalytic, trait-oriented approaches have added the following two cognitive constructs in response to stress: vigilance or orientation towards stressful aspects of an encounter, and cognitive avoidance of stress-related information (Janis; Krohne; Roth & Cohen, cited in Krohne, 2001, p. 15167). Byrne, Eriksen, as well as Miller (cited in Krohne, 2001, p. 15167) propose the following two dispositional forms of coping, based on the amount of attention directed at the stressor: The “repressors” or “blunters” tend to deny, minimise or reinterpret the stress experience and use
distraction to avoid thinking about possible negative consequences, whereas the “sensitizers” or “monitors” respond by searching for information, rumination and obsessive worrying. Repressing or blunting, or emotion-focused coping, appears only to be adaptive when the aversive event is perceived as uncontrollable, such as painful medical procedures (Krohne, 2001, p. 15167). Although monitoring, which is problem-focused, initially increases stress reactions, it allows the individual to gain control and thus reduce the impact of the stressful situation (Krohne, 2001, p. 15167). These habitual personality-related preferences are linked to individual differences in susceptibility to emotional arousal and level of uncertainty in stressful situations (Krohne, 2001, p. 15167). Individuals prone to cognitive avoidance may experience a dissociation of subjective and objective stress responses where they exhibit low levels of psychological distress, coupled with considerable autonomic arousal that could lead to physical illnesses that mask an underlying affective component (Krohne, 2001, p. 15168).

When the relative efficiency of these processes is evaluated, it is also necessary to consider what aspects of the objective environment the individual selects for cognitive transformation and to establish the personal goals of coping behaviour (Karoly; Lazarus; Mischel & Shoda; cited in Krohne, 2001, p. 15168). Coping strategies viewed as most effective are those that reduce tension, whereas those that lead to a disintegration of the ego are considered least effective (Menninger, cited in Donnelly, 2002, p. 717).

Jones and Johnston, as well as Westermeyer and Uecker (cited in Ritsner & Ponizovsky, 2003, p. 139), reported that hostility is a personality characteristic that contributes to the level of perceived stressors and distress. Shaffer et al. (2006, pp. 120-122) found that expatriates from diverse nationalities with personality characteristics such as emotional stability, who were outgoing, agreeable and high in openness to experience, and had cross-cultural competencies, such as strong task and people orientations and cultural flexibility, experienced better cultural, psychological, social and work adjustment on
international assignments, and were less likely to consider an early return. Black (cited in Bennett et al., 1997, p. 161) also suggests that personality factors, such as social orientation, willingness to communicate, collaborative conflict resolution and the creation of “stability zones” can affect adjustment. Kosic et al. (2006, p. 141) found that self-monitoring, which is regarded as a personality trait, facilitated the sociocultural and psychological adaptation of immigrants. Persons high in self-monitoring are sensitive to social cues, which allow them to interpret social situations, modify their behaviour to suit the demands of the context and to learn new behaviour (Snyder, cited in Kosic et al., 2006, p. 143). They are more likely to initiate conversations with strangers to establish interpersonal relationships, and to obtain information to increase their knowledge and behavioural repertoire (Graziano & Waschul, cited in Kosic et al., 2006, p. 143)

_Coping strategies and styles_

Defense mechanisms, such as repression and intellectualisation, are examples of a state-oriented, macro-analytical approach (Freud, cited in Krohne, 2001, p. 15166). According to Lazarus and Folkman (cited in Donnelly, 2002, p. 720), emotion-focused or problem-focused coping is another macroanalytic state approach, where the choice of coping option depends on the context at a particular time. Lazarus and Folkman (cited in Krohne, 2001, pp. 15166-15167) later added a microanalytic strategy by identifying specific coping strategies, such as confrontive coping, distancing, self-controlling, seeking social support, accepting responsibility, escape-avoidance, planned problem solving and positive reappraisal.

Currently, coping responses can be divided into the following four categories: active coping (problem focused or task based), avoidance-based coping (denial, self-distraction or substance abuse), emotion-focused coping, and social or instrumental support (Farley et al., 2005, pp. 214, 218). The particular strategy used may depend on the personal relevance and
perceived level of control over the stressor, properties of the stressor, such as novelty, duration and predictability, as well as self-attributions, such as causality (Bennett et al., 1997, p. 161). The person who uses problem-focused strategies endeavour to change the environment or his or her own behaviour, while those who choose emotion-focused strategies, such as distancing, change the personal meaning of the event without altering the actual conditions (Lazarus, cited in Donnelly, 2002, p. 720). According to Farley et al. (2005, pp. 214, 216, 218), active coping styles, coping styles emphasising social support and cognitive and emotional management strategies, such as humour, acceptance and resignation, religion and positive reframing, are associated with lower perceived stress and better health outcomes among Mexican immigrants. Beiser and Edwards (1994, p. 82) found that for the refugees in their study, focusing their energies on the present, rather than ruminating on the past or building expectations of the future, provided a buffer against stress, assisted post-migration adaptation and lessened the risk of depression. Avoidant coping, such as denial, substance abuse, behavioural disengagement, self-distraction and self-blame, and emotion-focused coping, have been associated with higher levels of perceived stress and poorer mental and physical health outcomes (Farley et al., 2005, p. 214).

Migrants generally view themselves as courageous, creative, resourceful, strong and resilient people. Firkin et al. (2004) conclude that you have to be “hard-nosed” (p. 24) and "thick-skinned” (p. 24), and have to remain focused and confident, obtain support, persevere and find a way to make things work (p. 26). Immigration can be extremely stressful, and the intensity of stress and the effectiveness of coping mechanisms affect physical and psychological well-being (Farley et al., 2005, p. 213). The psychological impact of social stress experienced by immigrants, such as depression caused by perceived discrimination, can be significantly mediated by personal coping behaviours (Noh & Kaspar, 2003, p. 232). Coping efficacy is determined by the nature of the stressor, personal resources, cultural
influences and social contexts (Noh & Kaspar, 2003, p. 232). Immigrants from different cultural, ethnic and national backgrounds may face different stressors, and the perceived stress, coping strategies and health-related quality of life may vary between groups (Farley et al., 2005, p. 213). Members of collectivistic cultures with strong attachments to traditional ethnic values and group identification tend to prefer passive, emotion-focused coping strategies, and receiving social support from members of their ethnic community may provide a buffer against emotional distress (Noh & Kaspar, 2003, pp. 232-233). However, frequent use of emotion-focused coping, such as passive acceptance and emotional distraction, may intensify the mental health impact of perceived discrimination, particularly in those who are not well supported by their cultural communities (Noh & Kaspar, 2003, p. 237). Immigrants from more individualistic societies or better acculturated individuals generally find problem-focused coping styles, such as confrontation or taking formal action, more effective in reducing the impact of discrimination-related stressors (Noh & Kaspar, 2003, p. 232). Noh and Kaspar (2003, p. 238) suggest that when empowered with sufficient social resources, members of diverse ethnic or racial minority groups are more likely to confront racial bias and discrimination, irrespective of their cultural background, but that interventions that do not involve changes to their social contexts are unlikely to be successful.

Recent South African immigrants, who had been in New Zealand for less than five years, reported that their most significant stressors were leaving family and friends behind, uncertainty about their decision to immigrate, financial difficulties, adapting to new cultural norms and a lack of support networks (Bennett et al., 1997, p. 162). The most commonly used coping strategies used by recent South African immigrants were attempts at changing an undesirable situation for important issues, or to accommodate this by adjusting their desires to fit the situation, and these strategies promoted psychological adaptation and integration in the short term (Bennett et al., 1997, p. 162). They also relied on persuasive arguments to
justify their decision to migrate, tried to ignore problems, avoided contact with other South Africans and used emotional outlets, such as crying and complaining (Bennett et al., 1997, p. 163). However, with an increased length of stay, their perceived sense of control over relocation problems lessened and they reported ongoing financial difficulties, problems re-establishing their reputation, a lack of close friendships, a loss of lifestyle, country and roots, isolation from family and friends and the anti-South African sentiment in New Zealand (Bennett et al., 1997, p. 162). As a result, those who had immigrated more than five years earlier could still try to accommodate or change difficult situations, but increasingly used avoidance as a coping mechanism (Bennett et al., 1997, p. 160). They attempted to change the situation by changing jobs or towns, involving themselves in community or business activities and establishing new friendships, or accommodating the situation by working harder and longer hours, looking at the pros and cons of their situation, visiting South Africa or receiving South African visitors, and adapting to local norms (Bennett et al., 1997, p. 163). Avoidance strategies were related to a sense that problems will remain unresolved in the foreseeable future, or that “time will eventually heal” (Bennett et al., 1997, p. 163). According to Bennett et al., p. 163), some long-term immigrants attempted to reduce their level of distress by keeping busy, sulking and complaining, and expressing their feelings about South Africa. It would appear that recent immigrants made resolute efforts to adapt on a superficial level to their new cultural context to fit in socially and survive financially, but as time progressed, some important issues remained unresolved and they lost confidence in their ability to resolve these problems (Bennett et al., 1997, p. 163). They responded by trying to adjust their needs and aspirations, or to devalue them, and if these proved to be ineffective they lost hope and resorted to self-distraction and emotional expression as an avoidance strategy (Bennett et al., 1997, p. 164). The danger of attempting to avoid, ignore or minimise the impact of the problem, instead of making an effort to manage it effectively, is that the
person may remain stuck in an unsatisfactory life situation by learning to rely on “quick
fixes” such as overeating, excessive sleeping or alcohol abuse.

Although some coping styles may appear to be universal, they interact with other
components of the ecological context (Bronfenbrenner, cited in Roer-Strier, 1996, p.5).
Immigrant parents are often faced with different child-rearing practices and ideologies held
by the host culture, and Roer-Strier (1996, p. 5) uses the concept of the “adaptive adult” to
bridge the cultural divide. According to this concept, parents have an internalised perspective
of shaping desirable characteristics in their child to maximise adaptation to their cultural
milieu, for instance, becoming an assertive, independent adult (Roer-Strier, 1996, p. 2).
Where their image of an “adaptive adult” clashes with that of socialising agents in the host
culture, they develop strategies to cope with the conflict, which depend on family
characteristics, the motivation for immigration, evaluation of the host culture, cultural context
and differences, economic and social changes, social policies and tolerance for pluralism in
the host society, and attitudes of socialising agents (Roer-Strier, 1996, pp. 2, 4). Roer-Strier
(1996, p. 3) suggests a typology of profiles, based on the metaphor of the Kangaroo, the
Cuckoo and the Chameleon. Parents who utilise the Kangaroo strategy prefer a traditional,
unicultural style of parenting, which conserves the culture of origin and shuts out foreign
influences, but their children risk estrangement from peers and the host society (Roer-Strier,
1996, p. 3). The Cuckoo strategy, or culturally disoriented style, involves rapid assimilation
of children into the host culture and entrusting their well-being to external agents, for
instance, immigrants to Israel sending their children to Kibbutzim at a young age (Roer-
Strier, 1996, p. 3). The Chameleon strategy or bi-cultural style requires the child to adjust to
live successfully in both cultures, and to adapt their language and behaviour according to the
demands of the particular context (Roer-Strier, 1996, p. 4).
Cognitive attribution theory

The cognitive appraisal model of stress and coping was developed by Lazarus and Folkman (cited in Walsh, 1996, p. 5). According to this model, stress is viewed as a transactional concept between individuals and their environments, and describes adaptive behaviours that involve appraisals of demands, constraints and opportunities. Interventions are aimed at reducing stress levels and seeking the best adaptation for an individual in a particular environment (Walsh, 1996, p. 5). Coping patterns and strategies vary in response to the particular stressful encounter, situational demands, individual capacity and social resources (Aldwin; Lazarus; Lazarus & Folkman; Parkes, cited in Donnelly, 2002, p. 721). An individual’s evaluation of a stressful encounter is also influenced by social, cultural, political and historical conditions (Donnelly, 2002, p. 720). According to Aldwin (cited in Donnelly, 2002, pp. 721-722), culture affects the perception and cognitive appraisal of stressful events, determines the choice of coping strategies and provides mechanisms for coping, which are further affected by individual coping resources, resources provided by the culture and the reaction of others. Banyard and Graham-Bermann (cited in Donnelly, 2002, p. 729) assert that power may act as a mediator in the stress-coping process, and may affect relationships between healthcare providers and clients. The implication is that passive coping strategies, such as emotional restraint and acceptance of fate, which may be viewed as maladaptive according to the criteria of Western society, may be considered successful coping by many Eastern cultures (Donnelly, 2002, pp. 722-723).

Lazarus views coping as an interactive, dynamic process between a person and the environment, and adds the concepts of cognitive appraisal and coping mechanisms as vital mediating factors of the stress-outcome relationship (Krohne, 2001, p. 15164). Cognitive appraisal is the process in which an individual makes an evaluation of the significance of a stressor in terms of his or her well-being, which guides his or her response (Carver & Scheier,
cited in Donnelly, 2002, p. 719). Cognitive appraisal determines the quality, intensity and duration of an emotional response, and depends on personal factors, such as motivational dispositions and expectancies, as well as situational factors, such as predictability, controllability and proximity of a potentially stressful event (Krohne, 2001, p. 15165). Primary appraisal is concerned with how relevant an event is to the individual’s well-being in terms of goals, values, beliefs, identity and self-esteem, whereas in secondary appraisal, options for cognitive and behavioural coping strategies are explored in order to master, tolerate or reduce demands and conflicts (Lazarus, cited in Krohne, 2001, p. 15165). Lazarus and Folkman (cited in Krohne, 2001, p. 15165) identified the following three types of stress relating to specific patterns of primary and secondary appraisal: harm resulting from previous damage or loss, threat due to imminent harm and challenge due to demands that the person feels confident about mastering. These different types of psychological stress are related to specific types of appraisal patterns and emotional reactions, which are described as core relational themes. Anxiety, for instance, involves the confrontation of uncertainty and existential threat (Krohne, 2001, p. 15165).

*Emotional and practical intelligence*

A primary component of culture shock is the emotional response to a new cultural environment, and adjustment to the new society is influenced by how successful these emotions are managed (Jhutty, 2007, p. 2). Scott and Scott (cited in Nevo & Chawarski, 1997, p. 90) reported a significant correlation between emotional stability and successful adjustment among immigrants to Australia. Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive, assimilate, understand and manage one’s own emotions, as well as the emotions of others (Jhutty, 2007, pp. 2-3). According to Jhutty (2007, p. ix), emotional intelligence is related to sociocultural adjustment, but not to psychological adjustment in expatriates on international
Tacit knowledge, which constitutes a major part of practical intelligence, is not explicitly taught or verbalised, but is necessary for individuals to successfully manage themselves and others, to solve problems and make decisions, and to adapt to novel environments (Wagner & Sternberg, cited in Nevo & Chawarski, 1997, pp. 84-85). Individual differences in practical intelligence and tacit knowledge determine the extent to which immigrants can take full advantage of the available opportunities for successful adaptation and career success in a new country (Nevo & Chawarski, 1997, p. 90). Seeking help from other people, social integration, the ability to adjust to new situations, a willingness to compromise and patience are significant indices for immigration success (Nevo & Chawarski, 1997, p. 90). Similarly, learning the new language prior to immigration (Scott & Scott), acquiring information about occupational conditions in the new country prior to immigration (Antonovsky & Katz; Krau) and appropriate social activity (Beijer) correlate positively with successful adaptation after immigration (cited in Nevo & Chawarski, 1997, p. 90).

**Resilience and hardness**

The Chinese word for crisis consists of two symbols, namely “danger” and “opportunity” (Walsh, 1996, p. 7). Likewise, many individuals believe that something positive can result from adversity, and families have reported that weathering a crisis brought them closer and strengthened their relationships (Stinnett et al., cited in Walsh, 1996, p. 7). Various protective resources modify and moderate the relationship between stressors and psychological outcomes, such as a sense of coherence, which is the belief that the world is comprehensible, manageable and meaningful (Antonovsky, cited in Krohne, 2001, p. 15166;

Davydov, Stewart, Ritchie, and Chaudieu (2010, p. 482) propose a biopsychosocial, multilevel construct of mental resilience to describe a lifespan trajectory of biological, behavioural and social mechanisms that determine, develop or modify resilience. Genetic, biological, psychological, family, community, social and environmental processes may interact in an adaptive trade-off between tolerance and sensitivity to stress (Cameron, Ungar, & Liebenberg; Connor & Zhang; Norris et al., cited in Davydov et al. 2010, pp. 481, 491). Resilience may be an innate trait or may develop through individual adaptation to adversity and disruption, or through external influences, such as the quality of perceived social support or public health services (Davydov et al., 2010, p. 482). The following three approaches to resilience have been suggested: harm-reduction factors, such as positive emotions that can mitigate risk factors or accelerate recovery; protective factors, such as stress management, which decrease the probability of pathology; and mental health promotion factors that actively enhance psychological well-being (Hoge et al.; Patel & Goodman, cited in Davydov et al., 2010, p. 482). Hence understanding resilience is necessary for developing interventions to prevent or treat common mental disorders where the impact of risk factors has high individual and cultural variability, particularly in anxiety, depression and stress reactions (Connor & Zhang, cited in Davydov et al., 2010, p. 481) and for promoting mental health in high-risk groups, such as migrants, victims of conflict, women and older adults (Davydov et al. 2010, p. 491). Resiliency mechanisms that may offer protection or promote mental well-being include the following: (1) cognitive flexibility, such as a positive explanatory style, reappraisal and acceptance; (2) social attachment and social behaviours such as altruism; (3)
a positive self-concept and effective self-regulation of emotions; (4) positive emotions such as optimism and humour; (5) the capacity to convert traumatic helplessness into learnt helpfulness; (6) existential meaning through religion or spirituality; (7) social support, including positive role models; (8) an active coping style, such as confronting a stressor; (9) stress inoculation and the capacity to recover from negative events; and (10) the capacity to accommodate new trauma-related information positively (Charney; Joseph & Linley; Southwick et al., cited in Davydov et al., 2010, p. 487).

A resilience approach to the challenges of migration involves a shift in focus from a deficit model (Hawley & DeHaan, 1996, p. 1), where the focus is on the pathology of distressed and traumatised individuals and families, to that of a strength-based, regenerative model, where conflict and change are viewed as an integral part of life (Falicov, cited in Walsh, 1996, pp. 5-6) and where competencies and resources are mobilised to meet challenges during different developmental stages (Antonovsky; Minuchin & Fishman; Walsh, cited in Greeff & Holtzkamp, 2007, pp. 189-190). Walsh (1996, p. 7) emphasises the fact that resilience does not imply rugged invulnerability and “breezing through” a crisis unmoved and unscathed, but is forged by weathering the storms of adversity and integrating this into the tapestry of individual and family identity and moving forward with their lives. Resilient individuals have a repertoire of coping skills to manage or transform stressful situations, to “bounce back” (Walsh, 1996, p. 7) after adversity, and to emerge from the experience scarred, but strengthened, with the capacity to “work well, play well, and love well” (Werner & Smith, cited in Walsh, 1996, pp. 2-3). They endure and thrive, and develop long-term patterns of mastery and competence (Burger, cited in Hawley & DeHaan, 1996, p. 4). Because they view change as inevitable, challenging and manageable, they are less likely to perceive situations as stressful (Walsh, 1996, pp.6, 8).
Psychological hardiness is associated with an internal sense of control over the outcome of life events and hardships, involvement and commitment to life’s activities, as well as viewing change as a challenge instead of a threat (Kobasa, cited in Walsh, 1996, p. 3). The belief of hardy individuals that they can control or influence what happens to them enhances their coping skills, as well as their sense of mastery and self-efficacy, which leads to an active orientation to adjustment and managing stressful situations because these life events are interpreted in the context of a meaningful life plan (Greeff & Holtzkamp, 2007, pp. 192-193; Pearlin & Schooler; Rutter, cited in Beiser & Edwards, 1994, p. 82). Involvement in the activities of daily life minimises feelings of alienation, and viewing life as a challenge allows exploration of the new environment and provides sources of support (Beiser & Edwards, 1994, p. 82). Hardiness and resilience encourage the taking of calculated risks, tolerating uncertainty, feeling confident about one’s ability to master adversity, adopting a long-term perspective and planning for the future (Beiser & Edwards, 1994, p. 82).

According to Silliman (cited in Hawley & DeHaan, 1996, p. 3,) resilience can be described at an individual, family and community level, and they are interrelated. A systemic or ecological view of resilience in the face of disruption shifts the focus from individual characteristics to interactional processes within the developmental, temporal and sociocultural contexts of families (Walsh, 1996, pp. 1, 5). These processes are based on multiple variables, such as life stage, family structure, gender roles, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion and socioeconomic status (Falicov, cited in Walsh, 1996, pp. 5-6). A resiliency-based stance views each family as a complex and unique ecological “niche” (p. 6), with similarities, but also differing from other families and the dominant culture (Walsh, 1996). The implication is that the efficacy of strategies and processes in dealing with change may vary according to the ecological context, and that flexibility to use a variety of coping strategies to fit the situation may be required to meet challenges as they emerge on the

Hawley and DeHaan (1996, p. 6) emphasise the fact that because today’s protective factor may become tomorrow’s risk factor, it is not advisable to develop a static list of risk and protective factors, but instead to examine these factors in the family’s developmental trajectory with a view to long-term growth and development. Migration poses a critical developmental challenge owing to a “profound ecological disruption and uprooting of meanings” (Walsh, 1996, p. 6). The cumulative effect of multiple stressors, losses and dislocations can overwhelm family coping efforts and contribute to family violence, fragmentation or disintegration (Walsh, 1996, p. 6). According to Reiss (cited in Walsh, 1996, p. 8), a critical event or disruptive transition can cause a major shift in a family’s belief system, which has an impact on their immediate reorganisation and long-term adaptation. A family’s perception and appraisal of stressful situations, the meaning they attach to the challenge and their response pattern are also affected by their historical experiences, cultural heritage and traditions, and spiritual values (Beavers & Hampson; Carter & McGoldrick, cited in Walsh, 1996, p. 8).

Family resilience or relational resilience refers to the characteristics, resources, processes and collaborative efforts of families that enable them to endure, withstand, transcend, overcome, rebound, thrive and prosper (Hawley & DeHaan, 1996, pp. 1, 6, 7) when faced with disruptive challenges, setbacks, crisis situations and prolonged hardship, leading to individual and family adaptation, growth and development in the face of adversity (Greeff & Holtzkamp, 2007, p. 189; Walsh, 1996, pp. 1-2, 5). Family resilience focuses on the multiple, recursive processes that influence immediate responses to a crisis situation, as well as the long-term adaptation of families (Walsh, 1996, p. 1). Families also need to negotiate between individual and system priorities, and between different dimensions of
family life, in order to achieve a functional fit that promotes the development and well-being of the family unit, as well as its individual members (McCubbin & Patterson, cited in Walsh, 1996, p. 6). A systemic approach to intervention strengthens key interactional processes that minimise the disruptive impact and foster resilience, allowing the family to readjust and recalibrate, and to heal and recover, strengthened as a family unit and able to move on with life (Walsh, 1996, p. 8). Hawley and DeHaan (1996, pp. 3, 5), McCubbin (cited in Hawley & DeHaan, 1996, p. 3), Silliman (cited in Greeff & Holtzkamp, 2007, p. 190) and Walsh (cited in Walsh, 1996, pp. 5, 8, 9) identify the following core traits of family resilience that mitigate the effects of stressors and facilitate adaptation: adaptability; flexibility; problem-solving skills; efficacy; commitment; cohesion; connectedness; coherence; spending family time together; open communication; a confident, empowering and hopeful outlook; a shared set of values, goals and attitudes; and affirming belief systems and spirituality.

The availability of community resources, social networks, religious and other group affiliations, and a family's ability to utilise them are also essential for family resilience because they offer financial or practical assistance, social support and a sense of connectedness (Walsh, 1996, p. 8). According to Werner and Smith (cited in Walsh, 1996, p. 4), unconditional acceptance by at least one person in a child's life imparts resilience. Resilience can therefore also be forged by friends, neighbours, teachers, coaches, clergy or mentors in a child's social environment (Brooks; Rutter; Werner, cited in Walsh, 1996, p. 3). Since predictable and achievable rewards are key factors in the development of resilience, the interplay between families and the political, economic, sociocultural and racial climates in which they live must be considered (Walsh, 1996, p. 4).

In a study on South African families who relocated to another area in South Africa, Greeff and Holtzkamp (2007, p.198) identified the following factors associated with resilience in migrant families: (1) the traits and abilities of individual family members, such
as optimism, humour and the ability to support oneself; (2) the utilisation of internal family strengths, such as cohesion, problem-solving, open and honest communication, and emotional and practical support; (3) the integration and stability of the family structure, fostered by routines and spending time together; (4) social support networks; and (5) a passive appraisal coping style in the midst of crises, indicating a spirit of acceptance of the prevailing circumstances. Kamya (1997, pp. 159-160) found that for African immigrants in the United States of America, spiritual well-being was significantly related to hardiness, self-esteem and overall coping resources, as well as lower stress levels. This finding supports the literature which suggests that religious beliefs are a vital coping resource for immigrants (Kamya, 1997, p. 159). In his research, he reported that the length of stay in the host country correlated positively with hardiness and confidence, which indicates greater internal strength for tolerating stress among long-term immigrants (Kamya, 1997, p. 159).

**Settlement needs and service utilisation**

He aha te mea nui i tenei ao?

He tangata, he tangata, he tangata.

“What is the most important thing in the world?

It is people, it is people, it is people”.

(Department of Labour, 2008, Front page)

One of the specific aims of this study was a review of migration literature to establish a theoretical framework of settlement needs, support systems and service provision to immigrants during the various phases of the immigration process. A literature survey of settlement needs and service utilisation, components of migrant settlement service provision and intervention programmes available for migrants in New Zealand follows in this second
half of this chapter. These elements were utilised to establish a theoretical immigration intervention framework (figure 2) to expand the preliminary coding manual used to conduct a thematic network analysis of participant narratives. The process of developing the theoretical immigration intervention framework is further discussed in chapter 4. The layout of the phases of immigration and type of Clip Art used in figure 2 were based on the framework of Van Coller (2002, pp. 41, 73).

A country’s readiness to accept newcomers should be reflected not only in its immigration and refugee policies, but also in its newcomer programmes and services, outreach efforts and training for service providers (Segal & Mayadas, 2005, p. 580). The aim of New Zealand’s immigration policies since the mid 1980s has been to “enrich the multicultural fabric of New Zealand society through the selection of new settlers, principally on the strength of their personal contribution to the future well-being of New Zealand” (Burke, cited in Bedford, Ho, & Lidgard, 2000, p. 8). New Zealand, unlike Canada and Australia, does not have a government department or a ministry with an explicit focus on multiculturalism and, other than for the annual refugee quota, has not had a migrant settlement policy since the termination of sponsored immigration from the United Kingdom and the Netherlands in the 1960s (Bedford et al., 2000, pp. 9, 24). The current immigrant selection procedures are structured to identify individuals and families who will settle without undue difficulty in New Zealand, using the human and financial capital they have brought into the country (Bedford et al., 2000, p.24). The assumption is that immigrants who have commendable personal qualities, in terms of education, skills or business experience, will settle down to a successful life in New Zealand without requiring additional information, support or assistance, and without much preparation on the part of the host country (Bedford et al., 2000, p.25).
Processes and components

Preventative  Supportive  Therapeutic

Assessment  Informative  Educational  Practical  Psychological

Preparation  Migration  Honeymoon  Crisis  Adaptation  Growth

Preventative  Supportive  Therapeutic

Individual  Couple  Family  Group  Informal networks

Home  Vocational  Recreational

Focus groups and contexts

Figure 2. Theoretical immigration intervention framework.
There is clearly scope for more research on immigrant adaptation in a changing New Zealand at the beginning of the 21st century as new forms of migration, in contrast to the classic settler migration of the previous century, become more apparent to researchers and policy makers (Hugo, cited in Bedford et al., 2000, p. 27). Complex patterns of skilled migrant flow will develop as an increasing number of people with internationally marketable skills develop transnational careers and astronaut family patterns, where migration to New Zealand becomes one of the steps on the ladder of a person’s multinational career cycle (Bedford et al., 2000, p.27). There will also be an influx of refugees and immigrants seeking to escape from economic hardship and various forms of ethnic, political, social or religious persecution (Bedford et al., 2000, p. 29) Hence the composition of New Zealand’s population will continue to diversify as groups with different cultures and lifestyles enter the country (Bedford et al., 2000, p.29). It is apparent that more deliberate efforts by a range of government and nongovernmental agencies will be required to facilitate the successful adaptation and integration of migrant groups from cultural and linguistic backgrounds, which differ markedly from those of New Zealand society (Ho et al., cited in Bedford et al., 2000, p.24).

*Maslow’s hierarchy of needs*

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory places human needs in a hierarchy of importance, and links the motivation to fulfil these unmet needs to particular behaviour (cited in Oosthuizen & Ehlers, 2007, p. 15). As each need in the hierarchy, from the more basic to higher needs, is realised, the next level becomes the central focus of a person’s thoughts and behaviour. At the lower levels of the hierarchy are deficiency needs, such as physiological requirements, followed by the need for safety, and lastly, social belonging (Oosthuizen & Ehlers, 2007). Since these needs promote survival and provide a sense of safety and security,
they must be met before the higher level of growth and development needs, such as self-esteem, followed by recognition from others, and eventually self-actualisation can be satisfied (Oosthuizen & Ehlers, 2007, p. 24). Each stage of the motivational hierarchy is embedded in a person’s particular worldview in terms of the meaning of life, and some individuals strive beyond self-actualisation to reach a level of self-transcendence (Maslow, cited in Koltko-Rivera, 2004, p. 17).

The “push” and “pull” factors that contribute to emigration can be evaluated according to Maslow’s theory in terms of unfulfilled needs, and the potential of having these needs met via immigration to another country. In the South African context, physiological needs were compromised because of affirmative action, the lack of economic growth, the high unemployment rates, the devaluation of the rand, poor remuneration, unsatisfactory work conditions, high taxation, an increase in the cost of living, declining standards of living, and low standards of public and commercial services (Oosthuizen & Ehlers, 2007, pp. 16, 24). Personal safety was constantly under threat because of crime and violence in South Africa, as well as unsafe work environments and the high incidence of HIV/AIDS, especially in the health sector (Oosthuizen & Ehlers, 2007, p. 24). After black majority rule came into effect, some ethnic groups felt like outsiders in their own country and this lack of social belonging was exacerbated by losing family and friends who had emigrated. Lack of career opportunities and advancement, lack of support and recognition, as well as wide-spread job loss due to affirmative action led to frustration, apathy and hopelessness (Oosthuizen & Ehlers, 2007). A salient factor was that most South Africans were loyal, and identified strongly with the country of their birth. They still regarded South Africa as a wonderful country of opportunities, and would probably not have considered emigrating if some of their basic needs in terms of career opportunities, standard of living, and safety and security had been satisfied (Oosthuizen & Ehlers, 2007).
Settlement service needs

The adaptation of migrants is dependent upon their pre-migration and migration experiences, the availability of internal and external resources, and how they are received by the host country. Immigrants and refugees require short-term assistance during the early phases of settlement, as well as longer-term input to facilitate integration at a physical, economic, sociocultural, political and government level (Mental health in a changing world, 2007, p. 6).

During the initial stages after arrival in the host country, the new migrant usually has a “help me get started” (Hulewat, 1996, p. 133) attitude and requires information and assistance with basic needs that are essential for physical and financial survival, and to gain a sense of control and independence, for example, by having access to food, housing, schools, transport, public services and healthcare, language skills, communication services and finding employment (Mental health in a changing world, 2007, p. 6). They may also require legal and financial advice, assistance with work visas and permanent residency, and later on with obtaining citizenship and voting in elections (Mental health in a changing world, 2007, p. 6). At a sociocultural level, they need to establish new friendships and social networks, and have to face the challenges of cultural adaptation, such as language and changes in family relationships (Mental health in a changing world, 2007, p. 6). During the settlement process, immigrants and refugees redefine their sociocultural and professional identities, and reassess and adapt their values while they reconstruct their lives in the host society (Mental health in a changing world, 2007). To facilitate integration in the long term, migrants may require information on and assistance with home buying, relocation in the country, further education, career advancement, income parity and entry into pre-migration field of employment (Mental health in a changing world, 2007, p. 6). With long-term settlement and sociocultural
integration they may become involved in management and policy making in organisations, or may be interested in participation in political parties and sociopolitical movements (Mental health in a changing world, 2007, p. 6).

After a couple of months, immigrants may become overwhelmed when confronted with the full impact of their life situation in the new country, and they may regress and adopt an overly dependent “take care of me” attitude (Hulewat, 1996, p. 134). Some become controlling and resistant to change, and demand of service providers to “do it my way” (p. 134), while others develop physical or mental illness and family dysfunction (Hulewat, 1996). Refugees and refugee-like migrants may have high mental health needs because of their pre-migration and migration experience, such as forced migration, exposure to trauma and violence, and refugee camp experiences (Mental health in changing world, 2007). During resettlement, these migrants experience a loss of identity and are vulnerable because they are socially and economically disadvantaged, and they occupy a marginal position in society, where they feel unwelcome, disempowered, stigmatised and alienated (Mental health in changing world, 2007).

According to Lawrence and Kearns (2005, p. 456), refugees reported that during resettlement in New Zealand their health outcome and sense of well-being was not so much determined by traditional medical care, but by other factors, such as immigration issues, employment and housing. They often experienced considerable stress and anxiety relating to uncertainty about their immigration status and difficulties with family reunification (Lawrence & Kearns, 2005, p. 456). Unemployment and underemployment had a negative impact on their confidence and psychological well-being, and accessing affordable housing was challenging (Lawrence & Kearns, 2005, p. 456). It was concluded that New Zealand had only broad resettlement services in place to meet these needs, and that migrants and refugees were invisible in mental health policy (Mental health in changing world, 2007).
Help-seeking behaviour and access to services

Healthcare service use can be influenced by client help-seeking behaviours, as well as characteristics of health and other services (Te Pou, 2008, p. 36). Both sources influence initial access and may result in underutilisation of services, which may affect ongoing and appropriate care (Fraser, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p.36). Help-seeking behaviours, perceptions, attitudes and expectations are shaped by the norms, values and practices in the migrant’s country of origin and cultural background. For instance, some may refrain from using counselling services to alleviate trauma because silence and “active forgetting” are more common coping mechanisms in their culture (Burnett & Peel, cited in Lawrence & Kearns, 2005, p. 453). Health-seeking behaviour is influenced by experience and familiarity with health services in the home country, the cultural understanding of illness and health and the appropriate means for treatment, such as consulting an elder or traditional healer in the community (Lawrence & Kearns, 2005, p. 456). Effective service provision and intervention may be hampered by cultural resistance to accept a stranger’s help because of shame or guilt, communication barriers due to differences in verbal and nonlanguage and taboo topics, valuing the privacy of family matters, and nondisclosure due to mistrust of authority, fear of exposure, or past experiences of torture or oppression (Segal & Mayadas, 2005, p. 570).

New Zealand researchers have reported reluctance among refugees and migrants to seek help for mental distress and family violence (Au; Baxter et al.; Chu et al.; Hauraki & Vong, cited in Higgins, 2008, p. 16). In New Zealand, potential barriers to mental health service access for refugee and migrants in terms of client characteristics were as follows: a lack of knowledge about the health system and the roles of various healthcare workers; the availability of services and where to access them; language and communication difficulties; the cost of treatment and transport difficulties; concerns about service providers or distrust of
medical professionals; fears that private matters would be disclosed to other people or family members; fear of bringing shame on the family and community stigma; unfamiliarity with and low expectations of counselling; the preference to seek help from a familiar person instead of a stranger; beliefs about the nature, causes, effects and treatments for mental illness that differ from Western conceptual models; a preference for alternative and herbal medicines, consulting religious leaders or utilising religious ceremonies; valuing emotional self-restraint; competing settlement priorities where economic and social support take precedence over psychological concerns; and only seeking help for mental health issues as a last resort (Auckland Sustainable Cities Programme; Briggs; Department of Labour; Fraser; Guerin, Abdi, & Guerin; Jackson; Ngai, Latimer, & Cheung; Schmidt & Poole; Sheikh-Mohammed, MacIntyre, Wood, Leask, & Isaacs; Summerfield, cited in Te Pou, 2008, pp. 36, 72; Vong, cited in Higgins, 2008, p. 104). To encourage health service access by refugee families, a number of Auckland DHB services have recruited refugee community health workers to engage in community health promotion and to collaborate with health and other support agencies (Te Pou, 2008, p. 47).

Asians are one of the fastest-growing migrant groups in New Zealand and about 2% were mental health clients of New Zealand’s District Health Boards during 2002 (New Zealand Health Information Service, cited in Mental health in changing world, 2007, p. 5). However, in a study of recent Chinese migrants, 19% reported psychiatric morbidity and a study of Chinese migrants over the age of 55 found that 26% had depressive symptoms (Abbott et al., cited in Mental health in changing world, 2007, p. 5). Lower emotional support, lack of understanding and engagement with New Zealand society, difficulties accessing health services and a greater number of visits to a general practitioner were associated with a higher incidence of depression (Mental health in changing world, 2007, p. 5). Factors that may further reduce attendance rates by migrants include social isolation and
chronic physical illness (Creed, 1987, p. 187). They may seek help for somatic symptoms, which reflect their underlying psychological distress and may be part of their cultural response to stress (Creed, 1987, p. 188). Older migrants access formal mental health services at an even lower rate, and rely much more on traditional healers and remedies (Pang, cited in Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 590). Chinese youth may experience greater emotional distress than was commonly thought because their cultural background was inclined to disguise their adjustment difficulties, and owing to the “model student” stereotype, teachers often assumed that they were coping well and did not require assistance (Chung, cited in Higgins, 2008, p. 95). At school, teachers generally viewed refugee youth as relatively happy and well adjusted, in contrast to reports by students about being extremely unhappy, sometimes to the point of suicide (Elliot, Lee & Jane, cited in Higgins, 2008, p. 96). In addition, refugee youth tended to have extremely high expectations of themselves, and this added to the overall burden of their situation (Elliot et al. cited in Higgins, 2008, p. 96).

After the initial struggles of adjustment, many immigrants and refugees establish a reasonable infrastructure and quality of life for themselves, and are less reliant on public assistance once they become more self-sufficient (Balgopal, cited in Segal & Mayadas, 2005, p. 575). Sociocultural changes, particularly gender role relationships, start emerging during early settlement, and families attempt to address these independently under the guise of perceived autonomy and personal adjustment, but it may merely reflect a culture of familial privacy (Segal, cited in Segal & Mayadas, 2005, p. 575). However, a crisis may occur when family expectations and intercultural and intergenerational differences come into conflict with long-established traditions and norms (Tummala-Narra, cited in Segal & Mayadas, 2005, p. 575). Often immigrant and refugee families do not seek help until difficulties become so prominent that someone outside the family becomes concerned about the situation, for instance, school officials (Segal & Mayadas, 2005, p. 575). Lerner et al. (2005,
reported that after five years in a new country, the level of psychological distress of immigrants had not subsided, and they continued to report a sense of demoralisation, among pensioners and women in particular. Lerner et al. (2005, p. 1811) found that immigrants were more prepared to seek psychological help five years post-immigration than after the first year.

In New Zealand, service characteristics that were potential barriers to access to mental healthcare were reported as follows: the low levels of knowledge, skill and awareness among health workers about the experiences and needs of migrants; the lack of cultural competency for working with refugee and migrant groups (Mental health in changing world, 2007); limited availability of refugee or migrant specific services; inaccurate diagnoses; insufficient interpreting services; limited cross-sector collaboration; and a lack of appropriate referrals (Auckland Sustainable Cities Programme; Department of Labour; Fraser; Guerin et al., cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 72). Referrals from resettlement services focused on the initial resettlement phase, despite evidence that many mental health and adjustment issues remained unresolved or occurred after settlement (Kinsie; Schmidt & Poole, cited in Te Pou, 2008, pp. 24, 36). Access to ongoing and follow-up care was limited by the difficulties doctors experienced in diagnosing mental health problems, or failed to follow up referrals to mental health services (Fraser, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 72).

Requirements for mental health services to respond to the unique needs of migrants and refugees in New Zealand have been proposed: early access to effective primary healthcare, an improved range and quality of services built on collaborative relationships, a workforce that is person-centred, supported recovery, and is capable of delivering culturally appropriate services (Mental health in changing world, 2007). Recommendations to improve services include the following: enhancing the cultural competence of workers in mainstream services through training programmes; gaining a better understanding of the perceptions of well-being and illness, as well as the mental health needs of ethnically diverse refugee and
migrant communities; developing culturally responsive support and intervention services; improving community services; and educating the host community to view new settlers as valuable additions to society (Mental health in changing world, 2007).

Pathways to mental healthcare

International studies have suggested that certain factors relating to migrant clients, such as ethnicity (Morgan, Mallett, Hutchinson, & Leff), severity of symptoms (Gormley & O’Leary), the nature and extent of social support networks (Albert, Becker, McCrone, & Thornicroft), social disadvantage (Alegria, Canino, Rios et al.) and concepts of illness (Rogler & Cortes) influence the time and route taken to reach mental health services (cited in Steel et al., 2006, p. 348). In Australia, members of ethnic minorities with mental health problems have an average of three consultations with other professionals or services, such as general practitioners, allied health professionals, emergency departments, the police, welfare workers, teachers, religious leaders, alternative health practitioners or traditional healers, prior to first contact with public mental health services (Steel et al., 2006, p. 349-350). According to Steel et al., 2006, p. 350), the median time taken to reach specialist mental health services is six months, but 25% of clients take over two years to obtain appropriate care. The pathway for individuals to reach mental health care may be delayed for those with nonpsychotic disorders, somatic problems and referrals by nonmedical practitioners (Gater et al, cited in Steel et al., 2006, p. 348) and it may be shorter for those with psychotic disorders, or those involving the police or emergency departments (Steel et al., 2006, p. 350).

Watters (2002, p. 154) asserts that the definition and extent of community and social care differ widely across countries, and mental health services are contained in different institutional contexts, such as a social benefit system that is linked to immigration status, or is insurance based and linked to employment. In many European countries, migrants are entitled
to mental healthcare services, such as counselling and psychotherapy, and while they are available in theory, in practice, they often do not materialise owing to inadequate information about service availability and access, the expense or delays due to long waiting lists (Watters, 2002, p. 164). Services reflect the norms and values of the host society and are often not tailored to meet the specific needs of minority ethnic groups or migrants (Watters, 2002, p. 167). A survey among medical doctors, dentists, nurses, psychologists, social workers and pre-school teachers in Sweden indicated that “knowledge of issues affecting immigrants was very rare” (Watters, 2002, p. 164). There is a tendency to homogenise a highly diverse range of individuals, groups and communities and to design policies for immigrants or refugees on the basis of common characteristics (Watters, 2002, p. 154). The result is that members of migrant groups often presented at primary healthcare facilities with “trivial” physical complaints, where general practitioners and other professionals have difficulty detecting underlying mental health problems (Watters, cited in Watters, 2002, p. 168). The lack of a strategic approach to preventive and early intervention services contributes to acute presentations and high levels of compulsory admissions to psychiatric hospitals (Littlewood & Cross, cited in Watters, 2002, p. 168).

Researchers have different opinions on whether specialist services should be developed to cater for the distinctive needs of migrants, or whether steps should be taken to ensure their access to mainstream mental health services (Van Willigen, cited in Watters, 2002, p. 161). In a number of countries, migrant groups do not have access to specialist mental health services, and have to rely on mainstream health services (Watters, 2002, p. 167). Mental health services are usually provided via community-based facilities such as crisis support, sheltered housing, group homes, refuges or day centres, outpatient services and hospitals (Goodwin, cited in Watters, 2002, pp. 160, 161, 163). Services are provided by multidisciplinary teams from the following four professional domains: medical (general
practitioners or psychiatrists), nurses, psychologists or psychotherapists, and social workers (Watters, 2002, p. 161). Specific difficulties are encountered in terms of counselling and psychotherapy because services are not available in the native languages of migrants and professionals tend to have a biased perception that migrant groups are inclined to somatise their psychological distress and lack the ability to reflect on their problems from a psychological perspective (Watters, cited in Watters, 2002, p. 167). In addition, owing to different explanatory models of the purpose of “talking therapies” (p. 167), migrant clients are inclined to attribute problems to external influences, such as social and political factors, whereas therapists viewed problems in relation to a client’s internal world (Boomstra & Kramer; Kramer, cited in Watters, 2002, p. 168). Special programmes for specific target groups, such as group therapy or information programmes in a particular language, have become common practice in some regions (Watters, 2002, p. 162).

Efforts to provide more culturally appropriate services are mostly the result of the interests and efforts of motivated individuals, working within the constraints of short-term funding, rather than initiatives driven by specific policies (Watters, 2002, p. 167). The result is a patchwork mental health services, with a clustering of resources in large cities with high concentrations of migrant groups (Watters, 2002, pp. 159, 167). There is also a lack of monitoring systems and consultation with migrant communities that make it difficult for planners and service providers to determine the accessibility, utilisation, appropriateness and efficacy of community-based mental health services by migrant groups, resulting in decision making, planning and delivery of services and official policies based on anecdotal information and the impressions of professional workers (Watters, 2002, p. 168). Watters (2002, p. 169) emphasises the lack of cultural competence and the paucity of adequate cross-cultural training for professional groups, the necessity for consultation with service users or
representatives from diverse migrant groups in the planning and presentation of training courses, as well as the training of healthcare professionals from minority groups. According to Watters (2002, p. 164), other areas requiring more training include needs assessment (medical, mental health and social), treatment and follow-up, how cultural and religious factors influence concepts of mental health, the impact of trauma, and addressing the negative attitudes of host nationals towards migrants by providing information on migration stress, as well as background details of sending countries. More qualitative research on the experiences of members of migrant groups and their perceptions of and satisfaction with mental health and social care services has been cited as the “cornerstone” of this process (Watters, 2002, p. 169). As migrant groups often have transnational family and community networks, responsive services have to be evaluated within an international framework (Watters, 2002, p. 155).

Spoonley (cited in Coates & Carr, 2005, p. 595) asserts that “New Zealand has an unusually poor record in settlement assistance”. According to Zwart (cited in Lawrence & Kearns, 2005, p. 452), New Zealand rated lowest in terms of refugee resettlement support services, despite ranking first in relation to the number of refugees accepted per capita, compared to the other nine countries which also had an annual quota for United Nations mandated refugees. Refugees experience some of the worst health outcomes in New Zealand society owing to pre-existing physical and mental health problems, the trauma of being a refugee, undiagnosed psychiatric morbidity and the challenges of the resettlement process (Blakely; Kizito; Watters; cited in Lawrence & Kearns, 2005, pp. 452-453). According to Lawrence and Kearns (2005, p. 453), refugees face considerable barriers in accessing and utilising health services, such as registering with a general practitioner, language difficulties, the cost of consultation and medication and a lack of transport. Where migrants are concerned, there is an implicit assumption that they should be able to make their own way in
New Zealand society and economy, without access to specific settlement and welfare services (Bedford, cited in Lawrence & Kearns, 2005, p. 452). Migrants may, however, have a limited understanding of the intricacies and complexities of the New Zealand health system upon arrival, as the system may differ considerably from what they were accustomed to in their country of origin (Lawrence & Kearns, 2005, p. 459). Comprehensive orientation is required regarding the process of referral, waiting lists and the requirement to register with a general practitioner practice or health centre (Lawrence & Kearns, 2005, p. 459).

In New Zealand, capitated and fee-for-service funding regimes in general practice result in pressure to conduct consultations within specified time frames, which poses a challenge when dealing with migrants in terms of communication difficulties and the complexity of presenting symptoms and conditions that the general practitioner was unfamiliar with (Lawrence & Kearns, 2005, pp. 458-459). As a result, migrants are often perceived as “demanding” (Burnett & Peel, cited in Lawrence & Kearns, 2005, p. 453). Delays and frustrations are exacerbated by a lack of funding for appropriate translation services and cultural consultation regarding migrant health beliefs, needs and expectations, coupled with a lack of cultural diversity awareness during medical training (Kearns & Dyck, cited in Lawrence & Kearns, 2005, pp. 458-60). The health needs and challenges experienced by refugees and migrants have received limited attention at the policy level by the Ministry of Health, with only a small number of refugee-focused initiatives established at the District Health Board level and some nonprofit, community-based health care centres that are hampered by long-term sustainability issues because of a lack of resources and funding (Lawrence & Kearns, 2005, pp. 451, 460).
Cultural competence

According to the American Psychological Association (cited in Stuart, 2004, p. 3), psychologists should be aware of and respect cultural, individual and role differences, practise within the boundaries of their competence, and make a reasonable effort to acquire the required cultural competence by using relevant training, consultation and research.

Culture is a complex, multilayered, dynamic and personal phenomenon, which may be influenced by historical, national, regional, familial, religious, political, occupational, gender, individual and social class issues (Tribe, 2005, p. 10), which may be congruent, complementary or in conflict with each other (Stuart, 2004, p. 5). Since each individual is a unique blend of many influences and can be considered a “culture of one”, a person’s cultural orientation cannot be inferred from knowledge of any groups to which the person belongs (Stuart, 2004, p. 5). It is therefore necessary to avoid the “myth of uniformity” (Stuart, 2004, p. 5) by stereotyping, or assuming an understanding of someone’s personal culture, characteristics and belief system (Tribe, 2005, p. 10). Stuart, (2004, p. 6) cautions that there is a fine line between cultural sensitivity and losing sight of a person’s individuality. Cultural sensitivity implies an understanding of the unique way in which specific values, beliefs and practices help to create meaning for the client (Stuart, 2004, p. 8).

Cultural competence includes cultural awareness, knowledge acquisition, skill development and inductive learning (Lum, cited in Segal & Mayadas, 2005, p. 568). Multicultural competence is defined as the ability to understand and constructively relate to the uniqueness of each client in the light of the multiple cultural influences that determine each person’s mixed identities and perspectives (Stuart, 2004, p. 6). The American Psychological Association (2003, pp. 382-392) and Stuart (2004, pp. 6-8) provide the following guidelines to facilitate multicultural competence in terms of psychology theory, practice, education, research and organisational policies: (1) psychologists should be aware
that their attitudes, beliefs and norms are influenced by their own ethnic, linguistic, racial and cultural background, and can lead to biases in their perceptions and interactions with individuals from other backgrounds; (2) they should recognise the importance of multicultural sensitivity and responsiveness to ethnically and racially different individuals, and explore each person’s unique cultural outlook in the broader context of their lives; (3) they should apply culturally appropriate skills in clinical assessment and intervention, as well as other applied psychological practices; (4) they should employ the constructs of multiculturalism and diversity in psychological education and training, as well as supervision and mentoring; (5) they should recognise the importance of conducting culture-centred and ethical psychological research with persons from ethnic, linguistic and racial minority backgrounds in terms of research design, assessment, analysis, interpretation and theory development; and (6) they should utilise organisational frameworks and models to facilitate culturally informed policy development and practices.

Some clients who have been forced to flee their country of origin may be too ashamed to disclose their experiences or worry that they will not be believed, and they may fear the stigma of being referred to a mental health professional (Tribe, 2005, pp. 10-11). Models of mental health or psychological well-being, and explanatory health beliefs, assumptions and narratives differ according to the cultural context (Tribe, 2005, p. 9). Western approaches tend to focus on individual intrapsychic experience or individual pathology, while other traditions may be based on community or familial processes (Tribe, 2005, p. 9). Western models may fail to recognise the rich sources of cultural symbolism available (Blackwell, cited in Tribe, 2005, p. 10) and the importance of resilience, as well as cultural, spiritual and sociopolitical meanings for the migrant client (Tribe, 2005, pp. 9-10). In addition, cultures may differ in the way psychological distress presents, is interpreted and described, what treatment is deemed appropriate, and expectations for recovery (Newland & Patel, cited in
Tribe, 2005, p. 10). This situation may be further exacerbated if the person requests a medicolegal report to strengthen his or her application for refugee status (Tribe, 2005, p. 10).

Tribe (2005, p. 11-12) suggests that the following should be taken into account when planning mental health services for refugee and migrant groups: (1) establish services that are appropriate, accessible, nonstigmatising and preferably community based; (2) include refugees in management committees or service user groups; (3) use the expertise of bicultural and bilingual workers in setting up appropriate services; (4) clinicians could network or establish partnerships with other professionals and refugee community groups; (5) determine the mental health needs of refugee and migrant communities; (6) create services that acknowledge the value of cultural practices in enhancing psychological wellbeing, (7) integrate information about different health beliefs and expressions of distress into staff training, consultations and clinical work; (8) provide leaflets and relevant information in a range of languages; (9) have access to qualified interpreters and training for staff on working effectively and appropriately with an interpreter; (10) establish an affordable fee structure and prompt reimbursement scheme; (11) ensure adequate support and supervision for staff because of the challenging nature of the work; and (12) carefully consider issues around trust and confidentiality. According to Bhabha (cited in Watters, 2002, p. 169), ongoing staff training should take into account the transformations that have occurred in the cultures of ethnic migrant groups and reflect the dynamic, complex and hybrid nature of cultural forms.

Migrant settlement service provision

According to Beiser and Edwards (1994, p. 82), host societies must recognise that post-migration factors have a powerful effect on immigrant and refugee mental health, and that their responsibilities do not end when they open their doors to newcomers. To promote the well-being of newcomers and benefit host societies, opportunities for employment and
job advancement should be provided, and immigration policies that keep families apart should be scrutinised (Beiser & Edwards, 1994, pp. 82-83). In their research, Samarasinghe and Arvidsson (2002, p. 295) found that the stressors experienced by contented families, who were leading satisfactory lives and were experiencing good physical and mental health, centred around becoming used to a different climate, food and social life, and learning a new language. After an initial period of settling in, these families felt that they were accepted by the host society; they were employed, had future plans and felt that their family life had returned to normal (Samarasinghe & Arvidsson, 2002, pp. 295-296). Kindness, understanding and helpfulness from others in providing primary needs such as food, shelter and a reasonable standard of living, as well as language instruction and information on everyday functioning in the host country facilitated adaptation (Samarasinghe & Arvidsson, 2002, p. 295).

Employment, similar to the position held in the home country, or being involved in some form of education had improved general well-being and had allowed the family to focus on the future, despite feelings of nostalgia (Samarasinghe & Arvidsson, 2002, p. 296).

Lerner et al. (2005, pp. 1805, 1813) suggest that in addition to offering material support, authorities in charge of the well-being of migrants in the first years of settlement need to develop educational, social and psychological intervention programmes. It is vital to establish help-seeking pathways to bridge bureaucratic obstacles that hamper access to services (Rogler & Cortes, cited in Rogler, 1994, p. 704). Public policies and programmes aimed at reducing acculturative stress and improving psychological and sociocultural adaptation should emphasise the integration approach to acculturation (Berry, 2005, p. 711). In some countries, such as Canada, the integrationist perspective has been legislated as policies of multiculturalism, which encourages and supports the maintenance of valued features of all cultures, and at the same time supports full participation of all ethnocultural groups in the larger society (Berry; Berry & Kalin, cited in Berry, 2005, p. 711). In Canada,
the Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Programme (ISAP) funds nongovernment agencies to provide services to facilitate migrant settlement (Ho et al., 2000, p. 17). Services funded under ISAP included: reception and orientation, translation and interpretation, paraprofessional counselling, referral to mainstream services, as well as employment-related activities, such as job-finding clubs, curriculum vitae preparation and interview techniques (Ho, Cheung, Bedford, & Leung, 2000, p. 17). In addition, ISAP also funds projects designed to complement or improve the delivery of settlement services, such as research projects, seminars and conferences on settlement and integration (Fletcher, cited in Ho et al., 2000, p. 17). According to Berry (2005, p. 711), further research is essential, as a lack of conceptual clarity and poor empirical foundations could result in policies that create more social and psychological problems than they solve.

According to Cordero-Guzmán (2005, p. 889), community-based organisations play a vital role in the social, cultural, political and economic adaptation and integration of immigrants during all phases of the immigration process. These organisations can be divided into informal immigrant groups, associations or clubs, immigrant organisations for specific countries or regions, multicultural immigrant service providers and large social service organisations (Cordero-Guzmán, 2005, pp. 893-894). Immigrant community-based, nonprofit, organisations often fill key service gaps and play a vital role in a number of areas of the migration process, for example: recruiting immigrants and assisting with the immigration process; the maintenance of ties and connections to communities in the countries of origin; the development, management and maintenance of networks in the host society; the orientation and provision of social services and programmes to immigrant children and families to assist with adaptation and integration; helping to maintain the customs, traditions and norms of the countries of origin; building community resources in terms of knowledge, services and information; articulating community needs and representation in politics and
policy making; and public education and information regarding immigrant groups (Cordero-Guzmán, 2005, pp. 902, 905-906, 908). They may also render specific services for particular subgroups in migrant communities, such as children and youth, senior citizens, women, and gay and lesbian clients (Cordero-Guzmán, 2005, p. 904). These organisations often face ongoing challenges, such as funding and resource problems, providing a service that fits the needs and priorities of their specific community, party politics and corruption (Cordero-Guzmán, 2005, pp. 906-907).

Because a poor physical health status has a strong negative impact on immigrants’ level of distress, primary practitioners play a key role in detecting distress and referring migrants to appropriate services (Lerner et al., 2005, p. 1813). In their research, Birman et al. (2008) explored the efficacy of a culturally competent, community-based mental health service model that provided individualised and comprehensive services for refugee children, adults and families during resettlement. Services included assessment, individual therapy, family therapy, group therapy, occupational therapy, psychiatric services, case management, consultation with treatment teams and other providers, as well as practical support services (Birman et al., 2008, p. 125). The locations where services were provided included on-site facilities, in schools or homes, at social service agencies, in public places, in law enforcement settings, in hospitals, and in state-operated and long-term care facilities (Birman et al., 2008, p. 126). Their research findings were consistent with those of other studies, indicating that clients gradually improved over time, but that the overall quantity of mental health services to migrants did not necessarily correlate with improvements or better outcomes (Birman et al., 2008, pp. 129-130). They (2008, pp. 129-130) emphasised the problems experienced with an ethnically and linguistically diverse client group and the crucial role of other underlying factors, such as the amount of pre-migration trauma, the level of impairment, therapeutic alliance and the willingness of the client to engage in therapy.
Since each person’s experience of adapting to a new country is unique, it is essential to understand the role of the person’s life experiences in causing, influencing or complicating his or her presenting problems (Hwang, Myers, Abe-Kim, & Ting, 2008; Kristal-Andersson, 2000, pp. 22-23). According to Samarasinghe and Arvidsson (2002, p. 296), acceptance by the host country has the greatest impact on the physical and mental health of involuntary migrants, and therefore education of migrant families, the authorities concerned, healthcare workers, as well as the broader host society on cultural values and culturally appropriate interaction are recommended (Samarasinghe & Arvidsson, 2002, pp. 299-300).

A key function of mental health and social services is to educate and help immigrants and refugees from diverse cultures to understand the cultural norms and practices of their new environment, as well as to educate mainstream providers about immigrants’ traditional cultural practices (Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 591). This may include the re-evaluation of traditional cultural practices and the incorporation of some of these into Western health and mental health services (Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 591). Culturally competent professionals should be included in treatment teams and if they are not proficient in the particular language of the immigrant or refugee group, a translator service is essential (Sack, cited in Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 592).

Practical support with socioeconomic needs

The second phase of intervention includes access to appropriate housing, employment and schools for members of the migrant family, allowing for the beginning of their integration into the new community (Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 592). Government-sponsored refugees may be eligible for income and housing support, and those entering the workforce
may receive English language training (Beiser & Edwards, 1994, p. 80). Those who obtain residency may sponsor other family members (Beiser & Edwards, 1994, p. 80). In Canada, other organisations, such as churches or groups of private citizens, who agree to provide income support to a refugee for one year, can act as private sponsors (Beiser & Edwards, 1994, p. 80). Community-based organisations play a vital role in assisting the socioeconomic adaptation and incorporation of immigrants by providing a variety of social services and community programmes (Cordero-Guzmán, 2005, p. 889). They can advise immigrants about the benefits they are eligible for, provide assistance with establishing a small business, educational services, such as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), workforce training and employment, food and nutrition services, housing services, day-care services, and transportation assistance (Cordero-Guzmán, 2005, p. 903).

Grinberg and Grinberg (1989, p. 95) emphasise the importance of work as a psychologically organising and stabilising factor for migrants. This is especially true of skilled workers, who gain a sense of satisfaction and pride from their work (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 95). Work restores the immigrant’s self-respect, allowing him or her to meet financial obligations and resume the functions of adulthood, following a period of relative regression and dependence after arrival in the host country (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 95-96). Work also allows people to feel that they have a place in society, and being allowed to use their creative abilities has restorative benefits in terms of the losses of migration (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 96).

*Sociocultural networking and support*

Because of socioeconomic conditions, some countries that are interested in attracting immigrants, and are aware of the importance of meeting their needs, make a concerted effort to create positive, welcoming conditions (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 85). Pseudo-
communities, as well as sponsors and hosts can be helpful in welcoming newcomers, but require assistance to be effective in bridging cultural gaps (Beiser, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 151). According to Grinberg and Grinberg (1989, p. 85), Israel, for example, has created Immigrant Absorption Centres, where newcomers live together for a few months while they learn the new language, as well as the new customs they will be expected to follow, from people who act as “tutors”. In other cases, more established immigrants can fulfil the function of receiving and welcoming newcomers (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 85). However, it may be painful for newcomers to admit that they need help and find it humiliating to be reduced to a state of childlike dependency, with society granting them a moratorium before they are expected to become fully functional in their new surroundings (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 85).

To enable families to manage stressful situations, support efforts should involve the family, support networks and larger systems to build the community connections that most families have lost. Multifamily psychoeducational and self-help groups are particularly well suited to promote family resilience because they can provide useful information, coping strategies and social support for families in crisis (Walsh, 1996, p. 10). Pumariega et al. (2005, p. 592) found in their research that in refugee communities, supporting indigenous religious and culturally prescribed altruistic practices supported resiliency and recovery. Social support groups can enrich life by validating shared feelings and reaffirming mutual experiences (Nikelly, 2004, p. 193). Individuals who migrate at an advanced age have to come to terms with a major transition in the final stage of their lives (Nikelly, 2004, p. 195). However, they can achieve a sense of integrity and coherence by retrospectively reviewing their psychosocial development and can make sense of their new existence by looking at what they have accomplished, instead of longing for what is forever lost, and hence create closure in their life spans (Erikson; Feinberg, cited in Nikelly, 2004, pp. 195-196). Reminiscing and
recounting their life stories in group sessions provide the benefit of shared recollections, the realisations that they are not alone in their feelings of loss and dislocation and gaining strength and hope that social integration is achievable, even late in life (Nikelly, 2004, p. 196).

Ethnic communities provide vital social support because they offer a means of maintaining cultural heritage and building bridges with the multicultural environment of the host society (Cook & Timberlake, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 151). These communities can provide a framework to receive newcomers and facilitate adaptation by promoting integration through language training and hosting programmes, the support of heritage language programmes, and the celebration of cultural diversity in communities and schools (Beiser & Edwards, 1994, p. 83). Immigrant groups, associations and clubs are usually concerned with promoting social, economic and political ties through connections and activities between immigrants from particular countries or regions of origin, and are mostly organised around community events, cultural heritage programmes, community economic development and conflict resolution (Cordero-Guzmán, 2005, p. 906).

Because immigrants are often career oriented and have left their home country with aspirations of improved economic well-being, better opportunities or greater political freedom (Ogbu, cited in Boneva & Frieze, 2001, p. 487), the psychological process of adjusting to new social, cultural and political conditions can lead to severe frustration if their expectations are not fulfilled (Boneva & Frieze, 2001, p. 487). For male immigrants in particular, frustration can lead to socially undesirable behaviour, such as aggression, and under stress, they are prone to develop physical illnesses (Boneva & Frieze, 2001, p. 488). Becoming involved in mentoring programmes or running community organisations may afford them opportunities to express their need to influence others and be recognised by society (Frieze & Boneva, cited in Boneva & Frieze, 2001, p. 488).
Selective immigration policies are used by most receiving countries to limit the number of legal immigrants and regulate the quality of workers to protect their own socioeconomic development (Afolayan, 2001). The welfare of workers is enhanced by ensuring that overseas employees are recruited by licensed recruitment agencies and assisted by reputable immigration consultants (Afolayan, 2001). Community-based organisations can assist individuals and families by providing advice and legal assistance with their immigration status or obtaining citizenship, and with the family reunification process (Cordero-Guzmán, 2005, pp. 889, 901). Some can also provide free legal advice relating to programme access and participation, personal, family and criminal issues, as well as labour laws (Cordero-Guzmán, 2005, p. 903). These organisations can help families to negotiate the bureaucratic hurdles of government systems, certifying documentation and providing interpretation and translation services (Cordero-Guzmán, 2005, pp. 901, 904). They can also serve as an advocate for ethnic groups by articulating their social service needs and concerns to policy makers, and by managing the flow of resources from the metropolitan to the community level (Cordero-Guzmán, 2005, pp. 889, 905-906).

The primary diagnoses in migrant families include anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, mood disorders, adjustment disorder, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, reactive attachment disorder, impulse disorders and subclinical issues such as acculturation problems, bereavement, parent-child relational problems and academic problems (Birman et al., 2008, p. 127). Culturally competent mental health services are required for the development and delivery of mental health services for immigrants and refugees to address
differences in symptom expression that can bias diagnostic assessment, as well as factors that affect accessibility and acceptability, such as location, stigma, language barriers, documentation and legal status, and cultural healing modalities and practitioners (Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 591). Cultural consultants can facilitate accurate assessments, and improve service utilisation and effectiveness (Kirkmayer, Groleau, Guzder, Blake, & Jarvis, cited in Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 591). Approaches that address the need for validation, mutual support and the processing of common experiences have been found to be particularly effective (Dossa; Simich, Beiser, & Mawani, cited in Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 591).

Treatment interventions with traumatised migrants include triage, debriefing and emergency services (Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 592). Triaging focuses on the most psychologically affected individuals to provide immediate treatment interventions, while debriefing endeavours to address the cognitive disorganisation that results from exposure to trauma, and to affirm the reality of their new surroundings (Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 592). Emotional, behavioural and physical reactions to traumatic events are reviewed and interpreted in the context of the surrounding circumstances (Pumariega et al, 2005, p. 592). Activities are designed to provide structure, organise time and plan activities in an attempt to normalise daily routines (Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 592). Psychotherapeutic groups provided for individuals and families endeavour to address feelings of helplessness, emotional dysregulation and regressive behaviours to help refugees slowly regain control of their surroundings (Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 592).

Community programmes can provide general health services, which involve access to primary care and family doctors for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of all health-related matters (Cordero-Guzmán, 2005, p. 903). They can also render emergency services for mental health, substance abuse and domestic violence, as well as disability services, crime victim services and HIV/AIDS prevention and support programmes (Cordero-Guzmán, 2005,
pp. 903-904). An approach that utilises the strengths and supports of the immigrant community along with community-based mental health services, such as preventive programmes and school-based services, is valuable in addressing the overall adaptation and mental health needs of migrant children, adults and their families (Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 593). A similar community-based approach may be necessary to meet the mental health needs of elderly immigrants, where traditional caregiving by the family may no longer be feasible because of changes in family structure (Strumpf, Glicksman, Goldberg-Glen, Fox, & Logue, cited in Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 593).

**Psychotherapy**

Immigration is a disruptive experience that can generate a crisis of meaning, which threatens identity and personal integration, but the tension that results from this challenge can provide the impetus for a reconstruction or reorganisation of a person’s life story (Walsh, 1996, p. 4). Psychotherapy can be a useful tool to explore narratives of adversity and resilience that can help the person to maintain a sense of coherence and integrity (Walsh, 1996, p. 4). A number of therapeutic modalities have been used with migrant groups, for example, psychodynamic therapy, cognitive-behaviour therapy, body-oriented therapy, art therapy (Santini, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 97), narrative therapy, multisystemic therapy, assertive community treatment, dance therapy, music therapy and poetry (Birman et al., 2008, pp. 123, 125). According to Cheng and Chang (1999, para. 21), programmes that integrate multiple disciplines and are action oriented are of particular importance for immigrant youth.

Birman et al. (2008, p. 130) mention the lack of research indicating which therapeutic techniques are most effective, and highlight the difficulties encountered in obtaining scientific data about evidence-based practice on diverse population groups in real-world settings. They suggest the addition of a practice-based approach via small-scale qualitative
studies of specific cases and utilising the clinical judgment of service providers, who are adept at combining and adapting various treatment modalities, to provide tailor-made interventions for individual clients (Birman et al., 2008, p. 130). These studies could provide information on specific intervention techniques that address particular symptoms or situations, which can form part of a service provider’s “tool kit” for intervention (Birman et al., 2008, p. 130). They (2008, p. 130) also recommend periodic feedback from clients on the effectiveness of multicomponent interventions on a case level to develop a “hierarchy of optimal interventions”. Birman et al. (2008, p. 131) advocate a marriage of science and practice to reflect the diversity of cultural and contextual factors, and to ensure the best possible outcome for individual migrant clients.

At a certain stage in life, every human being goes on a search for his or her cultural origins and the roots of his or her identity, and this quest sometimes involves migration (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 134). However, migration puts a person’s psychological and emotional stability to the test (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 134). During the early period following migration, states of disorganisation are common and result from conflicting desires for social integration to achieve a sense of belonging versus the need to be different and preserve the established identity (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 129). These conflicting desires can cause confusion and feelings of depersonalisation (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 132). Disturbances in spatial integration or the sense of individuation can cause the person to experience self-alienation, while disturbances of temporal integration or sense of “self-sameness” (p. 132) over time manifest as confusing memories of present and past events (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 131-133). For instance, migrants are often confused about which brands of foods are available in which country (Brokensha, 2003, p. 19). Immigrants often decorate their homes with objects typical of their original cultures, which serve to anchor the spatial, temporal and social components of the identity and help to make grieving
more bearable in a place where the person has no roots, no history, no ancestry and no personal memories (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 133). It is only by working through the mourning process that a person can integrate the two countries, two time periods and two social groups in a discriminating way in order to reorganise and consolidate his or her sense of identity as someone who remains himself or herself despite changes in the environment (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 134). The therapeutic context can provide a “container” (p. 130) for the fragmented “pieces of the self” (p. 131) and the “crucible” (p. 131) where complex processes are performed before integration can be achieved (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989). The therapist must be able to manage the client’s anxieties and provide a reference point for exploration, differentiation and consolidation of the person’s restructured identity (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 131).

The level of identity consolidation is relevant for diagnosis and directs treatment strategies and outcome expectations (Akhtar, 1999, pp. 68, 71, 74). Clients with a consolidated identity are better able to establish a therapeutic relationship, their conflicts are more manageable in therapy and they have a greater capacity for insight-oriented interventions (Akhtar, 1999, p. 70). In the case of immigrant clients, who almost invariably struggle with threats to the identity, the assessment of identity-related issues is necessary to avoid blind spots during the treatment (Akhtar, 1999, pp. 73-74). The greater the identity disturbance, the more severe the underlying psychopathology is (Akhtar, 1999, p. 68). Identity fragmentation results in the most serious consequences, which involves the breakdown of the boundaries of the identity and psychotic decompensation (Akhtar, 1999, p. 69).

Initial interviews with immigrant clients should focus on the reasons for relocation, and the extent and manner of their adaptation to this profound change (Akhtar, 1999, p. 73). Formal questioning during the clinical interview, and asking clients to “describe themselves”
are useful to ascertain if they can provide a coherent self-description (Akhtar, 1999, p. 72). Feelings of emptiness are usually more evident in the client’s complaints, while temporal discontinuity in the self-experience becomes evident by obtaining a longitudinal account of the person’s life (Akhtar, 1999, p. 71). Therapeutic approaches are usually combinations of “affirmative interventions” that provide holding, mirroring and containment to facilitate the developmental process and “bridging interventions” that explore conflicts and create tolerance for ambivalence (Akhtar, 1999, p. 71). Youth, who are in the process of identity consolidation, may only be able to integrate new elements when they have achieved some level of psychological adaptation in the host society (Walsh & Shulman, 2007, p. 370). The implication is that young immigrants who appear to be adapting quickly may be more at risk in the long term, whereas those who appear to be finding the initial period difficult may have a more secure psychological adaptation (Walsh & Shulman, 2007, p. 370).

According to Nikelly (2004, pp. 192-193), the essential features of therapy with migrants are efforts to heal the losses of the past and come to terms with the present and the future, and exploring nostalgic thoughts and feelings that can provide opportunities for personal growth and self-understanding. Hence the mourning process over the loss of the homeland should not be dismissed as sentimentality or viewed as symptoms of pathology that require psychiatric intervention (Nikelly, 2004, pp. 193, 195). He (2004, p. 193) believes that neither disowning nor suppressing ties with the past encourages healing, but that closure occurs when bonds with what has been lost are maintained and connected with what lies ahead. The immigrant tends to idealise the country of origin and is prone to nostalgic rumination, while the exile is inclined to avoid nostalgia (Akhtar, 1999, p. 127). Therapy can be utilised to explore the defensive nature of nostalgic memories that sustain the illusion that the past can be recaptured, and to facilitate acknowledgement and acceptance of loss (Akhtar, cited in Nikelly, 2004, p. 193; Nikelly, 2004, p. 194). According to Akhtar (1999, p. 130), for
traumatised migrants, “bridging interventions” may be required to acknowledge the pleasant, as well as the distressing memories of the homeland to facilitate nostalgia and mourning for what was lost, as well as commitment to the new country. Therapy also relies on “affirmative interventions” (Akhtar, cited in Nikelly, 2004, p. 193) that transform the magical thinking of pathological nostalgia into realistic nostalgia that directs life forward.

The therapist must validate the immigrant client’s sense of dislocation and loss of personal and historical continuity, and mourning should be facilitated (Akhtar, 1999, p. 126). Retelling the experience of separation and loss, as well as feelings of emptiness and abandonment, uncovers its significance and reconstructs the meaning it has for the person, and can lead to reintegration into a new phase of life (Gaines, cited in Nikelly, 2004, p. 193). The energy from the pain and loss of this process can be redirected to creative endeavours, ethnic satire and humour, and socially constructive activities to create new and realistic interests and plans for the future (Gaines; Loewald, cited in Nikelly, 2004, pp. 193, 196). A viable identity can be rebuilt by translating images, wishes and expectations into narratives that can provide a meaningful, historical point of reference from which they can launch their lives into the future (Hogman; Kaminsky, cited in Nikelly, 2004, p. 194).

Seaward (cited in Kamya, 1997, p. 161) asserts that efforts to enhance spiritual well-being are as important as interventions to improve physical and psychological health. For instance, an Africentric worldview comprises an integrated sacred and secular reality that is fused into a harmonious, cooperative and communal orientation (Kamya, 1997, p. 162), and in some cultural groups, silence is described as a “spiritual touch” (Mbiti, cited in Kamya, 1997, p. 162). Creating the therapeutic space to allow the respectful exploration of what constitutes the “holy” and the “sacred” in their lives constructs meaning systems to inform clinical practice (Kamya, 1997, p. 161). A lack of awareness of the complexity of the stressful aspects of the lives of immigrants may lead to errors in therapeutic interventions,
and a systemic perspective that includes the emotional response to stress, resilience, hardiness, self-esteem, coping and spiritual well-being is therefore recommended (Kamya, 1997, p. 161).

Ecological counselling focuses on the interaction between personal factors and environmental settings, allowing opposing forces to be organised into a logical and coherent narrative that can help people to recreate their lives. In international migration literature, family therapy and cross-cultural counselling, which conforms to the ecological approach towards family system development, have been recognised as favourable intervention modalities with immigrant families (Roer-Strier, 1996, pp. 5, 7). The assumption that rapid acculturation and disposing of “cultural baggage” will result in improved economic and emotional well-being of immigrant clients has been challenged by Turner and others (cited in Roer-Strier, 1996, p. 5). Sluzki (cited in Roer-Strier, 1996, p. 5) recommends that the therapist should assume the role of a cultural guide or bridge to assist the family to understand the extrafamilial system and to validate family cohesion and parental support. The metaphors used in the conceptualisation of the “adaptive adult”, or internalised cultural coping styles, can be used to develop a “meta-text” of the narratives embedded in two or more cultural meaning systems (Turner, cited in Roer-Strier, 1996, p. 5). According to this approach, therapists are encouraged to accept cultural differences, to “join the clients” in their cultural world, and to explore the costs and advantages of each of the “adaptive adult” coping styles with the family to free the parents from the need to justify their own value system, to reduce stress and confusion, and to encourage the family to make independent choices (Roer-Strier, 1996, p. 7). Co-therapy by a therapist from the host culture and another therapist, who shares the immigrant family’s background, has achieved the most effective outcomes (Roer-Strier, 1996, p. 7).
Successful interventions with families depend as much on the resources of the family as on the skills of the therapist (Karpel; Minuchin, cited in Walsh, 1996, p. 9). An ecological or contextual approach is aimed at understanding the complexities of a particular family when assessing challenges, meanings, constraints and coping responses (Walsh, 1996, p. 1). A resiliency-based approach to family therapy offers a flexible view of family functioning in a developmental framework to guide interventions aimed at strengthening the family as presenting problems are resolved (Walsh, 1996, p. 9). Collaboration between family members is encouraged to provide mutual support, build new competencies and a shared confidence that together they can overcome seemingly overwhelming obstacles (Walsh, 1996, p. 9). This approach establishes an empowering family climate where the experience of shared success strengthens family bonds and builds resources that improve their resilience to withstand future adversity (Walsh, 1996, pp. 9-10).

When working with immigrant clients in individual, child and family work, Taylor, (cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 115) emphasises the following: a cross-cultural assessment of family structure; important events in the life cycle; the roles of individual members; rules for language, communication, interpersonal interactions, decorum and discipline; religious beliefs; standards for health and hygiene; food preferences; dress and personal appearance; history and traditions; holidays and celebrations; education and teaching methods; perceptions of work and play; perceptions of time and space; explanations of natural phenomena; attitudes towards pets and animals; artistic and musical values and tastes; and life expectations and aspirations. The therapeutic framework should accommodate cultural differences such as perceptions of time and punctuality, degree of respect for the therapist and therapeutic formalities (Akhtar, 1999, pp. 116-119). The therapist should differentiate between cultural differences and psychological issues, as the client may focus on cultural matters to avoid addressing underlying psychological problems (Akhtar, 1999, pp. 122-123).
The polylingualism of a client, however, may pose challenges in therapy for the expression of feelings, as some words and concepts cannot be translated adequately (Akhtar, 1999, p. 134).

The therapist should accept that enmeshed and symbiotic identities (Searles, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 130) or a “familial self” (Roland, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 131) may be characteristic of some cultures, characterised by interdependent relationships with the extended family and involvement of relatives in consultation and treatment (Akhtar, 1999, pp. 131-132). Immigrant families who are experiencing intergenerational cultural conflict may require individual, parental and family work (Akhtar, 1999, p. 145). Sometimes, parents may insist on a therapist from the same cultural background (Mehta, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 145). They may feel that they will be able to establish a better bond with the therapist and will be better understood, but they may attempt to control the therapist to gain support for their wishes (Mehta, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 145). Akhtar (1999, p. 120) recommends remaining empathetic towards parents (p. 145), but adopting a developmental stance, thereby not only focusing on resolving pathology, but also acknowledging and encouraging developmental initiatives and achievements (Akhtar, 1999, p. 120).

It is often only the more educated and psychologically sophisticated among the immigrant population who seek psychotherapeutic help (Akhtar, 1999, p. 141). It is therefore necessary for the therapist to make an effort to understand the resistance of immigrants to ask for help, to reach out to them with psycho-educative efforts, and to offer assistance for underlying emotional problems in innovative ways (Akhtar, 1999, pp. 141, 151). Psycho-educative workshops for immigrant families and children allow the therapist access to underlying emotional problems in this group (Akhtar, 1999, p. 151). Workshops for adolescents and their families may be beneficial to address issues relating to identity, dating and sexual behaviour, vocational choices and the necessity of growing children becoming autonomous from their parents (Akhtar, 1999, p. 152). Liaison between psychological
societies and local schools, universities, day-care centres and ethnic organisations, as well as workshops and discussion groups with lay people on topics such as motherhood, day care, divorce and prejudice, may increase knowledge of psychological processes in immigrant populations (Akhtar, 1999, p. 153). This, in turn, may encourage help-seeking behaviour and prevent more serious problems at a later stage (Akhtar, 1999, p. 153). Recruiting more members of immigrant groups to the mental health profession, ranging from social work to psychology and psychiatry, is another agenda of such outreach activities (Akhtar, 1999, pp. 141, 153).

Immigrant therapists may have additional insight and skills when working with migrant populations as a result of their particular cultural background, as well as their own experience of immigration and acculturation. However, working with clients from the same cultural background increases the potential for shared blind spots (Shapiro & Pinsker, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 162). However, immigrant therapists doing psychotherapy with native-born clients also poses a challenge because the differences in culture may give rise to a variety of projections and stereotypes (Tang & Gardner, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 154). If the language used by the therapist differs from the client’s mother tongue, the therapist may lack idiomatic fluency in the client’s language and may miss puns, witticisms, double meanings, metaphors and insinuations (Akhtar, 1999, p. 158). There may also be linguistic differences based upon regions, subcultures and social classes, and individual families may use words that are idiosyncratic (Akhtar, 1999, p. 158). Sometimes, immigrant therapists may want to use words or images belonging to their mother tongue as an empathetic response to the client, which may not be appropriate or effective (Akhtar, 1999, pp. 159-160). The immigrant therapist’s own process of immigration-related mourning and level of unresolved grief are vital factors to consider (Akhtar, 1999, p. 163). Therapists’ “third individuation” and the ability to
maintain cultural neutrality and optimal distance between their own hybrid identity and the client’s relatively unitary one are crucial (Akhtar, 1999, p. 163).

Assessment, liaison, and referral

It is essential that communication, liaison and referral to appropriate social services and mental health agencies are maintained to assist individuals and families as problems arise during the process of adaptation and acculturation (Guarnaccia & Lopez, cited in Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 593). Community-based organisations can assist migrant communities by serving as a liaison between migrant communities in the host country and their countries of origin (Cordero-Guzmán, 2005, p. 889). This is achieved via the flow of economic resources, remittances and other investments to the country of origin, facilitating and managing the flow of news and information, supporting cultural, religious or patriotic activities, increasing public awareness and influencing policy making (Cordero-Guzmán, 2005, p. 907).

Intervention programmes for migrants in New Zealand

When we first arrived I felt that the whole world had just got darker.

Then as the months went by it was like a few little lights became visible.

One by one the lights started to go on, and soon there was light everywhere.

(Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-15)

New Zealand has a culturally diverse range of migrant communities, and the future of the country may depend on the successful adaptation of immigrants and their children. Social cohesion is a key concept in settlement outcomes because it has an impact on the economy and social well-being of people (Ministry of Social Development, 2008, p. 3). Jenson (cited in Ministry of Social Development, 2008, p. 3) defines social cohesion as a sense of
belonging, participation, inclusion, recognition and legitimacy. Indicators of successful settlement are feeling welcome, respected and accepted, being appropriately employed, having quality housing, speaking and understanding New Zealand English, knowing how to access information and services, and understanding and contributing to the New Zealand way of life (Department of Labour, 2007, p. 15).

Immigrants and refugees may experience barriers to successful settlement in New Zealand, such as language difficulties, limited access to appropriate employment, lack of knowledge about the healthcare system and challenges maintaining family and social networks (Auckland Sustainable Cities Programme, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 13). Language is a more significant barrier for refugee resettlement, because refugees are not required to meet language competency requirements to enter New Zealand (Te Pou, 2008, p. 13). Refugees also face additional difficulties as a result of the forced departure from their home country, limited control over their future, family separation and a greater likelihood of trauma, distrust and stigma (Te Pou, 2008, p. 13). These additional stressors have implications for the level, and types of support needed to enhance mental well-being in refugees, compared to immigrant communities (Te Pou, 2008, p. 13).

New Zealand migrant service providers

Refugee communities in New Zealand are supported by Refugee Services Aotearoa New Zealand (RS) and Refugees as Survivors (RASNZ). Refugee and Migrant Service (RMS) is a national nongovernment organisation that provides settlement services to refugees during their first year in New Zealand (Department of Labour, 2004, p. 18). They are based in most large cities and provide the following services: pre-arrival planning; assessment upon arrival; community orientation; placement and linkage; advice; information and advocacy; crisis intervention and home-based family support programmes; individual case management;
and referrals (Refugee Services, 2011). Practical support during their first six months in New Zealand includes banking, housing, and access to English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), social, education and health services, as well as employment (Te Pou, 2008, p. 12). Refugee Services (2011) also provide volunteer training, public and community education, as well as contributing to refugee policy and best-practice development.

Refugee-specific services include Refugees as Survivors centres in Wellington and Auckland, as well as the Christchurch refugee and migrant mental health service (Te Pou, 2008, p. 42). The service includes assessment, initial treatment, orientation, resettlement and follow-up to address pre- and post-migration stress and trauma for refugees (Refugees as Survivors, 2011). It provides education and health promotion strategies to other service providers, health professionals, community services and refugee communities, and liaises with relevant community agencies and government departments (Refugees as Survivors, 2011). Refugees as Survivors in Mangere, Auckland, is part of a one-stop shop, and comprises a multidisciplinary team that provides quota refugees and detained asylum seekers with free access to physical and mental health support upon arrival in New Zealand (Te Pou, 2008, p. 12). RASNZ also provides referral and specialist clinical consultation and follow-up to District Health Boards (DHBs) and mainstream primary healthcare services across the country where refugees are settled (Refugees as Survivors, 2011). The centre has a mobile mental health team, which provides psychiatric and psychological treatment as well as family therapy, social work, advocacy and community support for refugees who experience mental health problems (Refugees as Survivors, 2011). RASNZ and Lifeline Aotearoa collaborate to provide toll free after-hours and crisis counselling via telephone (Refugees as Survivors, 2011). RASNZ and Asian Health Services of the Waitemata District Health Board provide Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) training for mainstream health practitioners who work with refugees and migrants (Refugees as Survivors, 2011).
The Wellington branch of RASNZ offers community-based specialist screening, assessment, treatment, therapy, case management, consultation, referral, advocacy and community capacity building for individuals and families who have experienced torture and trauma (Refugees as Survivors, 2011; Te Pou, 2008, p. 12). Christchurch Resettlement Services provide general counselling and health promotion services for refugees (Briggs, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 12) and works closely with the Canterbury District Health Board’s specialist mental health service, which is dedicated to working with refugee and migrant clients (Te Pou, 2008, p. 12). The Canterbury mental health service does cultural consultancy work to train mainstream practitioners to work more effectively with refugee clients (Te Pou, 2008, p. 12). In the central regions of New Zealand, home health visits are organised for newly settled refugee clients (Fraser, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 12). There are few other mental health support services specifically tailored to refugees who settle outside the Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch regions (Te Pou, 2008, p. 12).

Settlement services have also been developed to assist immigrants to adapt to life in New Zealand (Te Pou, 2008, p. 15). Settlement Support New Zealand (SSNZ) is a government-funded service that provides new arrivals with information and access to local community services and support agencies in regard to education, training and employment, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), housing services, legal advice, ethnic communities, health and well-being, and other settlement-focused services (Te Pou, 2008, p. 15). SSNZ coordinators also organise workshops for migrants about relevant topics such as connecting through volunteering, renting a home, the health system, public transport, community safety awareness and the education system.

Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) provides a number of programmes that are open to new, mainly low-skilled, migrants in an attempt to help them gain employment (Ho et al., 2000, pp. 37-38). These programmes include ESOL classes, practical work experience,
and providing training and an allowance to set up a business (Ho et al., 2000, pp. 37-38). Nevertheless, many migrants cannot afford the cost of these training courses and are unable to obtain a student loan until they have been unemployed in New Zealand for at least two years (Ho et al., 2000, pp. 37-38). In addition, few services are available to help highly skilled migrants gain employment in the New Zealand labour market (Ho et al., 2000, p. 39). Hence business networking is a growing form of employment assistance, which is mainly provided by ethnic community groups, in particular the Pacific Island, Chinese and South African communities (Ho et al., 2000, p. 39). Business networking is a useful method for migrants to establish contacts in their own ethnic group, and to link members with mainstream businesses in the wider New Zealand community (Ho et al., 2000, p. 39).

The Office of Ethnic Affairs promotes and supports cultural and linguistic diversity in New Zealand and lobbies for the needs of ethnic communities with the government (Te Pou, 2008, p. 15). It also improves access to government services for people who do not speak English by offering an interpreting service via telephone (Te Pou, 2008, p. 15). At present, ethnic associations, community and church groups provide new migrants with information, advice and friendship, and they play a vital role in building supportive connections for recent migrants (Ho et al., 2000, p. 39). Some ethnic groups arrange social activities, such as multicultural festivals, which allow these groups to showcase their unique cultures and interact with the local New Zealand community (Ho et al., 2000, p. 40). Some groups also organise social activities for their specific ethnic communities to enable migrant groups to retain their own culture and have a sense of belonging while adapting to New Zealand society (Ho et al., 2000, p. 40).

A survey of nongovernment, not for profit agencies and organisations (NGOs) indicated that approximately 29% were providing services or programmes exclusively for immigrants and refugees, and most were based in local or specific ethnic communities (Nash
The main services provided by these NGOs were orientation on arrival, clothing and food, short-term accommodation and housing, employment and immigration advice, English language tuition, interpretation and translation, physical and mental health, women and child welfare, counselling and cultural support, legal assistance, advocacy and referrals to other services (Nash & Trlin, 2006, p. 9). According to the survey, NGOs had well-established networks with other service providers, such as Refugees as Survivors (RASNZ), Refugee Services (RS), English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), interpreting and advocacy services, well baby and child services, schools, mental health services, Stopping Violence Services, Immigration Services and other government agencies (Nash & Trlin, 2006, p. 12). They also had links with Auckland New Ventures Inc. and Newkiwis that provide workshops and employment opportunities. Relationship Services provide orientation programmes, and Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) offers social benefits or employment assistance (Nash & Trlin, 2006, p. 12). According to the results of this survey, these NGOs considered their main strengths to be accessibility, being a one-stop shop for services, rendering services for specific ethnic groups, being culturally and linguistically appropriate, providing safety for women and children and advocacy for vulnerable client groups, providing language education services and offering practical assistance with material needs (Nash & Trlin, 2006, p. 13). On the list of the ethnic origins of their client base, South Africans were not specifically mentioned, but they may have been included under the classification, “Other, includes British” (Nash & Trlin, 2006, p. 15).

Despite offering a variety of services, 82% of the participating NGOs reported that as many as two-thirds of their immigrant and refugee client base had experienced difficulties in accessing their services owing to a lack of funding for marketing and advertising, and client reluctance to approach these agencies (Nash & Trlin, 2006, pp. 15-16). Agencies that rendered services specifically to immigrant and refugee groups had few permanent staff and
only about 8\% of them had a professional, tertiary qualification (Nash & Trlin, 2006, pp. 17-18). Clearly, there was considerable room for staff development via appropriate qualifications and training, as well as staff recruitment and retention (Nash & Trlin, 2006, p. 18). Nearly 60\% of NGOs voiced concerns about the settlement of immigrants and refugees in New Zealand, which included under-resourcing of initial settlement services to facilitate independence, lack of assistance for new arrivals for retraining or updating their qualifications and finding work, the reluctance of employers to employ immigrants and refugees, a laborious family reunification process and a lack of cross-cultural training (Nash & Trlin, 2006, pp. 23, 27, 29). However, only a quarter were involved with the government’s development of immigration policies (Nash & Trlin, 2006, pp. 22-23).

New Zealand has a tradition of volunteer and community action to facilitate the settlement of migrants, refugees and their families, such as Refugee services, ESOL Home Tutors, the Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB), ethnic associations and community groups (Department of Labour, 2007, p. 21; Ho et al., 2000, pp. 33-34, 36;). The CAB has a network of branches throughout New Zealand, and is staffed by trained volunteers to provide information on matters such as visa, immigration and citizenship application, police and medical certificates, taxation and obtaining a drivers licence (Ho et al., 2000, p. 33). They have interpreters on site, and offer an advocacy service and free legal advice (Ho et al., 2000, p. 33). The CAB also has a comprehensive database of ethnic community groups and other organisations that may assist with the settlement process (Ho et al., 2000, p. 33). In addition to providing general information and referrals, some community groups also offer a variety of important services, such as English language classes, budgeting advice and assistance, education on upgrading qualifications or starting a small business, accompanying clients to organisations, such as the Internal Revenue Department (IRD) and providing legal consultation for serious legal problems (CM Research, cited in Ho et al., 2000, pp. 18, 35).
Despite a wide array of settlement services, concerns have been raised that the demand for services far outweighs the supply, and that many migrants are still not aware of their legal rights and responsibilities (Ho et al., 2000, p. 35). In addition, funders of these organisations do not fully comprehend the difficulties and problems involved in dealing with migrant populations, and do not support programmes and services that would meet their needs more effectively (Nash & Trlin, 2006, pp. 10-11). Hence the assistance that some community and ethnic groups provide to migrants is limited by their size, financial resources and knowledge base (Ho et al., 2000, p. 35). Funding problems also mean that few of their services are widely advertised, and many migrants are unaware of their existence (Ho et al., 2000, p. 35). It has also been found that there is little or no coordination of the services provided by the various agencies (Ho et al., 2000, p. 35). Poor information collection systems, ineffective referral systems and the inability to track family reunification refugees who did not go through the Mangere Refugee as Survivors centre in Auckland have been identified as major barriers to providing effective services for refugee communities (Te Pou, 2008, p. 37). Some migrant groups, such as older migrants and refugees, require greater assistance, but few services are available to address their special needs (Ho et al., 2000, p. 40).

There appears to be a sharp demarcation in the provision of services according to the Immigration Services migrant category (Ho et al., 2000, pp. 5-6), which does not necessarily meet the physical and mental health needs of the particular individual or family (Alpass et al., 2007, pp. 5, 11; Ho et al., 2000, p. 40). Comprehensive preventive, therapeutic and support services are offered to quota refugees and detained asylum seekers (Refugees as Survivors, 2011; Te Pou 2008), while skilled and business migrants, as well as family-sponsored migrants and family reunification refugees, are reliant on support services (Te Pou, 2008, p. 15) that are often provided by volunteers without specialist or culturally appropriate training.
The assumption is that these categories of migrants are generally healthy, and have access to adequate resources and funding to take care of their physical and mental needs independently via mainstream services (Bedford et al., 2000, p.25). Once these migrants have acquired the necessary resources for initial settlement, such as housing, education and employment, they “disappear” into the broader Kiwi society. Unless a crisis occurs or they come to the attention of government organisations, their difficulties remain under the radar. During the period in which this research was conducted, skilled and business migrants accounted for 60%, and family-sponsored migrants for 30% of permanent residents in New Zealand, while only 10% entered via the International and Humanitarian stream (Quazi, 2008, p. 1). From the research by Quazi (2008, p. 1) it can be concluded that about 90% of all migrants “fell through the cracks” of service bureaucracy because they did not have direct access to specialist preventive and therapeutic services to manage pre- and post-migration difficulties. Permanent residency was granted on the basis that they would be able to contribute to the economic growth of New Zealand (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 25) without incurring larger costs than the mainstream population (Te Pou, 2008, p. 15). They would therefore be reluctant to disclose settlement difficulties as they did not want to compromise career opportunities, citizenship or the residency of other immigrants from their home country by coming across as a “problem migrant group”. This was particularly true of reluctant immigrants or anticipatory refugees (Khawaja & Mason, 2008, p. 240), such as South African immigrants, who often did not have the luxury of returning home if they were not coping.

Ho et al. (2000, pp. 41-44) highlight the need for bilingual and culturally appropriate services, adequate volunteer training, additional funding and service evaluation. They (2000, pp. 45-47) and Te Pou (2008, pp. 36-37) make the following suggestions for developing more effective settlement services: one-stop shops to cater for migrants’ everyday needs; provision of information on support groups and social services in a pre-migration information kit;
orientation seminars for all new migrants; distribution of pamphlets and information in ethnic languages; provision of information on post-migration assistance services; casework services for migrants with special needs; greater numbers of settlement referral services; provision of employment assistance services for migrants of all age groups, skill levels and cultural backgrounds; cultural competency training for health staff; promoting to employers the benefits of a diverse workforce; and provision of community education programmes.

Staff members working in health and mental health services are required to respond to refugee and migrant mental health needs, but most health practitioners in New Zealand do not have the necessary skills and knowledge (Briggs; Fraser; Jackson, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 45). Resources, training and organisational support are needed to develop workforce cultural competencies in terms of awareness, attitudes, skills and behaviour (Nayar & Tse, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 47). Important knowledge required in working with refugee and migrant clients includes an awareness of cultural beliefs about mental illness, symptom expression and communication, cultural and contextual experiences, and post-migration risk factors (Bhui et al.; Briggs; Gray, & Elliot; Jackson; Kirmayer, Groleau, Guzder, Blake, & Jarvis; Serafica; Watters, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 45). However, there has been insufficient research to determine to what extent cultural competency training or having culturally competent staff actually benefits the mental health outcomes of clients (Brach & Fraser; DeSouza & Garrett; Taylor & Lurie, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 46).

Mental health promotion strategies have been implemented and evaluated in many Western countries, but little is known about the efficacy of these approaches for refugee and migrant communities (the WHO World Mental Health Survey Consortium, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 32). Some reports suggest that mainstream mental health promotion interventions and resources may need to be adapted to be effective for different ethnic groups (Jackson, Yeo & Lee; Milat, Carroll & Taylor, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 32). For example, ethnic
groups in New Zealand and the United States of America have reported a dislike for resources that are not in native languages, that are direct translations of mainstream resources, and that use “tag lines” designed for Western cultures (Jackson et al.; Palinkas et al., cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 32). According to Te Pou (2008, p. 32), mental health promotion initiatives that increase access to social and physical activities that are religiously or culturally inappropriate would be ineffective for certain refugee and migrant groups. To develop effective culturally specific programmes, information on which components of health promotion campaigns remain effective across cultures and settings would be required (Saxena, Hermann, Moodie, & Saraceno, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 32). Research on mental health promotion in immigrant populations is limited, and most evaluations in refugee and migrant groups do not include baseline or control measures (Milat et al., cited in Te Pou, 2008, pp. 32-33). Key knowledge gaps include methods to promote mental health by developing resilience in refugee and migrant communities, the impact of settlement experiences and service access on mental health, effective mental health treatment approaches, and how to train mainstream staff to respond more appropriately to the mental health concerns of refugee and migrant clients (Te Pou, 2008, p. 50).

According to the New Zealand government (Department of Labour, 2004, pp. 20, 26), the settlement of migrants requires a long-term approach involving the entire community, and settlement initiatives need to reflect community needs. The Department of Labour has received additional funding to establish a national Settlement Strategy to address the current fragmentation and lack of coordination and information sharing across and between central government agencies, local government bodies, migrant and refugee communities, service providers and other groups and communities involved with settlement matters (Department of Labour, 2004, pp. 18, 21, 26). The New Zealand Settlement Strategy provides a framework for the coordinated development of consistent and responsive settlement support services,
enabling migrants and refugees to maximise their contribution to New Zealand’s economic growth, and to become part of local, regional and national communities (Department of Labour, 2004, p. 26; Department of Labour, 2007, p. 16). The vision for the New Zealand Settlement Strategy is that “New Zealand’s prosperity was underpinned by an inclusive society, in which the local and national integration of newcomers was supported by responsive services, a welcoming environment and a shared respect for diversity” (Department of Labour, 2007, p. 9). The Immigration Settlement Strategy also contributes to the government’s three priority areas, namely economic transformation, families and national identity (Department of Labour, 2007, p. 9). The goals of the Immigration Settlement Strategy for successful settlement of migrants are as follows: access to appropriate education; obtaining employment appropriate to their qualifications and skills, and being valued for their contribution to economic growth; being confident in using English in New Zealand or having access to appropriate language support; access to appropriate information and other responsive services in the wider community; forming supportive social networks and establishing a sustainable community identity; multiculturalism and feeling safe to express their ethnic identity; being accepted, respected and becoming part of the wider host community; accepting and respecting the New Zealand way of life; and participating in civic, community and social activities (Department of Labour, cited in Nash & Trlin, 2006, p. 37; Department of Labour, 2007, p. 11; Mental health in a changing world, 2007).

Legislative and policy frameworks that support settlement strategies and healthcare for migrants were as follows: (1) the Health and Disability Commissioner Act 1995; (2) Health and Disability Code of Rights 1996; (3) Mental Health (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment) Act 1992 and the 1999 amendments; (4) New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000; (5) Human Rights Act 1993; and (6) Health Professional Competency Assurance Act (Mental health in changing world, 2007, p. 3).
For to stay, though the hours burn in the night,
is to freeze and crystallize and be bound in a mould.
Feign would I take with me all that is here. But how shall I?...
And alone, and without his nest shall the eagle fly across the sun.
(Gibran, 1996, p. 2)

Because some South Africans come to New Zealand and view the experience as a wonderful adventure, their outlook is positive and they see the best in situations (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-19). Others who have a more negative, pessimistic or cautious approach to new experiences may experience varying degrees of fear and anxiety (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-19). The points system and medical screening process whereby immigrants are deemed fit to live and work in New Zealand, and the selection criteria used by the Immigration Service imply that they should be able to integrate in New Zealand society without further assistance (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-8). Hence the emotional and financial impact of the relocation and the support required by a particular individual or family are difficult to predict (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-8). Immigration consultants, internet sites, reference books and friends can only provide a general idea of what to expect, but nobody can fully inform or prepare the potential immigrant of the enormity of this decision (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, pp. 13-8, 13-9). However, many South Africans have made the move, survived and thrived in the peace and security, and utilised the opportunities offered by New Zealand (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-9).
**Preventive assessment**

Settlement is a multidimensional process involving interrelated aspects of a migrant’s life (Masgoret, Merwood, & Tausi, 2009, p. 116). There is a strong correlation between migrants’ early settlement experiences of social and economic integration, and their long-term employment success and general well-being (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 116). Some migrants become receptive to the idea of leaving their country suddenly, whereas others contemplate it for a long time (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 58). There may be external reasons that justify or support the desire, such as seeking new experiences or opportunities for study or work, or running away from difficulties (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 58). Philobatic and ocnophilic attitudes (Balint, cited in Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 59) are present in different proportions in all people, and can cause ambivalence about leaving a familiar place. In a study by Masgoret et al. (2009, p. 53), about 40% of migrants to New Zealand had relatives already living in the host country, which could be a motivating factor for immigration. Sometimes the person in charge of a family group takes the initiative for making the difficult decision to migrate, which also affects the life plans of other family members (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 60). They may be grateful and admire the courage of the decision maker, but this person is also expected to fulfil the family’s expectations (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 60). Should any setback or disappointment occur during migration and settlement, the person who initiated the process will become the target of the family’s criticism, blame and anger (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 60).

It was suggested that comprehensive pre-migration preparation could prevent or alleviate many post-migration problems (Firkin et al., 2004, p. 25). Van Coller (2002, pp. 74-75) emphasises the importance of pre-migration preparation by conducting assessments, providing information and education, and implementing stress inoculation to avoid or minimise the impact of a post-migration crisis and enhance growth and self-actualisation.
Assessments of individual circumstances, strengths and weaknesses may include the following: self-reflection; family discussions or formal evaluations via psychometric instruments to evaluate the motivation and expectations for immigration; general health status; stress tolerance; coping strategies; problem-solving and social skills; the level of marital support and family cohesion; and external support systems (Van Coller, 2002, pp. 74-79, 84-85). Van Coller (2002, pp. 77-78) recommends an evaluation of the following qualities and traits that enable immigrants to cope with the stressors of migration: a sense of commitment and motivation for successful resettlement; a positive attitude towards change and acculturation; moral and spiritual sources of conviction and courage; a realistic idea of the stressors and viewing the experience as a challenge; a positive outlook; strong self-esteem; a sense of control over one’s own circumstances; an awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses; the ability to recognise the signs of extreme stress; a repertoire of adaptive coping strategies and problem-solving skills; emotion regulation and relaxation strategies; a good general health status; social skills and available support systems during the transition; and adequate financial resources.

According to Wallis (2006, p. 23), most South African immigrants enter New Zealand as skilled principal applicants, whose occupations match the Immediate Skilled Shortage List (ISSL), which specifies the recognised regional skill shortages and is used for approving temporary work visas. After working for two years in New Zealand, they can apply for permanent residency under the “work-to-residence” (Wallis, 2006, p. 11) immigration category. The three most common reasons migrants choose New Zealand are the relaxed pace of life or lifestyle, the clean and green environment and being able to provide a better future for their children (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 49). South African immigrants are more likely than other migrant groups to choose New Zealand to ensure a better future for their children, and for its safety from crime and political stability (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 192). They are
also attracted by employment opportunities, economic conditions, the relaxed pace of life and lifestyle and being able to join family members (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 192). In the study by Wallis (2006, pp. 31-32), some migrants reported that their decision to migrate to New Zealand had been influenced by certain individuals or organisations, such as a recruitment drives by New Zealand employers, New Zealand government websites, immigration consultants, Immigration New Zealand, Tourism New Zealand, or family and friends.

**Information and education**

The chances of successful settlement improve dramatically the better informed and prepared prospective migrants are (Department of Labour, 2007, p. 12). It is vital to ensure that people’s expectations of life in New Zealand are realistic, and are substantiated by accurate information and advice (Department of Labour, 2007, p. 12). A lack of information, or poor quality and incorrect information can lead to dissatisfaction for newcomers if they experience large discrepancies between publicity images and reality (Benson-Rea & Rawlinson, cited in Herrick & Morrison, 2010, p. 29). Research has indicated that potential migrants seek information and advice about New Zealand to facilitate decision making and pre-migration planning, and most choose to visit, study or work in New Zealand before applying for permanent residency (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 36). According to the Department of Labour (2007, p. 12), a third of immigrants who settle in New Zealand had visited the country previously to acquire a first-hand experience of life and work in the country. Among South African immigrants in New Zealand, this is called a Look, See and Decide (LSD) trip. Masgoret et al. (2009, pp. 46-47) state that about 80% of migrants have some form of temporary visa in the three years before gaining residency. This would indicate that the majority of migrants choose to work in New Zealand for a period, before committing to a more permanent relocation.
The main source of pre-migration information about New Zealand is obtained from friends or relatives living in New Zealand, followed by the internet, books, newspapers or television, and visiting New Zealand (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 50). Other sources of information include friends or relatives not living in New Zealand, the New Zealand immigration service, immigration consultants, prospective employers, universities, other New Zealand government departments or embassies, community or religious groups and ethnic associations in New Zealand (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 50). According to Wallis (2006, pp. 13-14), the Department of Labour provides migrants with settlement products, including “Living in New Zealand: a guide for migrants”, which is provided at the application stage, a welcome pack, which is provided after application approval and arrival in New Zealand, as well as information on the Immigration Department’s website. According to Wallis (2006, pp. 13-14), over 60% of respondents find these information resources useful.

However, Firkin et al. (2004, pp. 16-17, 47) contend that pre-migration information often paints an extremely positive picture of New Zealand, and immigrants express their dissatisfaction with inadequate and incorrect information that does not match their “lived reality” (p. 25) after immigration. A South African immigrant commented that many migrants maintain a positive public facade in an effort not to offend their “hosts”, but behind closed doors a less flattering and sad, private story often unfolds (Firkin et al., 2004, p. 35). This immigrant (Firkin et al., 2004, p. 26) suggested that positive experiences in everyday life might be the “story” that migrants develop and convey to others, or the version of events they emphasise, because that is what New Zealanders want to hear. Brokensha (2003, p. 86) argues that people’s value and inclusion in society are defined in terms of their skills and potential contribution to the economy, and that governments have perceived ownership of this skills resource. It could be argued that what sending countries and host nations value
most are the skills, but not necessarily the people and their personal lives that are part of the package deal (Brokensha, 2003, p. 86).

Firkin et al. (2004, pp. 17, 35) postulate that although professional migrants believe that the New Zealand government is actively encouraging people to migrate, they have found that little planning, preparation, information and support are available to meet the needs of new arrivals, and that the official and public position regarding immigrants and employment opportunities differs markedly. Benson-Rea and Rawlinson (cited in Firkin et al., p. 17) believe that information at the meso-level is critical to establish realistic expectations among migrants before departure in terms of their skills, as well as employer demands and preferences. The meso-level includes immigration agents and consultants, business organisations, recruitment agencies, skills organisations, trade bodies and business associations (Benson-Rea; Rawlinson, cited in Firkin et al., 2004, p. 17).

*Psychological preparation*

According to Van Coller (2002, p. 75), providing migrants with information and education on the immigration process prior to departure helps them to anticipate and plan for future demands and may reduce apprehension and anxiety. Education for the prospective immigrant includes information on the “push” and “pull” factors of immigration, having realistic expectations, acculturation strategies, the phases of the immigration process, migration stressors, signs of extreme stress and decompensation, cognitive appraisal of difficulties and developing adaptive psychological coping skills (Van Coller, 2002, pp. 75-76). Reading about other people’s immigration experiences could help to normalise their own responses to the immigration process, could clarify certain concepts and could provide role models for effective coping behaviour (Van Coller, 2002, p. 79).
The teaching of effective coping strategies, also known as psychological stress inoculation, could help migrants to acquire a flexible, integrated coping repertoire to manage migration stress more skilfully (Van Coller, 2002, p. 78). Skills training may include methods for obtaining practical information, decision making, problem solving, social and communication skills, relaxation training, cognitive restructuring and enhancing family resilience (Van Coller, 2002, p. 79). Walsh (1996, p. 1) confirms that a resiliency-based framework for intervention develops hardiness because it helps to prepare families to meet the uncertainty and challenges of immigration with mutual support, flexibility and creativity. Harrison and Nortje (2000, p. 13-12) suggest that the family should draw up a “manifesto” of their reasons for leaving South Africa, their feelings about the move and their expectations of their new lives. When difficulties are experienced after arriving in New Zealand, re-reading the manifesto can be a constructive exercise for the whole family to remind them of their long-term goals (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-12).

Marital partners need to make a conscious effort to strengthen their relationship, and to learn to communicate in a nonconfrontational manner prior to migration (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-8). In South Africa, the man is often regarded as the head of the household and has the final say in important decisions (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-8). In New Zealand, he would be expected to share the decision making and domestic work, and hence he would have to master new, cooperative ways to communicate with the rest of his family (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-8). Adjusting to a more democratic family structure could be perceived as efforts to undermine his authority, but in the long run it could be liberating to be freed from carrying the full burden of responsibility for his family’s welfare (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-8).
Practical support

According to Masgoret et al. (2009, pp. 51-52), a third of all migrants use an immigration adviser to assist them with the immigration process, including the application for visas, travel arrangements, business contacts and finding a place to live in New Zealand. Prior to their arrival, about 60% of migrants know people in New Zealand and 40% have family already living in New Zealand, and these social contacts are the primary source of pre-migration information and support (Masgoret et al., 2009, pp. 52-53). Friends and family who are already living in New Zealand are a rich source of practical information and encouragement regarding the practicalities of relocation, such as moving household goods, importing a car and pet emigration.

Post-migration assessment and intervention

You must be strong enough to make your own way, without the support of the Kiwi public or the government.

There will be friends upon whom you can depend.

There are government agencies that will assist you if the going gets too tough.

On the whole, it’s going to be up to you.

(Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-21)

The experiences of migrants during their first few years in a new country can have a significant impact on their long-term settlement outcomes. During this period, migrants have to orient themselves to their new country and finding employment, housing and schools, accessing health, education and other services, making new friends and settling into their new community is challenging. Settlement is a prolonged, ongoing process and is different for each person and family (Department of Labour, 2007, p. 12). It begins with people’s
perceptions of New Zealand, based on available pre-migration information, and it is achieved when they are integrated into New Zealand society and are able to fulfil their expectations (Department of Labour, 2007, p. 12). The integration of migrants into New Zealand society depends on many factors and they require a foundation from which to contribute to society and to reach their full potential (Badkar, 2008, p. 75). Understanding the factors relating to successful settlement could contribute to the development of effective immigration policy and settlement services for new migrants (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 148).

Information and education

There is a strong link between information-seeking behaviour, the content and accuracy of information newcomers receive and the development of a sense of community, support, and belonging (Macgibbon; Mason & Lamain, cited in Herrick & Morrison, 2010, p. 10). Information and education therefore play a key role in the settlement process (Department of Labour, cited in Herrick & Morrison, 2010, p. 10). For information to be relevant and useful, it needs to be structured and targeted to address a specific need of a particular person or group, and it must be delivered at the right time, in the right place and by the right people (Herrick & Morrison, 2010, p. 41). Moreover, it must have a demonstrable effect and tangible impact on improving people’s quality of life (UNESCO, cited in Herrick & Morrison, 2010, p. 41). Benson-Rea and Rawlinson (cited in Herrick & Morrison, 2010, p. 31) identify the following three levels of information migrants require: (1) macro-level information about the wider environment, including legislative and economic policies; (2) meso-level information about companies, such as business organisations, recruitment agents and trade bodies; and (3) micro-level information obtained at the individual level, for instance, by interacting with people and social networks. Macro- and meso-level information is the most useful during settlement, while micro-level information is used throughout all
stages of the migration and settlement process (Benson-Rea & Rawlinson, cited in Herrick & Morrison, 2010, p. 31).

Providing relevant information in response to the unique needs of each individual or migrant family in a culturally appropriate and supportive manner, when faced with demographically and ethnically diverse migrant groups from different immigration categories, who are at varying stages of the settlement process, poses a challenge for service providers (Herrick & Morrison, 2010, pp. viii, 26). The inability of migrants to acquire essential information does not necessarily reflect a shortage of available information or services, but is often due to access, language and structural barriers, such as a lack of coordination between services or conflicting information (Herrick & Morrison, 2010, pp. 37-38). Although services are available to help migrants cope with their everyday living, many newcomers are either not aware that these services exist owing to lack of advertising, or they do not have the English language skills to make adequate use of them (Ho et al., 2000, p. 25). In addition, migrants are not always aware that they lack knowledge about a particular aspect (Herrick & Morrison, 2010, p. 30), for instance, about the anti-smacking law in New Zealand. Some agencies, such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, only provide basic information to migrants to assist with general queries (Ho et al., 2000, p. 25). However, many migrants require practical help such as transport or low-cost healthcare (Ho et al., 2000, p. 34).

Mwarigha (cited in Herrick & Morrison, 2010, p. 37) relates information barriers to broader migrant settlement issues, such as suspicion or mistrust of government institutions, social isolation and the sense of being an outsider, emotional stress, and not knowing how to request assistance.

Research indicates that most people prefer to ask a person they trust or to use their social networks for information, and only thereafter utilise more formal resources (Fisher et al.; Caidi, cited in Herrick & Morrison, 2010, p. 32). However, interpersonal resources are
not anonymous or unbiased, and may not provide the necessary emotional support (Fisher et al., cited in Herrick & Morrison, 2010, pp. 33-34). In addition, many new migrants do not have social networks when they arrive in a new country, and are therefore reliant on other sources (Caidi & Allard, cited in Herrick & Morrison, 2010, p. 34). The internet provides culture- and language-specific news and information for new arrivals, and is a vital source of information about government departments (Caidi, cited in Herrick & Morrison, 2010, p. 34). Nongovernmental organisations, including community groups and ethnic organisations, are vital sources of information for migrants on everyday life, such as access to education and healthcare (Forsyte Research, cited in Herrick & Morrison, 2010, p. 35), and help to build social and supportive networks (Ho et al., 2000). Other important sources of information for migrants are libraries (Allen et al.; Fisher et al.; Caidi & Allard, cited in Herrick & Morrison, 2010, p.35) and translation services (White et al., cited in Herrick & Morrison, 2010, p.36). Herrick and Morrison (2010, p.24) hypothesise that employed migrants also access information through their colleagues in the workplace.

The need for information services varies according to the level of English usage, cultural background and the environment from which refugees and migrants have originated (Department of Labour and Auckland Sustainable Cities Programme; IMSED Research, cited in Herrick & Morrison, 2010, p. 31). Migrants from countries with political, governmental, and social infrastructures similar to that of New Zealand may only require information on how to access services because they should be able to find their own way around systems (Department of Labour and Auckland Sustainable Cities Programme, cited in Herrick & Morrison, 2010, p. 32). Migrants accustomed to different infrastructures require information and advice on settlement services, as well as support to understand and access services (Department of Labour and Auckland Sustainable Cities Programme, cited in Herrick & Morrison, 2010, p. 32). Refugees with high and complex needs, resulting from their pre-
migration experiences, need intensive and long-term support and advocacy to understand, have access and utilise a wide range of settlement services (Department of Labour and Auckland Sustainable Cities Programme, cited in Herrick & Morrison, 2010, p. 32). According to the Department of Labour (2004, p. 8), of established refugees, 39% require ongoing assistance for settlement in New Zealand, such as English language training, financial support and finding employment.

Service providers should ensure that the content of supplied information is relevant to the needs of the individual, is accurate, reliable and up to date, is provided in the client’s preferred language where possible, and is delivered through channels and media appropriate to the needs of the client base (Herrick & Morrison, 2010, p. 42). Information services should be accessible in terms of location and opening hours, have staff that are culturally competent and trained in the provision of information services, involve migrants in the design and operation of the service, have adequate funding, and have a strong relationship with other agencies that can provide additional services to clients (Herrick & Morrison, 2010, pp. 42, 46-47). Owen and Ho et al. (cited in Herrick & Morrison, 2010, p. 44) emphasise the usefulness of a holistic service or a one-stop shop that can provide access to a wide range of information, advice and services to meet the multiple settlement needs of migrants. According to Kuhlthau (cited in Herrick and Morrison, 2010, p. 44), migrants seek information to achieve a particular goal, and may thus require additional services or practical assistance for effective problem solving. When referring migrants to other services, there should be a “duty of care” particularly in relation to issues such as domestic violence or health concerns (Herrick & Morrison, 2010, p. 45).

According to Badkar (2008, p. 52), access to essential services, such as health and education, and understanding cultural norms and legal requirements are crucial for migrants upon arrival in a new country. In Masgoret et al.’s (2009, p. 116) study, almost 50% of the
migrants said that they had required information and assistance during the settlement phase. A lack of knowledge could result in people missing out on services to which they were entitled, and which could assist with re-settlement (Department of Labour, 2004, p.8). For many new migrants, the most important settlement issues are finding accommodation, schools and employment, obtaining a driver’s licence, accessing healthcare, understanding New Zealand’s social systems, government services, taxation and other legislation, and locating community and ethnic support groups (Ho et al., 2000, p. 25; Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 127). Other areas in which they might seek help are legal matters, government income support, budgeting, accessing community or local services, recognition of qualifications, and additional education and training, such as learning English (Badkar, 2008, p. 52). According to Wallis (2006, p. 29), most migrants are able to obtain the services they need most, but some migrants do not receive the help they have requested, such as finding a general practitioner and accessing other health services, including mental health and managing family stress (Badkar, 2008, p. 54). More than half of those seeking employment do not receive the assistance they require (Department of Labour, 2004, p.8). Most migrants have found settlement services provided by the New Zealand Immigration Department satisfactory, but some have reported an extremely negative experience because of staff members providing conflicting or incorrect information, and they have felt isolated by having to manage complex issues on their own (Wallis, 2006, pp. 18-19). Others have not been informed about changes to their application status or other immigration policy changes, and some respondents have received information too late to utilise it (Wallis, 2006, p. 16).

A study on the settlement outcomes of skilled migrants revealed that nearly 25% of respondents said that they would have benefited from more specific information about the New Zealand health system, such as the how to find a doctor and the costs of doctor visits; the interface between the public and private system; children and pregnant women’s
eligibility for the public health system; how the emergency services works; the Accident Compensation Fund (ACC); which services are not funded; accessing dental care; and whether and how to obtain health insurance (Wallis, 2006, p. 14). They also required more detailed information on the following: the tax system; New Zealand pension plans; buying a car; drivers’ licences and road safety; employment rights and labour laws; housing; the education system; the cost of living; budgeting and income support; opening a bank account; opening hours for retailers; setting up a business; and learning English (Wallis, 2006, pp. 14-16). Some migrants in this study mentioned that the cost of living and the cost of housing in New Zealand were higher than they had expected, and they did not know how to cope with damp and cold homes (Wallis, 2006, pp. 15-16). They also wanted more information on New Zealand customs, culture and popular expressions (Wallis, 2006, p. 16). In response to research results, the Department of Labour (2004, p. 17) was aiming to establish a national network of migrant resource services to provide a better coordinated delivery of settlement advice and information at a local and community level.

Prevention programmes

According to Fong (2007) the process and impact of migration on immigrants and refugees, and their families should be explored in the context of the entire migration journey with a focus on building resilience. A family resilience approach aims to resolve presenting problems and to promote resilience via “psycho-social inoculation” to prepare a family to meet future challenges effectively (Walsh, 1996, p. 10). Primary prevention reduces the possibility of encountering stressors, and helps to counteract harmful circumstances or events before stress reactions lead to system instability (Neuman, cited in Samarasinghe & Arvidsson, 2002, p. 299). Secondary prevention is aimed at protecting the internal and external structures of the family system by early treatment of symptoms, and encouraging
participation in and fostering a sense of belonging in the immediate social environment (Neuman, cited in Samarasinghe & Arvidsson, 2002, p. 299). Tertiary prevention is focused on re-adaptation and re-establishing the stability of the family system via therapeutic engagement and utilising the strengths and resources of the family (Neuman, cited in Samarasinghe & Arvidsson, 2002, p. 299). The following contextual variables should be included in the assessment to guide treatment planning and intervention: original culture and religion, country of origin, pre-migration life, traumatic experiences, circumstances of migration, family functioning, legal status and the resettlement process, and experiences in the host community (Fong, 2007, p. 4).

According to Abbott (1997, p. 258), it was important for prevention programmes to be developed for migrants as a significant number had experienced elevated rates of distress and mental disorder after arrival. New Zealand research suggests that these levels had persisted for many years and that mental health service utilisation of migrants had been much lower than that of other New Zealanders (Abbott, 1997, p. 258). Significant transgenerational effects could also occur (Abbott, 1997, p. 258). Abbott (1997, p. 258) contends that a number of high-risk groups in the migrant population, as well as major factors associated with mental disorder in these groups, have been identified. Some risk and moderating factors are potentially modifiable, which provides a basis for primary prevention interventions during the post-migration resettlement phase (Abbott, 1997, p. 258). Individual and social factors and resources, such as age, gender, language, social skills, personality, coping style, family, ethnic community, support groups and access to services are potential focal points for targeted interventions (Abbott, 1997, pp. 256, 258).

Mrazek and Haggerty (cited in Abbott, 1997, p. 259) indicated that interventions aimed at strengthening individual and social resources in high-risk groups could help to alleviate migration-associated distress and prevent the onset of depression. In New Zealand,
United Nations quota refugees arrive five times a year in groups of about 125, and spend six weeks at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre (MRRC) in Auckland (Ministry of Health, 2012, p. 39). The MRRC facilities include accommodation blocks, a nursery, classrooms, medical and dental clinics, recreational and sporting facilities and a clothing store (Ministry of Health, 2012, p. 39). According to the Ministry of Health (2012, p. 39), agencies represented at the MRRC are Immigration New Zealand, Refugee Services, Refugee Health Services, the Centre for Refugee Education (Auckland University of Technology) and Refugees As Survivors (RASNZ). At the MRRC, quota refugees have an organised programme of support and resettlement on arrival, including health screening and healthcare, dental care, English language instruction, welfare and accommodation support, and a basic orientation to New Zealand before starting their new lives as New Zealand residents in communities throughout the country where housing is provided for them (Ministry of Health, 2012, pp. 39-43). The Auckland Refugees as Survivors (RASNZ) Centre offers mental health assessment, early intervention and referral to all newly arrived refugees who have been exposed to trauma (Ministry of Health, 2012, p. 46). It also provides group therapy, including support groups for refugee women (Ministry of Health, 2012, p. 46). Clients can be referred to the RASNZ programme by any agency at the MRRC, or they can self-refer (Ministry of Health, 2012, p. 46).

According to Harrison and Nortje (2000, p. 13-16), South African immigrants often felt pressurised to prove themselves in a strange, new environment. Hence they find it hard to “go with the flow” and to stop pushing themselves so hard to succeed (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-4). They tend to feel defeated by small obstacles, because their expectations are high and they are burdened by the guilt of family obligations (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-15). They have become accustomed to function in survival mode owing to the high level of crime and unstable political system in South Africa, and they thus neglect themselves
emotionally and spiritually (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-15). For stress management and self-care after arrival, it is therefore important to eat a healthy diet, take additional supplements and vitamins where needed, get enough sleep, and unwind by exercising, such as walking along the beach or in a nature reserve (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, pp. 13-13, 13-18).

Abbott (1997, pp. 259-260) recommends that a comprehensive prevention programme for migrants and refugees in New Zealand would need to include the following: a nationwide collection of mental health service utilisation data by ethnicity, country of birth and length of residence; pre-migration orientation; mental health screening for refugees on arrival and the provision of treatment in a culturally acceptable context to recent and settled refugees; language education for all new settlers not proficient in English and financial assistance for those who cannot afford the classes; greater recognition of overseas professional and educational qualifications, and the provision of additional courses to assist refugees and migrants to practise their profession or trade in New Zealand; consultation with refugee and migrant groups about ways that health, education and social service providers could help them strengthen their communities and families in order to reduce the loss of social and cultural supports, to foster acculturation and adaptation, to reduce the barriers to utilise mainstream services and to develop targeted prevention programmes for high-risk groups, such as the elderly, youth, women the unemployed and socially isolated; and the establishment of ongoing media, school and community programmes to promote multiculturalism, understanding and tolerance and reduce prejudice and ethnocentrism, especially with regard to visible minorities and refugees. In addition, greatly improved coordination and cooperation between the various services, as well as with voluntary organisations and new settler communities would be required (Abbott, 1997, p. 260).
Support needs and services

In comparison with other major migrant-receiving countries such as Australia, Canada and the United States of America, New Zealand provides only a limited range of publicly funded settlement assistance services or programmes for migrants (Fletcher, cited in Ho et al., 2000, p. 15). The Citizens Advice Bureaux (CABs), ethnic associations and community groups currently provide a range of services to meet the variable needs of migrants (Ho et al., 2000, p. 5). However, access to these services for migrants is limited (Ho et al., 2000, p. 5). Many recent migrants are either not aware that these services exist, or they do not have the English language skills to make proper use of them, or they do not have transport available reach the service providers (Ho et al., 2000, p. 5).

Assessment of supportive needs

In international literature, access to information and support are recognised as a vital part of the settlement process (Caidi; Ho et al., cited in Herrick & Morrison, 2010, p. 6). During the pre-migration phase people make the decision to migrate, expectations are developed and the context is established for the settlement process (Benson-Rea & Rawlinson; IMSED Research, cited in Herrick & Morrison, 2010, p. 6). Most countries, including New Zealand, provide targeted services to newcomers during early settlement (IMSED Research, cited in Herrick & Morrison, 2010, p. 6). Upon arrival in New Zealand, settlement needs focus on orientation and survival, although employment and language needs are also important (IMSED Research; Mwarigha, cited in Herrick & Morrison, 2010, pp. 6, 29). As migrants start to settle in, they need to access systems and institutions to develop or upgrade their skills, develop social networks and adapt to cultural and lifestyle differences (IMSED Research; Mwarigha, cited in Herrick & Morrison, 2010, p. 6). At the integrated or settled stage, migrants become full participants in the economic, cultural, social and political
life of their new country, and they are able utilise mainstream services (Department of Immigration and Citizenship; IMSED Research; Mwarigha, cited in Herrick & Morrison, 2010, p. 6). Later in the settlement process, migrants require additional information and support in health services, understanding the political system, identity reconstruction and becoming a New Zealand citizen (Caidi, cited in Herrick & Morrison, 2010, p. 30). However, the settlement process is highly variable, as individuals and groups move through each stage at their own pace (Department of Labour; Department of Labour and Wellington Mayoral Forum, cited in Herrick & Morrison, 2010, p. 6).

Research indicates that the current Resettlement Programme is insufficient, and that the development and implementation of official Immigrant and Refugee Resettlement, as well as Ethnic Relations Policies, to guide and assist the settlement of immigrants and refugees from diverse ethnic backgrounds are required (Nash & Trlin, 2006, p. 24). These authors (2006, pp. 26-27) conclude that despite specialist settlement services, there are no formal immigrant settlement policies and programmes in place for so-called “voluntary migrants”, analogous to those provided for refugees. Nash and Trlin’s (2006, p. 26) research also indicated that resettlement took longer than two years and that education and training were required to assist with social and cultural integration. Immigrants and refugees may be traumatised, suffer from depression or have other mental health problems while grappling with a multitude of issues and tasks relating to settlement, and they often have to cope in the absence of family support in a strange environment (Nash & Trlin, 2006, p. 36). NGOs realise that coordinated support efforts are required as they are working in a new field of practice that requires new skills and knowledge to respond competently to the needs and difficulties presented by migrant clients (Nash & Trlin, 2006, p. 36).
Support for home living

According to Masgoret et al. (2009, p. 54), about half of all migrants reported that they had stayed with family or friends for a few weeks after arrival in New Zealand, but Skilled and Business category migrants had spent little or no time living with family and friends. After settlement, most migrants had lived with a partner, a partner and dependent children or with extended family or friends (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 189). About 7% of migrants had lived alone, or as single parents with dependent children (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 189). At six months post-migration, just over half of all migrants were living in rental accommodation, and about 30% owned or partly owned their accommodation (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 117), which increased to about 50% after three years (Longitudinal Immigration Survey: New Zealand–LisNZ, 2009, pp. 1, 7). Migrants from the United Kingdom, Irish Republic and North America were more likely to own, or partly own, their homes after six months (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 118) as well as three years (LisNZ, 2009, Table 5) after residency approval, compared to migrants from South Africa. Six months after residency approval, about 18% of South African migrants were living in their own homes and about 70% were living in rental accommodation (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 216). After three years, about 40% of South Africans were living in their own homes (LisNZ, 2009, Table 5).

According to the findings of Badkar’s (2008, p. 42) research, most skilled migrants had settled in the Auckland region, followed by Canterbury and Wellington. One-third of migrants had experienced difficulties finding suitable housing in New Zealand, mostly because of the high costs of rent or a mortgage, as well as the lack of suitable housing in the preferred area or the poor quality of housing (Badkar, 2008, p. 43). Of these migrants, 8% had attributed their difficulties to discrimination from real estate agents or property owners towards migrants (Badkar, 2008, p. 43). Migrants who had owned their own homes were more likely to feel satisfied with their housing situation than migrants who had been living in
rental accommodation (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 122). Migrants who were not satisfied with the quality of their accommodation cited problems with dampness, lack of insulation and keeping their homes warm, housing that was too small, poorly equipped, in poor condition or required repairs, noise levels from neighbours or traffic, an unsafe neighbourhood, difficulty with the landlord or property manager, the lack of public transport and distance from essential services (Badkar, 2008, p. 45; Wallis, 2006, p. 28).

Work and income support

According to the Department of Labour (2004, p. 7), the majority of migrants, as well as their family members, had sought employment upon arrival in New Zealand. Finding work that matched their skills and qualifications, and integration into the labour market were significant indicators of successful settlement (Department of Labour, 2004, p. 7). Migrants entered the country with a range of skills, work experience and talents that could contribute to New Zealand’s economy (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 62). Of skilled migrants, 67% held a post-school qualification, and nearly half of them held an advanced vocational qualification or university degree (Masgoret et al., 2009, pp. 64, 69). About two-thirds had been in full-time employment in their countries of origin, 40% had worked as professionals, and more than 50% had ten or more years of work experience before obtaining New Zealand residency (Masgoret et al., 2009, pp. 62, 66, 69).

Masgoret et al. (2009, p.72) reported in their research that 62% of skilled migrants indicated that they had no difficulty in finding employment in New Zealand. Looking at job advertisements, and contacting an employer or an employment agency were cited as the most common methods used by skilled migrants to find their first job in New Zealand (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 92). Securing a job through friends or relatives was most common for business migrants (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 92). The factors that helped migrants to secure
employment were work experience or qualifications that were officially recognised in New Zealand, English as a first language, arranging a job in New Zealand prior to arrival and emigrating from regions outside North Asia (Masgore et al., 2009, pp. 88, 93). Overall, employment rates were higher for males, for migrants aged 25 to 54, and for those with post-secondary school qualifications (Masgore et al., 2009, p. 88). Skilled migrants were more likely to work in professional, scientific, engineering and technical services, education and training, healthcare and social services, and management and business services than other migrants (Masgore et al., 2009, p. 85; Wallis, 2006, p. 22). For migrants who had difficulties finding employment, the lack of New Zealand work experience was the most commonly cited reason, followed by employers not accepting overseas skills or experience, lack of suitable work opportunities to match their skills or experience, language difficulties and discrimination on account of their migrant status (Badkar, 2008, p. 39; Masgore et al., 2009, p. 94). Ho et al. (2000) reported that New Zealand employers “were prejudiced against hiring people who were more qualified than themselves” (p. 27) or had the tendency to hire people “on first impression” (p. 28).

Employment rates for all migrant groups were 53% after six months of residency, 62% after 18 months (Department of Labour, 2004, p. 7) and approximately 76% after three years (LisNZ wave 3, 2009, pp. 1, 6). Employment rates were low for refugees: 16% at six months and 26% at two years (Department of Labour, 2004, p. 7). Of the Skilled and Business migrants, 70% were working within three months of residency approval, and 4% were seeking employment (Masgore et al., 2009, pp. 74). After six months’ residency, 76% of Skilled and business migrants were employed or self-employed, which increased to 84% after 18 months (Department of Labour, 2004, p. 7). Surveys found that between 10 and 39% of migrants were engaged in formal study or training in New Zealand to improve their English, to gain employment or find a better job, to upgrade their qualifications to work in
their chosen profession or to change their career (Badkar, 2008, pp. 47-48; Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 122). According to Masgoret et al. (2009, p. 80), about 86% of South African principal residency applicants and about 62% of secondary applicants, which may have included a spouse or partner, were employed after six months’ residency. Most unemployed South African immigrants were caring for dependents at home, or were studying or retired, but about 9% were seeking employment (Masgoret et al., 2009, pp. 99, 204). The implication here is that South African families may decide to immigrate after the principal applicant secures employment, but that the spouse or partner may experience difficulty finding suitable employment after arrival, which could lead to disappointment and frustration.

According to Wallis’s (2006, p. 25) research, approximately 80% of skilled migrants were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their jobs, 12% were “neither satisfied nor dissatisfied”, and 8% were “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied”. The majority of skilled migrants took up their initial job offer in New Zealand, but 25% of those who had changed their jobs after a few months reported work-related difficulties (Wallis, 2006, pp. 20-21). Low job satisfaction resulted from a mismatch between the job and their qualifications, skills, experience and expectations, because they were not working in their preferred occupation, low pay, poor working conditions and difficulties adjusting to a new employment system, workplace bullying, incompetent management and unsupportive or difficult employers (Badkar, 2008, pp. 37-38; Wallis, 2006, pp. 21, 25, 26). In addition, about a quarter of migrants reported at least one incident of discrimination, usually in a public place or at work (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 136). According to Masgoret et al. (2009, p. 142), South Africans experienced more discrimination than migrants from the United Kingdom, Ireland, North America, Europe or the Pacific, but to a lesser extent than migrants from Asian countries. An added factor of concern for South African immigrants was that after three years of residency, the median hourly earnings of both skilled primary applicants and skilled secondary
applicants were lower than that of applicants from the United Kingdom and Ireland, the United States of America, Continental Europe and Russia (LisNZ, 2009, table 3).

Experiencing discrimination from employers and colleagues can be a significant stressor for South African immigrants, and the inability of their spouses or partners to find suitable employment can cause financial hardship, resentment and family conflict.

Ho et al. (2000, p. 29) reported in their research that many respondents believed that the inflexible attitudes and idealistic career expectations of some migrants were partly the result of the false or unrealistic information they had received from immigration consultants in their home countries about their employment prospects in New Zealand. Migrants who had entered under the immigration points system also believed that the more points they gained for their qualifications and professional work experience, the easier it would be for them to find employment (Ho et al., 2000, p. 29). The difficulties in obtaining acceptance of qualifications from professional associations were most notable for health professionals and engineers (Barnard; Department of Internal Affairs, cited in Ho et al., 2000, p. 14). There were also concerns that some employers might have difficulties in determining the authenticity and quality of overseas qualifications, and assessing their applicability to the New Zealand work environment (Fletcher; Ho & Bliss, cited in Ho et al., 2000, p. 14). With no pre-migration preparation to cope with the difficulties of finding employment, some migrants had been compelled to leave New Zealand to return home, or to remigrate elsewhere (Ho et al., 2000, p. 29).

The employment assistance services provided by Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) mainly benefited low-skilled migrants (Ho et al., 2000, p. 6). Few services were available, either from WINZ or from community and ethnic groups, to help highly skilled migrants gain employment in the New Zealand labour market (Ho et al., 2000, p. 6). Career Services aimed to provide career information, advice and guidance on the labour market and
workplaces for migrants and refugees to improve their ability to find employment appropriate to their skills (Department of Labour, 2004, p. 15). This included knowledge about available opportunities, as well as the attitudes and expectations of employers (Department of Labour, 2004, p. 15). The Ministry of Education provided English language support for students who were recent migrants, or were first-generation children of migrants, to improve educational and employment outcomes (Department of Labour, 2004, p. 17).

Wallis (2006, p. 24) found that three quarters of skilled, principal migrants were earning more than the average salary for full-time workers in New Zealand, and about 70% had enough money to meet their everyday needs after six months and three years of residency (LisNZ, 2009, p. 7; Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 110). The medium annual income for males was higher than that for females across all age groups (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 105). The medium annual income of South African skilled migrants was slightly less than that of migrants from the United Kingdom and Irish Republic, and similar to those from the United States of America (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 106). About 15% of South African migrants had sent money overseas to family, friends, a church or other community groups (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 109). Half of all migrants said they owned assets in New Zealand, mostly property, while 31% percent owned overseas assets (Masgoret et al., 2009, pp. 113-114).

The majority of migrants reported that before coming to New Zealand they had enough, or more than enough money to meet their everyday needs (Badkar, 2008, p. 67). In contrast, nearly a third of all migrant groups said they did not have enough money to meet the cost of living in New Zealand after six months and three years of residency (LisNZ, 2009, p. 7; Masgoret et al., 2009, pp. 102, 110). These findings should be interpreted in the light of the socio-economic contexts and personal circumstances of migrants in their source countries compared to New Zealand, such as taxation and unfavourable exchange rates, the additional financial resources required to establish a new home during the first year of settlement, and to
what degree migrants were able to rely on their extended families and relatives for additional support (Badkar, 2008, p. 69).

With regard to employment assistance services, the most significant service provider was WINZ (Ho et al., 2000, p. 6). Migrants were not usually entitled to receive statutory core benefits from WINZ until they had been a resident in New Zealand for two years (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 111). However, emergency benefits were available to those who were suffering hardship and were ineligible to receive any other benefit (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 111). Migrants were also entitled to receive financial assistance from the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) and Working for Families tax credits from the Inland Revenue Department (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 111). Of all migrants, 9% had received some kind of government financial assistance, but less than 2% had received a core benefit, such as an unemployment benefit or a sickness benefit (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 102). The majority of migrants receiving a benefit within two years of being approved for residence had been refugees (Quazi, 2008, p. 26).

According to Quazi (2008, p. 24), Skilled and Business migrants accounted for the lowest proportion of migrant beneficiaries, despite being the largest migrant group. South Africans ranked tenth on the list of migrant groups receiving a government benefit, whereas they were the fourth largest immigrant group (Quazi, 2008, p. 5). Firkin et al. (2004, p.35) assert that South African immigrants have expressed frustration about the tendency of some migrants to expect, and obtain government support shortly after arrival. One research respondent commented that despite her family’s own experiences and difficulties to secure employment, this was something they had never considered as an option (Firkin et al., 2004, p. 35). This sense of pride and stance of self-sufficiency and independence in the face of difficulties could prevent South African immigrants from obtaining the assistance available to them, and to which they were legally entitled.
Support for families

According to Masgoret et al.’s (2009, p. 116) study, the ease with which migrants and their families had settled into their new life in New Zealand was an important indicator of migrant well-being and adjustment, and was integral to New Zealand’s ability to attract and retain the migrants needed to contribute to the country’s growth and diversity. Keeping in contact with family and friends back home via telephone, e-mail or the internet was an important tether to support networks in South Africa. Telephone companies often had special rates for land lines in specific countries and speaker phones facilitated transcontinental family interaction (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-19). However, South African immigrants sometimes chose to avoid or reduce their contact if family members who stayed behind were burdening them with guilt, loss or worry or resorted to subtle blackmail (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-19).

Communication between family members and addressing emotional and spiritual issues in a cooperative way were essential to managing the challenges of relocation (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-8). It could be helpful for the immigrant family to revisit their “manifesto” of reasons for leaving South Africa, as well as their expectations for a new life in New Zealand (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-12). In New Zealand, the hierarchical family structure tends to become “flatter” than what it was in South Africa and decisions need to be made with the input of everyone concerned (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-12). It is necessary for family members to venture beyond their comfort zones, and new rules about areas of responsibility need to be drawn up (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-12). Traditional gender-role household chores are interchangeable in New Zealand, where men may prepare meals and do the ironing, and women may wash the car and mow the lawn (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-12).
Harrison and Nortje (2000, pp. 13-8) reported that South African immigrant families often struggled to let go of South Africa as their homeland and reminisced about “in South Africa, we...”. As New Zealanders could perceive this as criticism, immigrants were advised against displaying this tendency in public to facilitate allegiance with the host country (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-8). Afrikaner families were more openly affectionate, for instance, family members greeting each other with a kiss, but this habit made some New Zealanders feel uncomfortable (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-15). As South Africans were often perceived as racist, it was important to leave racial prejudices and preconceptions behind and for parents to avoid negative comments about New Zealand or New Zealanders in the presence of their children (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-11). It was also recommended that parents should not to talk to their children about serious topics when they were in vulnerable situations and could feel trapped, for instance, in bed or during meal times (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-10).

According to Badkar (2008, p. 46), for migrant families in New Zealand, satisfaction with the quality of their children’s education could be a significant factor in successful settlement. A survey found that the majority of migrants were satisfied with their children’s schools (Badkar, 2008, p. 46) and felt that their children had settled well at school (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 127). The small number of respondents who were not satisfied with the quality of their children’s schooling had concerns about the quality of teaching and education, a lack of teaching materials, unsatisfactory academic progress, fighting or bullying at school or the school being inappropriate for their ethnic, religious or cultural preferences (Badkar, 2008, p. 46; Wallis, 2006, p. 29). Children had “wider” (p. 13-10) social boundaries in New Zealand, compared to South Africa, and South African children were generally perceived as disciplined, diligent, polite and committed to their education (Harrison & Nortje, 2000). Their behaviour and value systems thus rarely caused concern at school (Harrison & Nortje, 2000,
Teachers expected children to be self-disciplined, and when South African children realised that nobody was checking up on them, owing to the different assessment system at school, they could feel that nobody cared about their achievements anymore (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-10). Some became unmotivated, but once they realised that they were working for themselves, their former diligence, commitment and discipline were usually re-established (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-10).

Groups, informal networks and leisure

According to Masgoret et al.’s (2009, p. 136, 15) research findings, social networks not only contributed to the social integration of new migrants, but also played a significant role in their economic integration as they provided access to information networks that increased social interaction and employment opportunities. Ethnic associations, community and church groups, as well as other social networks could play a key role in building supportive connections to help migrants feel at home (Badkar, 2008, p. 50; Ho et al., 2000, p. 6). Social networks could also build migrant community resilience, reduce barriers to good health, improve mental health awareness and increase support for people with mental illness (Te Pou, 2008, p. 33). According to the Department of Labour (2004, p. 9), most cities and large towns offer a wide range of ethnic, social and community groups and organisations that can help migrants to settle. However, migrants are often unaware of these support groups or do not know how to get in touch with them (Department of Labour, 2004, p. 9). In addition, older migrants, “astronaut” families, migrants from rural backgrounds, teenagers and refugees often encounter more problems in building supportive connections (Ho et al., 2000, p. 6). Few services are available to address the special needs of these migrant groups (Ho et al., 2000, p. 6).
Masgoret et al. (2009, p. 139) reported that moving to a new country was a major challenge and making friends who could help, offer advice and share their experiences was essential in the settlement process. Friendships with members of the host community, as well as the migrant’s own ethnic community, provided important sources of social support and assisted the settlement process (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 137). The majority of migrants in this study reported that they had established new friendships after their arrival in New Zealand (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 137). New migrants often longed for the companionship of people “of their own kind” (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-18) to provide support and understanding of their experiences, but it was also necessary to mix with the broader community to facilitate acculturation. Those who had difficulty making friends outside their ethnic group attributed it to language problems and cultural differences (Department of Labour, 2004, p. 9). Poor English skills could be socially isolating and prevent migrants from successfully participating in their local community (New Zealand Department of Labour, 2004, p. 7). Even for migrants who spoke English well, New Zealand English had presented challenges owing to the different accent, terms and expressions, and unfamiliarity with Māori words (Department of Labour, 2004, p. 7).

According to Masgoret et al.’s (2009, p. 39) research, approximately 20% of South African immigrants spoke only one language, presumably English, while the majority were bilingual. Afrikaans-speaking immigrants may not always have the same verbal fluency as English-speaking South Africans, or understand the subtleties of the English language to the same degree (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-15). Hence they are often perceived by New Zealanders as too direct, “arrogant” or “aggressive” (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-15). Some Afrikaans speakers have to translate their thoughts from Afrikaans to English prior to responding, which is further complicated by New Zealanders finding the Afrikaans accent difficult to follow (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-16). The technical jargon of the workplace
and expressions used by the general population also need to be mastered (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-16). New Zealanders tend to find South Africans rather serious, and find it difficult to laugh at themselves (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-15).

According to the New Zealand Department of Labour (2004, p. 10), full participation in society involves being part of broader civic, community and social activities, which includes joining sports clubs, community and church groups, or standing for election for a school board or local council. Up to two-thirds of migrants surveyed reported that they had belonged to at least one club, group or leisure network, such as sports clubs, hobby or cultural groups, religious groups, youth groups, service clubs, community or voluntary groups, ethnic or work-related associations, or a training course relating to a leisure activity or personal interest (Badkar, 2008, p. 50; Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 138). Belonging to a religious group was of particular importance to migrants from South Africa and the Pacific (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 138). South African migrants tended to make new friends in New Zealand at work or through other friends, relatives and neighbours, followed by meeting them through religious groups, day-to-day activities, their child’s school or at a sports club (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 229). Doing volunteer work could help migrants to gain a foothold in the job market, and joining professional organisations or a golf club would provide opportunities for networking and building professional relationships (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-14). Employment improved social functioning because it provides an income, enhanced social status and strengthened identity, enabling the individual to develop interpersonal relationships with others in society (Aycan & Berry, cited in Alpass et al., 2007, pp. 6, 10). According to Spoonley and Trlin (2004, pp. 55-56, 58-60), in New Zealand there is a rapidly expanding alternative media accessed by immigrants, such as the internet, social network sites and smart phone applications, which helps significantly in the settlement process by providing contacts and information.
The Department of Labour (2004, p. 10) recognises that it is important to value the ethnic and cultural diversity that migrants and refugees bring to New Zealand society. Migrants place more importance on retaining the values and traditions of their ethnic group after 18 months of residence than after six months, indicating that this issue becomes more significant over time (Department of Labour, 2004, p. 10). Most migrants are proud of their cultural heritage; they want to maintain their own culture in New Zealand to preserve a cultural identity for future generations and are eager to share it with the broader society (Department of Labour, 2004, p. 10). The most common ways to maintain their culture are through eating traditional food, religious practice and speaking their language (Department of Labour, 2004, p. 10).

According to Masgoret et al.’s (2009, pp. 142, 231-232) findings, about 40% of South Africans reported that most of their friends in New Zealand had the same ethnic background as themselves, and nearly 60% said it was important to carry on the values and traditions of their ethnic group. Many South Africans were determined not to associate with fellow expatriates, but others longed for the companionship of their own people that offered an oasis of familiarity and a helping hand (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, pp. 13-17, 13-18). South Africans in New Zealand (SANZ), the South Island New Zealand Association of South Africans (SINZASA) and similar groups provided a place where South Africans could relax, share jokes, off-load their worries, ask advice and reminisce about the past (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, pp. 13-14, 13-17). Numerous internet sites, such as Kiwiboer, SA Kiwi, South African in New Zealand, Kiwikaner and South African Kiwis provided information and advice, and the opportunity to connect and share experiences with other South African immigrants. Although scattered across New Zealand, the Afrikaans community had extremely strong ties, boosted through the community activities of the Afrikaanse Klub, an organisation which issued regular newsletters and organised frequent cultural activities (Barkhuizen, 2006, p.
There were also regular Afrikaans church services in numerous towns and cities, and Afrikaans lessons for beginners was recently introduced for the community on the North Shore in Auckland (Brokkies, cited in Barkhuizen, 2006, p. 66).

**Therapeutic assessment and intervention**

The one who talks to me in a language other than that of my heart

How, tell me, can he heal the splits and wounds that inhabit its dark corners.

(Chopra, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 102)

According to Beiser and Edwards (1994, p. 83), although prevention of disorder and promotion of positive adaptation are encouraged, some newcomers will develop psychiatric problems, but may avoid seeking help from the mental health care system. The expression of psychiatric illness, as well as help-seeking behaviour may be different in migrants, for instance, they may present with somatic symptoms to general practitioners, and refugees who have experienced trauma may be more hesitant to seek help (Chang & Cheng, 1999, para. 23, 25). There is also a risk of misdiagnosis due to cultural or linguistic barriers, or issues relating to social desirability, social approval and compliance (Cheng & Chang, 1999, para. 26). However, when culturally sensitive services are available, refugees and immigrants tend to utilise and benefit from these services (Kinzie, cited in Beiser & Edwards, 1994, p. 83).

In New Zealand, both mainstream and refugee specific services, such as Refugees as Survivors (RASNZ), the Canterbury District Health Board and Christchurch Resettlement Services provide mental healthcare for refugee communities. Eligibility for these services differs according to the category of refugee entry (Te Pou, 2008, p. 12). Specialist mental health services, relevant to migrant groups, include a refugee and migrant mental health service in Christchurch, as well as Asian and Pacific services in Auckland and Wellington
Some refugees may prefer to access alternative healthcare providers, including traditional herbal and spiritual healers (Fraser; Jackson, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 12). The health and mental health concerns of immigrants are principally managed by mainstream health services (Te Pou, 2008, p. 14). Once immigrants become New Zealand residents they are entitled to mainstream health services at the same cost as New Zealand citizens (Te Pou, 2008, p. 15).

Understanding the complexity of the migrant’s experience, as well as cultural competence, are essential elements during assessment to build rapport, establish credibility and provide appropriate interventions, services and resources to the newcomer (Segal & Mayadas, 2005, pp. 569, 576). To understand their immigration experience, it is important to explore the following: the place of birth and circumstances under which individuals left their homeland; the family’s experience of relocation; their migrant category; their ethnic and sociocultural heritage; prevailing psychosocial and economic issues; their awareness of the phases of the immigration process; their pre-migration knowledge of the host country; length of time since arrival; and their level of sociocultural integration (Allen, 2010, p. 50, Segal & Mayadas, 2005, pp. 576, 578-579). Essential elements in the assessment of immigrant and refugee families are the following: evaluating the family composition; existing support from family members, relatives, friends and others; resources for social, economic and cultural integration; differentiating between realistic and unrealistic expectations; evaluating families’ problem-solving abilities; exploring family functioning in the context of their cultural heritage; qualifications and years of education; identifying the transferability of work skills; and determining families’ learning capabilities and motivation for adaptation (Allen, 2010, p. 50; Segal & Mayadas, 2005, pp. 563, 576-579). Fluency and literacy in the dominant host-society language, literacy in the native language, socioeconomic status in the homeland and
exposure to Western social and cultural patterns are vital factors for integration in the host society (Segal & Mayadas, 2005, p. 577).

The goals and expectations of migrants are dependent on the resources brought from their homeland, their willingness to adapt to the host society and the opportunities available to them (Segal & Mayadas, 2005, p. 577). Adaptability and adequate functioning in the homeland may be good predictors of adjustment in the new environment, and problem-solving abilities, strong and healthy family relationships, and adequate support networks in the immigrant community may increase adaptation (Segal & Mayadas, 2005, p. 577). The focus of the assessment process is economic self-sufficiency and asset building, empowerment, equitable functioning in society, civic and political participation, physical and psychological health, and providing access to education programmes, community organisations, discussion and support groups, as well as individual or family counselling (Segal & Mayadas, 2005, p. 579).

In Masgoret et al.’s (2009, p. 133) study, the health of migrants was found to be an important component in successful settlement, and experiencing physical health problems was a consistent predictor of poor mental well-being (Alpass et al., 2007, p. 10). Migrants had to meet health requirements to gain entry into New Zealand, and everyone intending to stay in New Zealand for longer than 12 months had to undergo medical screening to ensure they had an acceptable standard of health for immigration purposes (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 133). The most common type of health professional seen by migrants during the first 18 months of residency was a general practitioner (GP), followed by a dentist or dental nurse, or a pharmacist (IMSED research, Health fast facts, p. 2). Lower numbers of migrants consulted a medical specialist, an optician or optometrist, a physiotherapist or midwife (IMSED research, Health fast facts, p. 2). Of migrants, 23% had not seen any health professional during this period (IMSED research, Health fast facts, p. 2). Most migrants had not been
admitted to hospital or used hospital services during the first 18 months of residency (IMSED research, Health fast facts, p. 2).

A study on the psychological wellbeing of skilled migrants from India, China, and South Africa, who had been in the country for five years, indicated that South African immigrants experienced higher levels of role limitations due to emotional health problems than Indian and Chinese immigrants, as well as the general New Zealand population (Alpass et al., 2007, pp. 5, 11). Female immigrants from all three countries had lower mental health scores than men, which could have been caused by separation from the extended family, acculturation difficulties and shifts in traditional gender roles (Alpass et al., 2007, pp. 6, 8-9). Immigrants attributed their mental stress and resulting depression to the “arduous nature” of the immigration process, as well as a lack of family and social support (Alpass et al., 2007, p. 10). For newcomers, contact with friends and family from the home country improved mental well-being as it helped to maintain cultural identity (Alpass et al., 2007, pp. 6, 9). After five years, regular contact with compatriots in the adopted country was unrelated to well-being, and it was argued the lack of daily reinforcement of cultural identity was not as detrimental as in new arrivals (Alpass et al., 2007, p. 9).

As indicated by international research, New Zealand’s refugee and migrant communities may underutilise general health and mental health services (Fraser, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 35). They may wait until they develop more serious levels of mental illness before they seek mental healthcare, compared to the host population (Bean, Eurelings-Bontekoe, Mooijaart, & Spinhoven, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 35). This could result in higher utilisation rates of crisis mental health services and social services (Have & Bijl; Ziguras, Klimidis, Lewis, & Stuart, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 35) and higher hospitalisation rates for schizophrenia than the host population (Abbott; Cartor et al., cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 35). Little information is available about the number of refugees and migrants in New Zealand.
who experience distress, physical or mental illness but do not seek help from services (Te Pou, 2008, pp. 37-38). Strategies that could improve refugee and migrant service access and utilisation are language-appropriate information pamphlets about mental health and healthcare systems, provider-initiated contact for quota refugees, cultural competence training for health staff, collaboration between health providers and settlement services, follow up of clients to reduce the level of unmet mental health needs, and obtaining the support from community and spiritual leaders (Te Pou, 2008, pp. 36-37).

According to Alpass et al. (2007, p. 11), difficulties experienced by migrants with healthcare services in New Zealand include the cost of care, particularly dentistry, the waiting period to see specialists, accessibility problems due to bureaucracy, the lack of continuity of care, such as seeing different doctors in a practice, communication problems, and a lack of communication between health professionals. One study noted that 83% of refugees had seen a general practitioner after arriving in New Zealand, but 10% reported that they had been unable to see a doctor when required owing to communication difficulties, financial costs, transportation or a lack of available appointments (New Zealand Immigration Service, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 35). Some migrants reported that general practitioners did not spend enough time with them, were not thorough enough or they disliked the manner of the doctor (IMSED research, Health fast facts, p. 2). Because the general practitioner was often the first port of call when people experienced physical or mental health problems, this could be a serious barrier to obtain appropriate help in a timely manner.

According to Te Pou (2008, p. 39), it was not known to what extent the mental health needs of refugee and migrant communities were met by primary healthcare services in New Zealand. Primary healthcare was a first contact point for essential healthcare, provided by health practitioners and support workers in the community, and includes health promotion, health screening, illness diagnosis and treatment services. Primary healthcare was an
important source of psychological support for refugee and migrant populations in New Zealand, as they were more likely to access primary health professionals as a first port of call with their mental health concerns, such as stress and anxiety (Fraser; Guerin et al., cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 38). Effective screening and treatment of mental illness in primary care settings were important for initiating appropriate referrals and responding to problems that did not meet the criteria for referral to specialist mental health services (Te Pou, 2008, p. 38.). Practitioners in New Zealand reported difficulties with screening, diagnosing and treating mental illness in refugee and migrant clients (Ngai et al., cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 38), as well as encouraging refugee clients to adhere to the prescribed treatment recommendations (Fraser, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 39). The Ministry of Health (2009) recommended that to improve primary healthcare services to New Zealand’s migrant and refugee community it would be necessary to improve access to translators, promote mental health and destigmatise mental health issues, improve early detection and treatment of mental health problems, improve referral to supportive community services and ensure that mainstream services were culturally competent.

Te Pou (2008, p. 43) maintains that little research has been conducted internationally on what type of mental health services would be most effective for improving treatment outcomes for refugee or migrant service users. Migrant groups could have differing health beliefs, specific disorders and unique stressors, come from countries with different healthcare systems, and might prefer individualised, face-to-face information rather than translated documents (Allen et al., cited in Herrick & Morrison, 2010, p. 27). Difficulties treating refugees who have experienced torture or trauma include communication difficulties, distrust of medical professionals, physical implications of torture and the risk of re-traumatising service users by asking them to recount their traumatic experiences (Jackson, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 40). Refugee communities also have different beliefs and perceptions that include
attributing mental illness to past wrongdoings, supernatural powers, spirit possession and physical imbalances (Jackson, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 45). A number of authors therefore assert that Western models of mental healthcare are less effective for refugee and ethnic migrant service users (Ho et al.; Schmidt & Poole, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 40). However, little is known about the relative efficacy of other treatment methods or service delivery models for mental well-being in refugee or migrant clients (Ho et al.; Office of the Auditor General, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 40).

Services based on holistic approaches, multidisciplinary teams and cross-sector collaboration are deemed to be most appropriate for treating mental illness in refugee communities (Guerin & Guerin; Keyes; Lustig et al.; Watters, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 40). Treatment approaches for PTSD in the general population include trauma-focused cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing therapy (EMDR), and stress management techniques (Bisson et al.; Ehnholt & Yule, cited in Te Pou, 2008, pp. 40-41), but there are only tentative indications that these therapies will be effective for refugee and migrant populations (Bisson et al., cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 41). Some steps have been taken towards developing specific treatment options, guidelines, checklists and service recommendations for working with refugee and migrants in New Zealand (Lustig et al., cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 41). At that time, most of New Zealand’s mental health treatment guidelines did not include specific recommendations for refugee or migrant communities (Te Pou, 2008, p. 41).

A number of service users, service providers and researchers have argued that specialist services should be developed for refugee and migrant clients (Schmidt & Poole; Watters, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 41). However, few refugee or migrant mental health services have been set up internationally, and even fewer have been evaluated for their impact on treatment outcomes (Forbes, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 41). The availability of
ethnically matched clinicians is associated with better rates of service access (Ziguras et al., cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 41), and it reduces contact with crisis intervention teams because of better client management (Ziguras et al., cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 41). Cultural consultation to assist mainstream services to provide culturally competent services could be more resource efficient than specialist ethnic services, particularly when a population includes a multitude of small ethnic groups (Whitler, Kirmayer & Jarvis, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 41). At the time of Te Pou’s (2008) research, there was limited evidence about the relative effectiveness of specialist services, cultural competency models or mainstream services for refugee and migrant communities (Bhui & Sashidaran, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 41). Culturally specialist services for smaller ethnic migrant communities in New Zealand, namely those who were not from Asia or the Pacific, were unlikely to be a major funding priority (Te Pou, 2008, p. 42).

Refugees as Survivors appeared to be the only migrant-focused mental health service in New Zealand (Te Pou, 2008, p. 42). The Auckland Refugees as Survivors centre included multidisciplinary teams which consisted of nurses, social workers, psychiatrists, psychologists, psychotherapists, counsellors, body therapists, interpreters and refugee community link workers (Fraser; Thomas, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 42). A mobile team worked with refugees living in various Auckland communities (Te Pou, 2008, p. 42). The Wellington Refugees as Survivors Trust dealt mostly with survivors of trauma and torture, and used a range of client-centred approaches, such as Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, Gestalt therapy and narrative therapy (Te Pou, 2008, p. 42). They were also involved in capacity building in refugee communities (Wellington Refugees as Survivors Trust, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 42). The specialist refugee and migrant mental health service in Christchurch accepted referrals from the Mangere resettlement centre, general practitioners and other local professional and community agencies (Te Pou, 2008, p. 42). The model of care included a comprehensive mental health assessment, diagnosis, medication reviews and ongoing
treatment, using a range of therapeutic models (Te Pou, 2008, p. 42). Appropriately trained interpreters were used throughout the treatment process (Te Pou, 2008, p. 42). The service also offered consultation, teaching and training to a range of mainstream health and mental health professionals and teaching institutions on working more effectively with refugee clients (Briggs, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 42).

Evaluations of refugee services in New Zealand had focused on monitoring service access and service delivery targets (Jackson, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 42). Specific outcomes measures to assess changes in mental health had not been developed for refugee and migrant populations (Te Pou, 2008, p. 42). A number of authors emphasise the fact that migrant communities should be involved in identifying priorities and developing innovative treatment approaches to address their needs (Keyes; Lustig et al.; Watters, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 43). Of the NGOs in New Zealand, 72% reported that they had employed former immigrants and refugees, and most had been engaged as cultural advisors, translators and interpreters, social workers, counsellors and community development workers (Nash & Trlin, 2006, p. 19). The advantages reported were ease of communication, empathy due to shared experiences and client comfort (Nash & Trlin, 2006, p. 19). However, disadvantages were unrealistic expectations of clients, excessive demands from the ethnic community, poor boundaries in personal and professional life, unfamiliarity with New Zealand systems and professional standards that differed from those of the NGO (Nash & Trlin, 2006, pp. 19-20). There was also scope for improvement in documenting staff members’ particular cultural and language skills to improve recognition and remuneration for these skills (Nash & Trlin, 2006, p. 20).

It was not possible to determine the prevalence of mental illness in migrant groups in New Zealand from official mental health data, because it did not include a breakdown by country of birth or length of residence (Abbott, 1997, p. 252). No New Zealand studies had examined community mental health service utilisation by immigrants or refugees, or had
determined the prevalence of the major categories of mental disorder among these groups (Abbott, 1997, p. 253). However, community surveys of psychological distress and disorder had been conducted (Abbott, 1997, p. 253). Clinically significant levels of depression were found in 29% of refugees, 18% of Pacific migrants and 8% of British migrants (Pernice & Brook, cited in Abbott, 1997, p. 253). Of the refugees and Pacific migrants, 15 to 18% experienced anxiety, compared to 3% of British migrants (Pernice & Brook, cited in Abbott, 1997, p. 253).

Harrison and Nortje (2000, p. 13-12) observed that after a few months in New Zealand, South African immigrants became extremely critical of New Zealand and developed a kind of “idealism” about the past in South Africa. They started minimising the terrible events that had motivated them to emigrate and some even decided to throw in the towel and return to South Africa (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-12). For those who remained in New Zealand, pretending that they were coping and denying their feelings only served to suppress intense emotions and this was more likely to lead to aggression or depression (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-13). Mutual support among family members could be enhanced by verbalising emotions to spouses and creating a safe context for children to admit their own feelings and fears (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-13). South Africans were inclined to put up a brave front, but sharing feelings of uncertainty with other South African immigrants and being sensitive to the needs of others could provide mutual validation and support (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-13). If things became too difficult, they would find it useful to talk to a mental health professional (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-13). Individual therapy or group sessions run by South African therapists were available in certain areas, as well as immigrant therapy and discussion groups via Relationship Services (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-13).

According to Samarasinghe and Arvidsson (2002, p. 293), for a family in transition, inevitable changes in the family system require flexibility to respond to the dynamics of
family life, while maintaining connectedness and continuation of the family. The goal of interventions is to reduce stress factors and adverse conditions that could affect optimal functioning, and to maintain or restore the stability of the family system (Samarasinghe & Arvidsson, 2002, p. 293). Walsh (1996, p. 10) contends that crisis intervention is limited to brief, intensive support in the immediate crisis phase. Resilience is promoted by normalising and contextualising difficulties, and by offering useful guidelines for coping and adaptation, based on psycho-educational principles (Walsh, 1996, p. 10). With prolonged challenges, therapeutic contracts need to be flexible to allow “booster” sessions during more stable periods and more intensive work around a crisis, transition or predictable stress point, such as an anniversary of a traumatic loss (Rolland, cited in Walsh, 1996, p. 10).

To summarise, during this period, interventions usually focused on factors believed to be associated with improvements in mental health, but these interventions may not have had a measurable impact on the mental well-being of migrants if other risk and protective factors remained unchanged (Te Pou, 2008, p. 33). Evidence is lacking on what type of mental health promotion campaigns were effective for refugee and migrant communities (Te Pou, 2008, p. 34). There is also little information available on the impact of existing New Zealand mental health promotion strategies on the mental health outcomes of refugee and migrant populations (Te Pou, 2008, p. 34). Further research would be required on the benefits of antidiscrimination campaigns, and developing mental health promotion strategies for smaller immigrant and refugee communities without sufficient access to social support (Te Pou, 2008, pp. 33-34). At the time, the number of refugees and migrants without access to health services when needed, as well as the efficacy of strategies to encourage service access, had not been determined (Te Pou, 2008, p. 37). The focus of research had been on barriers to service access, rather than investigating factors that encouraged help-seeking behaviours and promoted effective health service utilisation (Te Pou, 2008, p. 37). Pamphlets had been
developed in a limited number of refugee and migrant languages to educate refugees and migrants in New Zealand about mental health in an effort to improve knowledge and remove stigma and discrimination towards mental illness (Te Pou, 2008, p. 33).

Assessment of settlement outcomes

In their survey, Masgoret et al. (2009, pp. 59-60) found that most migrants had not attempted to obtain residence in another country, and planned to stay in New Zealand for five years or longer at the time of being granted residency. However, one year after residency about 20% of migrants reported that they did not intend to live in New Zealand for more than two years, or were unsure how long they would stay (Badkar, 2008, p. 58). The majority of surveyed migrants were satisfied with their lives in New Zealand and would recommend New Zealand as an immigration destination, although 43% said their recommendation would be with some reservations (Badkar, 2008, pp. 70-72; Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 116). After three years in New Zealand, about 14% of migrants reported that they were more satisfied than they had been after six months, while about 24% had been less satisfied (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 9; LisNZ, 2009, p. 9). Most migrants, their partners and children reported that they had felt settled or very settled in New Zealand, while only 2% had felt unsettled or very unsettled (Masgoret et al., 2009, pp. 116, 125). Migrants who had spent two or more years in New Zealand before gaining residence, mostly on a temporary work visa, were more likely to report being settled than those who had never visited New Zealand (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 125).

About 54% of South African immigrants were very satisfied, and about 43% were satisfied with life in New Zealand three months after obtaining residency (Masgoret et al., 2009, pp. 126, 224). Six months after obtaining residency, more than 90% of South African immigrants reported that they had felt settled and were satisfied with their lives in New
Zealand, and after three years approximately 93% had wanted to obtain New Zealand citizenship (LisNZ wave 3, 2009, p. 10). Nearly 50% of South African immigrants would encourage others to immigrate to New Zealand (Masgoret et al., 2009, pp. 132, 228).

Masgoret et al. (2009, pp. 130, 226) found that the aspects of New Zealand that South Africans liked most were as follows: safety from crime and violence; followed by achievement of their desired lifestyle; the natural beauty and green environment; the friendly people; recreation and leisure activities; effective provision of services; job opportunities and economic conditions; political stability and lack of corruption; a good education system; and having family in New Zealand.

However, the majority of migrant groups reported unwelcome settlement shocks and surprises during their first few months in New Zealand, such as the high cost of living, housing and health services, coupled with lower-than-expected salaries and wages (Wallis, 2006, p. 35). Other surprises were poor driving and road safety, poor public transport, a lack of infrastructure, poor childcare and healthcare, higher-than-expected levels of crime and violence, and environmental or climate shocks, such as earthquakes and cold temperatures (Wallis, 2006, p. 35). When asked what they disliked most about New Zealand, the main issues identified by South African immigrants were the distance from family and friends, followed by the tax system, the poor quality or cost of housing, employers wanting New Zealand work experience, the cost of health services, the climate, the attitude of New Zealanders towards immigrants or discrimination (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 227). About 25% of South African immigrants reported that they had experienced discrimination, which was higher than that of immigrants from the United Kingdom, the Irish Republic, North America, Europe or the Pacific (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 232). South African immigrants most frequently experienced discrimination in the workplace or when applying for work, followed by public places, at a social gathering, at a child’s school, trying to find accommodation,
dealing with a government agency or attending a training course (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 233). The majority of all immigrants, including South Africans, who felt discriminated against had not sought help (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 233). For the few who had sought help, the main sources were family and friends, their employer, a school teacher or the police, while some had found the support of a community, religious or ethnic group helpful (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 234).

Six months after residency, 86% of migrants had felt safe or very safe living in New Zealand with regard to crime, but this figure decreased to 76% after three years in New Zealand, with about 8% feeling unsafe or very unsafe (LisNZ, 2009, p. 10). After six months, about 95% of South African immigrants had felt very safe or safe (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 234), and after three years in New Zealand, about 88% of South African immigrants reported that they had felt safe (LisNZ, 2009, p. 10). After six months’ residency, 41% of migrants, excluding refugees, had rated their health as “excellent”, 35% as “very good”, and 20% as “good”, while less than 4% had rated their health as “fair” or “poor” (Masgoret et al., 2009, p. 228). At 18 months, there was a slight decrease in migrants rating their health as “excellent”, and an increase in the number of migrants rating their health as “good” (IMSED research, Health fast facts, p. 1).

Research efforts were inclined to focus on adaptation during the first few years of resettlement, but strategies that were adaptive in the short run may need to be replaced by others to manage populations at high risk during later phases of the settlement process, for instance, to permit the integration of traumatic memories. According to Masgoret et al.’s (2009, p. 150) findings, while some general trends could be inferred from aggregated migrant group results, the experiences and settlement outcomes of some segments of the migrant population may have varied according to particular subgroup characteristics, such as immigration approval category, country of origin and area of settlement in New Zealand.
**Recommendations for settlement programmes**

Allen (2010, p. 49) identifies the following good practice guidelines to facilitate migrant settlement: (1) providing accurate information about the host country to avoid having unrealistic expectations and being disappointed; (2) identifying and providing guidance to migrants groups who have difficulty to integrate socially and economically; (3) encouraging English language proficiency as soon as possible in order to facilitate integration; (4) education of employers about the value of overseas qualifications and work experience to reduce the unemployment and underemployment of migrants; (5) the social and economic integration of migrant youth and subsequent generations; and (6) encouraging migrants to use settlement services and other support groups and organisations to facilitate integration.

In chapter 4, the aims and objectives, and research questions described in chapter 1 are revisited, and the research paradigm, research method, data collection and analysis procedures are discussed in more detail.
CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN

South Africans were in the top five source countries for immigrants to New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2013), but limited research had been conducted on this migrant group. However, as South Africans can be regarded as reluctant migrants (Khawaja & Mason, 2008, p. 240; Meares, 2007, pp. 49, 284), they may be at higher risk than other immigrant groups of developing psychological problems, such as depression (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-2; Khawaja & Mason, 2008, p. 238; Pernice et al., 2000, p. 27). This lack of research presumable stems from the assumption that South African immigrants would integrate with the same ease as voluntary immigrants from other First World countries as they can speak English, are usually able to find employment, and come from a similar cultural and religious background as mainstream New Zealand society (Meares, 2007). Most studies on South African immigrants in New Zealand have been conducted by non-South African researchers, universities or large research organisations, and focused on practical aspects of immigration or on issues of national interest. Clinicians and other service providers faced with South African immigrants in New Zealand who experience adaptation and settlement difficulties lacked comprehensive models for the assessment of pre-migration and post-migration risk and protective factors, as well as preventive, supportive and therapeutic interventions for South African immigrants in New Zealand, based on their specific needs during various phases of the immigration process. A number of researchers recommend using an ecological framework or ecomodel for conducting mental health research with immigrant populations to capture a wide range of interrelated or nested factors (Al-Baldawi, 2002; American Psychological Association, 2012; Bronfenbrenner, 1994, 1999; Deaux, cited in Awad, 2007; Johnson, 2007; Meares, 2007; Roer-Strier, 1996; Yakushko & Chronister, 2005). In this qualitative study, thematic network analysis was used to investigate the
immigration narratives of South African immigrants in New Zealand that included pre-
migration, post-migration and return migration processes and experiences across various ecological contexts of living.

Aims and research questions

Qualitative research was conducted to describe the immigration experience of South African immigrant families in New Zealand. The general aim of this study was to explore the various factors that had an impact during the respective phases of immigration, acculturation and adaptation of South African immigrant families in New Zealand. A further objective was to examine the coping strategies and support systems utilised by South African families in New Zealand to serve as a buffer to immigration stressors, and to determine the efficacy thereof in terms of well-being, resilience and settlement outcomes. The practical goal of this study was utilising the themes obtained from participant narratives to develop ecomodels of assessment and intervention with South African immigrant families in New Zealand.

The specific aims and objectives to be achieved were as follows:

(1) Reviewing migration literature to establish a theoretical framework of the phases and factors that influenced the immigration process, acculturation stressors, coping strategies and the well-being of immigrants

(2) Reviewing migration literature to establish a theoretical framework of settlement needs, support systems and service provision to immigrants during the various phases of the immigration process

(3) Developing an ecomodel of assessment, by conducting a qualitative study of the factors, processes and contexts that had an impact on the immigration journeys of South African immigrant families in New Zealand
(4) Developing an ecomodel for intervention, by conducting a qualitative study to identify strategies and resources that facilitated settlement and improved adaptation, well-being and resilience to determine which support systems and interventions were required to meet the needs of South African immigrants in New Zealand

(5) Increasing the level of awareness and understanding of the challenges faced by South Africans as a group of “reluctant immigrants” in New Zealand, and make recommendations to the South African immigrant community, family and friends in South Africa, New Zealand society, employers, service providers and policy makers to promote successful settlement

Research questions were developed from the researcher’s own immigration journey, the experiences of other members of the South African immigrant community in New Zealand, and pertinent issues that arose from the review of immigration literature.

The research questions for this study were as follows:

(1) What was the experience of South African immigrant families in New Zealand, and what factors had an important impact on their immigration journeys?

(2) What coping strategies, resources and support systems did South African immigrant families in New Zealand utilise to manage immigration and acculturation stressors during the various phases of the immigration process?

(3) How did family and friends who remained in South Africa respond when people decided to emigrate to New Zealand, and did they continue to support the emigrants after their arrival in New Zealand?

(4) Did South African immigrant families in New Zealand experience prejudice, intolerance or discrimination by the broader public, employers, immigration officials or government agencies?
(5) Did South African immigrant families in New Zealand experience a change in their personal, professional or cultural identity, and how did it affect their behaviour and sense of self?

(6) Did South African immigrant families in New Zealand experience physical, psychological or spiritual difficulties during their immigration journeys, and how did it affect their adaptation and settlement?

(7) What were the support needs of South African immigrant families in New Zealand?

(8) What recommendations could the settled community make to facilitate adaptation and settlement of South African immigrants in New Zealand?

Research paradigm

An ecological framework was utilised for this study to examine the migration journeys of South African immigrants in New Zealand. Based on a post-modernist paradigm, grounded theory informed the purpose and aims of this qualitative study, the research methodology and the interpretation of results. A qualitative research design was chosen because it permitted a detailed exploration of the complex phenomenon of immigration by examining the various ways participants conceptualised their immigration experience, as well as an interpretative analysis of data obtained from their immigration narratives (Van Coller, 2002, p. 42). A qualitative approach provided the methodology to address the complexity and multidimensionality of the various phases of the immigration process, the nonlinear causality of factors that influenced this process and an interpretation of the inner experience of participants during acculturation (Stiles, 1993). According to Jack (cited in Petty et al., 2012, p. 381), qualitative research findings have instrumental, conceptual and symbolic value as they may affect clinical, service or policy decisions and provide new insights into a particular issue. In the current study, involving participants in constructing interpretations allowed a
A deeper and broader understanding of the immigration experience, and the results could be used to further the interests and well-being of the South African community in New Zealand (Stiles, 1993, p. 598).

Post-modern thought lends itself to a subjectivist epistemological position (Walsh & Downe, 2006, p. 118) and qualitative methodology to describe the diversity of people’s relations to a changing world (Kvale, 1992, p. 53). Traditional, positivist epistemologies define knowledge and reality empirically - in other words, complex phenomena are observed, analysed, quantified and interpreted via reductionism, linear causality and neutral objectivity of the researcher. Post-modern thought questions an objective, stable, knowable world and universal systems of meaning (Kvale, 1992, p. 32), which Gergen (1992, p. 25) termed “grand narratives”. In contrast, a post-modernist perspective is based on the premise that knowledge, reality and a relational self are shaped by social networks. Because knowledge and meaning reflect the collective attitudes, values, beliefs and social order of communities, perceptions of reality may vary considerably across sociocultural and historical contexts. Since relationships and contexts may change over time, a continuous deconstruction and reconstruction of personal identities is needed to adapt to a multitude of networks in changing environments (Gergen, cited in Kvale, 1992, p. 46). These fundamental concepts of post-modernism supported an ecosystemic theoretical framework for the exploration of the multiple constructed realities of South African immigrants in New Zealand across various sociocultural, economic, political, environmental and historical contexts during the immigration process, and the way it shaped their lives and identities.

Grounded theory provided a suitable foundation to explore the immigration process because it lent itself to phenomena that were constantly changing and helped to uncover contextual and macrosocial influences, as well as the interactive processes between the person and his or her environment (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, pp. 5, 19; Egan, 2002). This
implied that theory was developed by the researcher, and was grounded in the data of participants who had experienced the phenomenon under investigation (Petty et al., 2012, p. 378). The aim was not to generalise findings to the broader population, but to develop a theoretical explanation of a phenomenon by determining the immediate and broader conditions that led to it, how it was expressed and what the consequences were (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, pp. 9, 11). Grounded theory research offered new insights, promoted understanding and presented the possibility of making meaningful recommendations (Egan, 2002, pp. 278, 294; Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 12).

In this study, a theoretical or deductive grounded theory approach was followed (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), as the thematic analysis method was guided by specific research questions and a preliminary coding manual, based on theoretical immigration frameworks. In grounded theory, collection, analysis, and interpretation of data are interrelated processes (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 6). Analysis involves the coding of data texts and assigning labels to concepts, which are grouped together to develop categories and subcategories (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 12). Similarly, thematic analysis can be used to organise, interpret and describe patterns or themes in textual data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). The basic themes, organising themes and global themes extracted from data texts by using thematic network analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 387), are analogous to the three basic elements of grounded theory, namely concepts, categories and propositions (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, pp. 7-8, 15). Thematic analysis offers a flexible qualitative analysis method, and is useful for providing a detailed and complex description of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 78). The researcher plays an active role in coding text segments and abstracting themes from coded segments by identifying underlying, repeated patterns of meaning across a data set (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 392; Braun & Clarke, 2006, pp. 80, 86). Interpretation is involved with the breakdown and coding of textual data, the identification, systemising and
deduction of themes, and the subsequent description of thematic networks, where each progressive stage requires a more abstract level of conceptual analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 390). Original texts are then interpreted and described by mapping them onto the thematic networks, where text segments from the original transcripts can be used to support the analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 393). All the thematic networks are then summarised in a cohesive narrative to link thematic concepts, categories and propositions (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, pp. 7-8, 15) to the original research questions and the theoretical frameworks that guided the research, and to ground explanations and conclusions in the themes or patterns of meaning derived from the analysis of texts (Attride-Stirling, 2001, pp. 394, 402).

An autobiographical narrative interview methodology was utilised for data collection because it was particularly suited to capture the vicissitudes of the immigration process, provide detailed accounts of the stressors and symptoms experienced and examine the coping strategies and adaptive resources utilised. Narratives were also useful to depict the sociocultural and historical contexts in which the immigration process was embedded, and to provide rich descriptions of the tapestry of meaning in individual lives (Meares, 2007, p. 55). People’s “mental pictures” of themselves and the world are metaphorically expressed via language (Gergen, 2009a, p. 6), and people give meaning to their lives by “storying” (White & Epston, cited in Gergen, 1997, p. 186) their experience. According to Gergen (1997, pp. 187, 193-194), a personal narrative is the depiction of a connected series of self-significant events across time to shape a person’s identity and provide coherence, meaning and direction in his or her life. According to Gergen (1997, pp. 194, 197), culturally circumscribed story lines could impose limitations on one’s choices in life, but moments of drama and danger provide new opportunities to forge one’s sense of identity. These critical life events can propel a person towards or away from valued goals as they invite certain actions and discourage others (Gergen, 1997, pp. 199-200). Gergen (1997, p. 202) argues against the
notion of an independent self-concept and an enduring core identity, contained in individual life stories, in favour of multiple selves realised in a variety of sociocultural encounters. The relationship between life experiences can be constructed and reconstructed in many different ways in our self-narrative, which allows us to view our lives as stable, improving or in decline (Gergen, 1997, p. 202). Autobiographical stories consist of macronarratives (Gergen, 1997, p. 203) about events that occurred over a long period of time, as well as micronarratives (p. 203) that refer to significant events nested in the historical narrative. People who consider emigrating from South Africa may construct regressive narratives (Gergen, 1997, p. 206) about declining conditions in South Africa to increase their motivation to immigrate and to make a concerted effort to achieve a better life somewhere else. Those who have immigrated may construct progressive narratives (Gergen, 1997, p. 203) around the disruptive changes of immigration, with themes of sacrifices made in the hope of a better future in a new country, hardships and defeats endured, and ultimately rising above these challenges with a sense of accomplishment and restored stability.

Cultures encourage consistency among the narratives of its people, and these collective macronarratives are the foundation for constructing a legacy of enduring, culturally shared narratives (Gergen, 1997, pp. 204, 207). For instance, New Zealanders constructed a collective narrative of themselves as a racially tolerant people and of South Africa as a racist and oppressive society. These culturally mediated assumptions and expectations of South African attitudes and behaviour thus became the lens through which New Zealanders viewed the South Africans they encountered. Multiple narratives are constructed to meet the demands of various relational and cultural contexts, and people may therefore adapt their self-presentation and behaviour to fit their relational context (Gergen, 1997, p. 204). This potential to adopt a variety of self-accounts (Gergen, 1997, p. 206) has implications for the acculturation process of immigrants because their narrated identities have to be weaved
across two cultures (Gergen, 1997, p. 207). Gergen (1997, p. 207) postulates that the validity of a person’s self-narrative and the role he or she enacts in shared stories, depend on the affirmation of other participants in the social groups they encounter. Maintaining one’s personal identity is thus reliant on an array of interdependent social systems and a “network of reciprocating roles” within a cultural narrative (Gergen, 1997, p. 209). Immigrants may therefore experience a dismantling of their personal identities when they are dislodged from the supportive network of South African society, and propelled into a new sociocultural context where their valued, historical narratives are invalidated, marginalised or denied.

In a post-modernist paradigm, social narratives contained in communal networks are a legitimate source of useful knowledge (Kvale, 1992, pp. 12, 34). Personal narratives are regarded as a rich source of knowledge to understand the lived experience of people in a particular sociocultural context. Qualitative, interactive and interpretive methods are suitable for the analysis of narrative texts to describe the diversity of immigrants’ relations to the world (Kvale, 1992, p. 13, 53) in terms of the multiplicity of relationships and the conflicting ways of being (Gergen, 2009b, p. 227). The deconstruction of the stories of South African families, finding common themes and links between these social dialogues and reconstructing a collective narrative, were therefore chosen to give voice to additional realities of the South African immigrant community within the dominant stories of the larger New Zealand society.

Research method

Selection of participants

According to Stiles (1999, p. 99), when selecting participants for qualitative studies, the focus is more on informative examples of a phenomenon as opposed to a representative sample of a population. The research site of this study was Wellington, New Zealand, the city where the researcher was located. Preliminary informal discussions among the settled
community revealed that South Africans were keen to “tell the story” of their immigration experience. Personal and professional networks, immigration consultants, settlement support services, academic and religious organisations, South African businesses and expatriate websites were used to recruit potential participants. Purposeful, convenience, snowball and theoretical sampling were used to select immigrants who had been in New Zealand for at least three years. From a list of potential participants, those who had the capacity for reflection and communication skills to convey rich descriptions of their experience to provide “thick descriptive data” were selected for the study (Petty, Thomson, & Stew, 2012, p. 383). This decision was based upon e-mail correspondence and telephone conversations with respondents that formed part of the initial screening process. Purposeful and convenience sampling were initially used, according to study relevance and the geographic ease of conducting interviews, followed by snowball sampling as participants recommended other potential participants. Since data collection and data analysis were done concurrently, theoretical sampling was used later on to fill the gaps during theory development and to provide variation that could deepen understanding (Petty et al., 2012, p. 380).

Sample size

From the research population, namely South African immigrants living in New Zealand, 35 families responded to the research advertisement (Appendix A). For the convenience of conducting face-to-face interviews, those living in the Wellington region were screened for suitability via telephone or e-mail. Families who were committed to the research process and were available for interviews during the following months were short listed. Nine families, consisting of a total of 23 participants, were selected for this study on the basis of their cultural and ethnic diversity, to fill gaps in theory development or to explore new areas of interest that developed during the research process. Members of these families
were formally invited to participate in an interview to tell the story of their immigration journey. An information leaflet (Appendix B) containing information on the research objectives, procedures and nature of the study, as well as the rights of participants, was sent to participant families via e-mail. Also included in this e-mail were copies of the informed consent form (Appendix C) and the demographic information questionnaire (Appendix D). The number of members in a family who consented to participate in the interviews varied from two to four persons. All the families consisted of a husband and wife, and in some instances, also their minor or adult children. To accommodate the wishes of family members, sometimes more than one interview was conducted.

**Demographic profile of participants**

The objective was to select participants who varied in terms of age, gender, marital status, home language, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status and length of stay in New Zealand. Attempts were made to select a sample that would be representative of the Rainbow Nation in New Zealand, but the diversity of the sample depended on the availability and willingness of participants in the Wellington region. The research sample broadly consisted of the following cultural groups: “White, Afrikaans speaking”, “White, English speaking”, “Coloured”, as well as a traditional “Jewish” family. A “Zulu” family was approached via professional contacts, but declined to participate. Even though the initial aim was to include families that had been living in New Zealand for five years or longer, it became apparent as the interviews progressed that families’ memories of their first few years in New Zealand had started to fade, and some were reluctant to revisit their initial struggles. Hence two families who had only been in the country for three years, but were highly committed to participating in the research, were included to add immigrants’ perceptions during early settlement. Two participants who had been born in New Zealand were included in interviews because they
were married to South African immigrant participants. They could provide information on the challenges of a cross-cultural marriage, as well as a “thicker description” of how South Africans were perceived by New Zealanders. Since one family planned to return to South Africa shortly after the interview, their experience of readjusting to life in South Africa was added to their transcript.

The full demographic profile of participants was included in Table 1. A brief description of the nine families was as follows:

Family number 1: Hennie, aged 72, had been married to Hettie, aged 69, for 52 years, and they had four children, aged 50, 48, 42 and 40. Hennie was self-employed and Hettie was an executive assistant. Hennie and Hettie had emigrated from South Africa in 1994 and had been living in New Zealand for about 17 years.

Family number 2: Neil, aged 61, was married to Jeanne, aged 58, and they had three children, aged 33, 31 and 22. Neil was an electrical technician and Jeanne was employed as a part-time teacher. Neil and Jeanne had emigrated from South Africa in 1995 and had been living in New Zealand for 16 years.

Family number 3: Placido, aged 72, was married to Haldegaad, aged 58, and they had three children, aged 45, 39 and 30. Placido was a retired school teacher and Haldegaad was employed in an administrative position. Placido and Haldegaad had emigrated from South Africa in 2002 and had been living in New Zealand for nine years.

Family number 4: Vrystaat, aged 72, was married to Loe, aged 72, and they had two children, aged 48 and 45 (Louise). Vrystaat used to have his own business, where Loe assisted with administrative duties, and they were both retired. Vrystaat and Loe had emigrated from South Africa in 1992 and had been living in New Zealand for 19 years. Louise, aged 45, had been married to her New Zealand-born husband, Ray (aged 52) for about four years. Louise was a school teacher and Ray worked in information technology.
Louise had emigrated from South Africa in 2003 and had been living in New Zealand for nine years.

Family number 5: Andries, aged 73, had been married to Aletta, aged 74, for 16 years. Andries had three children, aged 45, 43 and 40, from a previous marriage. Andries was a scientist, and Aletta was a home maker and author. Andries and Aletta had emigrated from South Africa in 1995 and had been living in New Zealand for 16 years.

Family number 6: Jo, aged 51, had been married to his New Zealand-born wife, Annabella, aged 53, for 21 years, and they had two children, Jaimie, aged 20, and Harvey, aged 17. Jo had his own business and Annabella worked part-time as a consultant. Jaimie was a university student and Harvey was at college. The family had emigrated from South Africa, via the United Kingdom, in 2003 and had been living in New Zealand for nearly nine years.

Family number 7: Andrew, aged 43, was married to Anna, aged 42, and they had two children, Javier, age 14, and a 21-year-old daughter. Andrew was a tradesman and Anna was an administrator. The family had emigrated from South Africa in 2004 and had been living in New Zealand for about seven years.

Family number 8: Fred, aged 49, had been married to Angelica, aged 47, for 27 years, and they had one daughter, aged 22. Fred was an engineer and Angelica worked in the information technology field. Fred and Angelica had emigrated from South Africa in 2009 and had been living in New Zealand for nearly three years. They had returned to South Africa early in 2012.

Family number 9: Rudi, aged 57, had been married to Jill, aged 57, for 14 years. Jill’s daughter, aged 26, from a previous marriage, had immigrated with them to New Zealand. Rudi and Jill had their own business. They had emigrated from South Africa in 2008 and had been living in New Zealand for about three years.
Table 1. Demographic profile of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family no.</th>
<th>One</th>
<th>Two</th>
<th>Three</th>
<th>Four</th>
<th>Five</th>
<th>Six</th>
<th>Seven</th>
<th>Eight</th>
<th>Nine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age at immigration</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age at interview</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in NZ</td>
<td>17½</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration visa</td>
<td>Permanent residency</td>
<td>Permanent residency</td>
<td>Family sponsorship</td>
<td>Visitor’s visa</td>
<td>Permanent residency</td>
<td>NZ Citizen</td>
<td>Permanent residency</td>
<td>NZ citizen</td>
<td>Work visa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Children</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Agnostic, and respect all religions</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>Christian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Children from previous and current marriages
** Born in New Zealand
Thematic network analysis

According to Tucket (cited in Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 86), a literature review prior to analysis of research data could sensitise the researcher to more subtle features of the data. Corbin & Strauss (1990, p. 5) and Egan (2002, p. 280) confirmed that various sources of printed material are suitable for grounded theory research. Egan (2002, p. 286) recommended the development of a structural framework to depict central and supporting categories generated from data. Prior to commencing the thematic network analysis of participant narratives, theoretical frameworks (figures 1 and 2) were developed by following a grounded theory approach to achieve an integrated, theoretical explanation of immigration by grounding concepts in data obtained from a review of existing immigration literature (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, pp. 5, 7). Data analysis commenced as soon as the first sources of data had been collected as the identified concepts guided further literature searches (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 6). Constantly comparing data within, and across data sources, by means of tables, mind-maps, diagrams and memos on sheets of A3 paper, concepts were compared and grouped together into categories on the basis of similarities and differences (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 7). Categories that were developed and named during this process of open coding became the building blocks for the two theoretical models (figures 1 and 2), and the preliminary coding framework for the thematic network analysis of participant narratives that followed. Axial coding was used to further refine the coding framework by relating categories to their subcategories (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 13). Interlinking the ecological conditions under which immigration occurred, such as sociocultural, physical, economic and political environments, coping strategies used, and the resulting outcomes added variation and conceptual specificity to the theoretical explanations (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, pp. 9, 11, 13). Data collection stopped when a saturation point was reached, in other words, new data did not contribute to further elaboration of the theoretical immigration models (Egan, 2002, p.
Using selective coding to unite all the categories around a central idea or proposition, namely describing the immigration process in terms of stages or phases (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, pp. 10, 14-15), formed the back bone of the theoretical models (figures 1 and 2) and the preliminary coding manual for the thematic network analysis of participant narratives.

Thematic network analysis of textual data obtained from participant narratives was conducted, using qualitative analysis techniques that paralleled the three basic elements of grounded theory, namely concepts, categories and propositions (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 387; Corbin & Strauss, 1990, pp. 7-8, 15). The aim of thematic analysis was to reveal various themes in the texts, and thematic networks facilitated the structuring, illustration, interpretation and description of these themes. The advantage of thematic analysis was its flexibility: participants could act as research collaborators, it could provide a detailed description of the entire data set, it could highlight similarities and differences across data sets and it could generate new insights (Braun & Clarke, 2006, pp. 83, 97). This method allowed for the social and psychological interpretation of data, and could provide results to educate the general public and to inform policy development (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 97).

A grounded theory approach (Corbin & Strauss, 1990) was utilised during the sampling, data collection and analysis processes to extract categories and themes, and to develop conceptual frameworks to explore, understand and describe the “lived texture of the individual lives” of immigrants (Meares, 2007, p. 56). Themes extracted from the data were compared to, and integrated with existing research findings to develop ecomodels for assessment and intervention (figures 6 and 7), as well as formulating recommendations to guide support services for South African immigrants in New Zealand (Egan, 2002, pp. 279, 286-287).
Role of researcher

Patton (cited in Golafshani, 2003, p. 600) encourages quantitative researchers to “embrace their role and involvement as research instruments” in the research process. Qualitative researchers however, are cautioned that because data analysis is filtered through the lens of their past experience and assumptions, the credibility and trustworthiness of the study rests on their shoulders. As the post-modernist approach implies that the nature and grounds of knowledge are value laden, critical self-reflection is considered essential for the researcher (Gergen, 1992, p. 24). Narrative enquiry was used to enter and experience the world of the South African immigrant community to give a voice to the lives of “the otherwise unheard” (Gergen, 2009b, p. 236) in New Zealand society. The researcher’s personal knowledge of being a South African immigrant in New Zealand permitted an empathetic understanding of the experience of participants (Stiles, 1993, p. 595). The role of the researcher during interviews was not to intervene or control, but to be a neutral, supportive observer who provided a safe context for participants to describe their experiences, responses, emotions, interpretations and meanings at a verbal and nonverbal level without being unduly influenced by researcher perceptions. Establishing rapport with the research participants was facilitated by contacting them telephonically to discuss the aims of the research project and address any concerns they may have had. Establishing a context of trust, reassurance and support to tell their stories was facilitated by conducting the interviews in participants’ home environment, and spending time getting to know each other first before commencing the interviews. A number of participants invited the researcher to join them for a meal or have tea with them, and some families offered traditional South African delicacies, such as rusks and milk tart. Others displayed their collection of South African books and offered to play some of their favourite South African music. A few shared additional background information, such as their family genealogy and photos, or books published by
themselves or family members. The researcher shared some demographic aspects of her own immigration and what had prompted her to conduct this research. This “joining” of participants and the researcher in the present moment served as a reference point for participants to reflect on the journey that had brought them to this stage in their lives. A qualitative research design implied that the researcher “immersed” herself in the data during analysis. As a South African immigrant living in New Zealand, the researcher had to guard against research bias due to her own experiences, because this could potentially have compromised the reliability and validity of the study.

Data collection and analysis procedures

*Interview method*

Initial contact with potential participants was made via e-mail or telephone to ascertain whether they met the sample criteria, and to provide both verbal and written information on the research objectives, procedures and nature of the study. Their rights as participants, such as confidentiality and the option to withdraw from the study at any time during the research, was emphasised. Suitable participants were contacted to arrange a time and place to meet that was convenient for them, and all participants agreed to the interviews being conducted at their homes. Written informed consent was obtained and an opportunity for additional questions was provided prior to the commencement of interviews. One copy of the informed consent form was given to the participant and the other copy was retained by the researcher. Completed demographic information questionnaires were collected and a genogram of the family structure, including children, parents and grandparents, was compiled to serve as a guide for the researcher during the interviews.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted between 1 October 2011 and 25 May 2012, and the duration of recorded narratives varied from one-and-a-half hours to three-and-a-half
hours. Interviews were usually conducted with single, nuclear families, but on two occasions, participant families who were friends requested that the interview be conducted with both families at the same time. Families could choose whether they wanted to conduct their interview in Afrikaans or English, or use both languages interchangeably. Interviews were initiated by means of a single narrative-seeking question, based on Meares (2007, p. 82):

Please tell me the story of your immigration to New Zealand. You may begin around the time that you started thinking about the possibility of immigration, and how it all developed until now. Begin wherever you like. Please take all the time you need. We've got about two hours. I won't interrupt. I'll just take some notes if anything is not clear to me, or if I have any questions so that I can ask you afterwards.

At least two hours were set aside for interviews, depending on practical considerations and individual family preferences. The immigration narratives of participating families were captured on an electronic recording device, as well as on audio tapes with a cassette recorder as a back-up in the event of equipment failure. After presenting the narrative-generating question, the researcher allowed the participants’ stories to unfold without interruptions so that the storyline was continuous (Riemann, 2003, p. 13). Participants were informed that it was not compulsory to relate their experiences in a chronological order, but instead were encouraged to talk about what seemed important, relevant or meaningful at a particular time while telling their story. Field notes were taken during and after the interviews to record nonverbal communication, as well as researcher observations and questions. A semi-structured, open-ended interview, using circular questioning (Selvini-Palazzoli, Boscolo, Cecchin, & Prata, 1980), was conducted on the same day to clarify issues or answer questions noted down by the researcher during the taping of narratives. These questions were useful to reveal differences between family members across
various sociocultural contexts and phases of the immigration process, for instance, who had been the most motivated about emigration, who had settled down the quickest after arrival, and how immigration had affected family roles and relationships. The purpose of the post-narrative questions was to “exhaust” the potential of the main narrative and to obtain new narrative material by eliciting descriptions, evaluations, statements and reflections. As suggested by Samarasinghe and Arvidsson (2002, p. 298), participants were also asked for feedback on their experience of the interviews. Where further questions arose during the transcription and analysis phase of the data, participants provided feedback via e-mail. One family granted a second interview to have a more in-depth discussion about additional questions posed by the researcher, which was recorded and added to their first transcript.

*Steps in the analysis of information*

This study followed the guiding principles of a grounded theory approach by utilising transcripts of autobiographical narratives (Petty et al., 2012, pp. 380-381) to develop concepts, categories and propositions for theory development (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, pp. 7-8, 15). Thematic analysis was used to break up text to reveal the most prominent patterns or themes in data texts at different levels of abstraction, which were organised in thematic networks to facilitate interpretation and theory development (Attride-Stirling, 2001, pp. 387, 391). Themes capture important elements in relation to the research questions or represent coherent or meaningful patterns in the research data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). Analysis was commenced after the first interview had been conducted to direct further interviews and observations, as well as theoretical sampling (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 6). Electronically recorded narratives and semi-structured interviews were transcribed ad verbatim. All transcriptions were done by the researcher to maintain confidentiality, and because of the unavailability of Afrikaans transcribers in New Zealand. The transcripts were repeatedly read
for accuracy, and to resolve unclear or inaudible segments, the audiotapes were revisited and
clarification from participants was sought. Participant feedback on the transcribed narratives
and other additional information obtained via e-mail, were added to the narratives to provide
written texts of the verbal and nonverbal content of participants’ narratives. Field notes were
also included for analysis purposes. The transcription process was useful to enable the
researcher to familiarise herself with the raw data to facilitate coding and analysis. The
researcher did the transcription, coding and analysis of texts containing all data items by

Because a theoretical thematic analysis approach was followed for the qualitative
study (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84), a preliminary coding framework or manual was drawn
up, based on the core theoretical assumptions that guided the research aims and questions.
The a priori code list (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006, p. 4) was revised as recurrent or
significant issues were identified from the data in narrative texts (Attride-Stirling, 2001, pp.
390-391, 402). Coding lists were used for data reduction by dividing the text into manageable
and meaningful passages or segments, such as sentences or phrases, and to classify and group
text segments from the entire data set according to these codes or labels (Attride-Stirling,
2001, pp. 391, 394). Segments derived from Afrikaans texts were translated into English and
sent to participants for verification. Text segments were assigned to as many codes as
possible to facilitate the identification of patterns and themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 89).
Data extracts in each coding category were examined for clustering or similarities in meaning
(Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79; Stiles, 1993, p. 605) in order to extract basic themes or
premises (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 388). Themes were defined, named and refined by
constantly comparing the similarities, differences and inconsistencies in each code and
between groups of related codes in the data set (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 392; Braun &
Clarke, 2006, p. 92; Petty et al., 2012, pp. 378-379). Thematic analysis across all participant
narratives was conducted by collating in one table the basic themes per coding category that were extracted from all the data sets. From the basic themes in this integrated table, more abstract principles or organising themes were deduced from which principal metaphors or global themes that formed the core of three different thematic networks (figures 3, 4 and 5) were derived (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 388).

**Format and interpretation of results**

Thematic networks or web-like conceptual maps were used to represent the most prominent basic, organising and global themes, and to illustrate the nonhierarchical relationship between these themes (Attride-Stirling, 2001, pp. 388, 393). Themes were grouped on theoretical grounds, as well as the results of narrative text analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 392). Based on the research questions and aims, the following three separate thematic networks were constructed: (1) phases of the immigration process, (2) factors that influence the immigration process, and (3) the acculturation process. As recommended by Attride-Stirling (2001, p. 393) the networks were designed to be read clockwise from the left-hand side of the page to facilitate presentation and understanding of the data. The thematic networks were verified and further refined by revisiting the transcribed narratives and text segments to interpret themes contextually before repeated patterns of meaning were identified and described (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 393).

The thematic networks (figures 3, 4, and 5) were used as a tool for the description and interpretation of underlying patterns in the transcribed narrative texts (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 393). A coherent analytical narrative or overall story was used to summarise the main concepts, themes and patterns that were identified during the exploration of all three thematic networks (Attride-Stirling, 2001, pp. 394, 402). Excerpts from the original transcripts were included to illustrate salient aspects of the data. The key conceptual findings across all three
thematic networks were correlated with the original research questions and their theoretical foundations (Attride-Stirling, 2001, pp. 394, 402) in order to construct ecomodels for pre-migration and post-migration assessment and intervention with South African immigrants in New Zealand (figures 6 and 7). Discrepant cases and nonconforming data, in other words which did not fit the researcher’s theoretical preconceptions or data from other participant narratives, were included in the analysis and interpretation of results. The final conclusions and recommendations were grounded in the themes and patterns constructed during the qualitative, thematic network analysis of the text data, the researcher’s own reflections during analysis and the theoretical constructs that guided the research process (Attride-Stirling, 2001, pp. 394, 402)

Credibility, reliability and validity

According to Walsh and Downe (2006, p. 118), despite extensive publications on the appraisal of qualitative research, there has been a lack of consensus among authors on definitive assessment criteria. In qualitative research, reliability, dependability (Lincoln & Guba, cited in Golafshani, 2003, p. 601) or procedural trustworthiness refers to the repeatability of observations or data, and contributes to the reader’s understanding of a situation (Stiles, 1993, p. 601). Guba and Lincoln (cited in Stiles, 1993, p. 606) posit that in qualitative research results are grounded in the unique content and context of observations, which cannot be duplicated by another researcher. Walsh and Downe (2006, p. 117) suggest that instead of being overly concerned about the lack of generalisability in qualitative research, the emphasis should be on integrity, transparency and transferability to understand and explain the phenomenon in similar settings. The researcher should therefore specify the conditions under which the phenomenon was studied to enable other practitioners to determine whether the grounded theory applies to their setting (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p.
Qualitative research employs subjective processes where the researcher uses the self as an “instrument” (p. 6) during data collection and analysis and draws on critical, as well as creative and intuitive thinking to construct meaning (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 13). Stiles (1993, p. 614) asserts that personal involvement and commitment to the topic can motivate the researcher to conduct a more in-depth investigation that can lead to a deeper understanding. According to Straus and Corbin (1998, p. 13), qualitative research involves an interplay between researcher and data, and analysis can therefore be viewed as “both science and art”. Researcher bias in qualitative research is therefore unavoidable and an awareness of the researcher’s expectations, preconceptions, values and theoretical paradigm is important because it could influence results (Maione, 1997; Stiles, 1993, p. 602).

Stiles (1993, pp. 602-607) proposes good practice guidelines to improve the reliability of qualitative research, such as disclosure of the researcher’s theoretical orientation, internal processes and engagement with participants, stipulating the social and cultural context of the study, asking questions that elicit stories rather than explanations, immersion in research material and grounding the analysis process in narrative texts. Walsh and Downe (2006, p. 117) stress the importance of a comprehensive literature review, either before research commences or to contextualise the findings. Glaser and Straus (cited in Walsh & Downe, 2006, p. 116), however, caution that exploring a topic prior to data collection could restrict the ability of the researcher to offer alternative explanations for findings. Walsh and Downe (2006, p. 116) assert that complete detachment is unrealistic because researchers still approach research with preconceptions, based on previous experience and interest in a topic.

Prior to commencement of data collection for this study, a systematic search of theoretical databases was conducted, followed by an iterative process (Walsh & Downe, 2006, p. 110) where the retrieval of one paper led to others via its reference list. Researcher bias was reduced, and the likelihood of observations permeating (Stiles, 1993, pp. 602-603) the
researcher’s initial views was enhanced by disclosing the theoretical underpinnings that informed the study, and reflecting on the researcher’s role and internal processes during the research process. In addition, the cultural and social context of data collection was clarified (Stiles, 1993, p. 603) by stipulating the linguistic, racial and cultural background of the researcher and participants, and stating the location where the interviews were conducted.

Riemann (2003, p. 12) underscores the importance of building a relationship of trust with participants via a “narrative presentation of self”. The researcher therefore disclosed demographic details about her own immigration, such as the length of stay in New Zealand and immigration status to inform and build rapport with participants. Analytical practices that further enhanced “permeability” (p. 602) were engagement with the study material via face-to-face interviews, utilising a single narrative-eliciting question at the beginning of the interview, and asking questions at the end of the interview and during analysis to enhance the researcher’s understanding of observations (Stiles, 1993, pp. 604-605). Asking participants to tell the researcher the story of their immigration to New Zealand encouraged them to give thick descriptions about “what” they had experienced, which provided information that did not fit stereotypical views of “why” South Africans immigrated and struggled to adapt in New Zealand (Stiles, 1993, p. 606). The researcher utilised individual supervision and debriefing with a clinical psychology supervisor to reflect on her own psychological responses elicited by the research process.

Strategies that are useful during data collection and transcription to minimise the risk of errors that could affect the reliability of the study are to guard against equipment failure, environmental hazards and transcription errors (Easton, McComish, & Greenberg, 2008). Equipment required for interviews was checked beforehand and a tape recorder and an electronic recording device were used in the event of equipment failure during the interviews. To maximise the quality of the audio recordings, participants were requested to sit close to
the recording devices and extraneous noise was reduced as far as possible, for instance, by turning off cell phones. Interruptions were minimised by arranging a time that was convenient for participants, making it clear that the family needed to set aside about two hours for the interview, having the interview in an area away from the main flow of activity, and asking a nonparticipant to answer the phone and doorbell (Easton et al., 2008, p. 705). Immersion in and familiarity with data were facilitated by the researcher transcribing the interviews, listening to the audio recordings a number of times to check for accuracy and using different playback speeds for sections that were obscure. To further reduce transcription errors, participants were approached to clarify inaudible segments and to review their transcripts and phrases to be coded in order to confirm that what they had said had not been misunderstood or misinterpreted. Comments and additional information were requested from participants to confirm, disconfirm or expand on the data from transcripts, and the first thematic analysis performed was returned to the relevant participants for review and comments (Stiles, 1993, p. 605). During analysis, new data was constantly compared to existing concepts for similarities and differences to guard against bias, and to achieve greater precision and consistency in categories (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 9). According to Stiles (1993, pp. 604-605), rereading transcripts during coding and thematic analysis is useful to clarify contextual elements and grounding interpretations in narrative texts. This process of alternating between transcribed texts and obtaining feedback from participants facilitated interpretation and developing grounded theoretical categories for coding (Glaser & Strauss, cited in Stiles, 1993, p. 605). Statements and conclusions were grounded in concrete observations by using excerpts from narrative transcripts, with the consent of participants, to illustrate prominent topics (Glaser & Strauss, cited in Stiles, 1993, p. 605).

Validity in qualitative research refers to the credibility or trustworthiness of interpretations or conclusions (Stiles, 1993, p. 601) in order to establish confidence in the
findings (Lincoln & Guba, cited in Golafshani, 2003, p. 602). Validity can be enhanced via the triangulation of data, where testimonial validity and catalytic validity by participants, as well as reflexive validity by the researcher, are used to determine whether interpretations coincide with theoretical preconceptions or uncover new information (Stiles, 1993, p. 608). Stiles (1993, p. 608) emphasises the importance of triangulation, such as using different sources of information, multiple prior theories or interpretations, and assessing convergence across several perspectives and types of impact to limit personal and methodological biases, and to enhance generalisability (Decrop, 1999, p. 158) and fairness (Guba & Lincoln, cited in Stiles, 1993, p. 608). A post-modernist paradigm, which endorses multiple perceptions and interpretations of reality, supports data triangulation and utilising participants as co-investigators to improve validity (Denzin, cited in Decrop, 1999, p. 159; Golafshani, 2003, p. 604). In this study, data triangulation involved the use of field notes during and immediately after interviews to record environmental factors and nonverbal behaviour during interviews, as well as researcher observations and responses to the interviews. During the transcription and analysis process of participant narratives, additional information was requested from participants via e-mail to collect missing data or elucidate a particular point. Participant narratives, field notes and e-mail responses from participants, including poetry and newspaper articles about their achievements, were included in the data analysis. The researcher also examined her personal psychological processes and adaptation during the immigration process and included relevant parts in the results.

Investigator triangulation included member checking (Decrop, 1999, p. 159) - in other words, participants were afforded the opportunity to read and verify their verbatim transcripts and the data units extracted for coding purposes. They were invited to comment on and change, delete or add information to the transcripts, and were asked to supply additional information to fill in gaps in the theory. Participant responses were reworked during the
analytical process. The first thematic network analysis performed was sent to the participant family for review and comment, to determine whether the researcher’s findings accurately reflected the story of their immigration experience. The results of this research were examined for resonance (Lincoln & Guba, cited in Stiles, 1993, p. 609) with the researcher’s preconceptions, convergence or deviation from the multiple theoretical perspectives on immigration expounded in chapters 2 and 3, and to what extent unique findings and new ways of understanding were generated. As recommended by Glaser and Straus (cited in Decrop, 1999, p. 160), thematic analysis and interpretation were achieved by prolonged engagement with information, constantly comparing research data with existing theories, and searching for exceptions and alternative explanations to draw more sound conclusions.

According to Stiles (1993, pp. 607-608), one has to consider whether interpretations merely fit with the preconceived notions of participants, researchers and theories or whether interpretations advance their understanding. Participant responses that reflected testimonial and catalytic validity included comments that they found it meaningful to reflect on their immigration journeys and that they could to assist other South Africans. Some expressed their surprise at how much they had revealed in telling their stories, and one participant explicitly stated that it had been time well spent. On completion of the interviews, some participants forwarded new information or other interesting material via e-mail, such as their own poetry. During the research process, some re-evaluated their life goals and others considered new business ventures. The reflexive validity of this study lies in the dialectic view of data and the impact observations had on the researcher and her theoretical understanding of immigration (Stiles, 1993, p. 612). During the research process the researcher had to adjust some of her theoretical preconceptions. To enhance permeability in response to new information, the researcher had to accommodate discrepant observations and nonconforming data in the analysis and interpretive processes.
Ethical considerations

The ethical framework for this study was based on protecting participants from harm by obtaining written informed consent and ensuring confidentiality and anonymity (Walsh & Downe, 2006, p. 116). A research advertisement (Appendix A) and information leaflet (Appendix B) explaining the purpose and procedures of the study, including the option for participants to withdraw from the study at any time while it was being conducted, were provided to all prospective participants prior to the commencement of the study procedures. In addition, copies of the Unisa registration letter for the DLitt et Phil degree in psychology and the researcher’s Annual Practising Certificate, issued by the New Zealand Psychologists Board, were provided to prospective participants. Participants were afforded the opportunity to ask questions prior to consenting to participate. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants, including youth. Participants were treated as co-researchers to explore the experience of South African immigrants in New Zealand, instead of the researcher assuming an expert stance. To ensure the subjective integrity of results, the researcher had to reflect on her own internal processes during data collection and analysis. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, chosen pseudonyms were used in the study report, but demographic data remained unaltered. Where text excerpts were used to illustrate particular statements and conclusions, participants were contacted to give consent for these quotations to be used under their chosen pseudonyms. Electronic recordings, audio tapes, transcripts and field notes were stored in a locked cabinet at the researcher’s home where only the researcher would have access to the data. Some of the families who participated in the research provided contact details for other potential participants, and the researcher was mindful not to disclose which families had consented to participate in the research.
The researcher was aware that “telling their story” might cause emotional distress for participants and they were treated with empathy, honesty, respect and transparency throughout the research process (Walsh & Downe, 2006, pp. 115-116). Participants were allowed to take breaks during the recording process, or ask for the recording devices to be switched off during certain parts of the conversation and for this data to be excluded from analysis. A short debriefing, which was not recorded, was offered on completion of the interview. In the event of participants experiencing ongoing distress or symptoms of an underlying psychological or psychiatric disorder after interviews had been concluded, they were advised to contact their general practitioner, a psychotherapist or another service provider, such as a Regional Health Board. All participants were provided with contact details of three South African psychologists in the Wellington region, who were aware of the study being conducted and gave their permission to be contacted for psychotherapeutic support. Transcripts were returned to participants to confirm accuracy and provide additional feedback. They were informed of their right to have their entire transcript or sections of their data excluded from the analysis, and the researcher took care not to include details in the manuscript that could identify participants and be potentially harmful to their personal or professional lives. The researcher informed the study participants that they would also receive a copy of the article, published in a peer-reviewed journal, containing the results and conclusions of the research project.

In chapter 5, the themes extracted across all participant narratives are systemised and described by way of three thematic networks (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 388).
CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

Phases of the immigration process

Figure 3. Thematic network of phases of the immigration process.
The general aim of this study was to explore the various factors that had an impact during the respective phases of immigration, acculturation and adaptation of South African immigrant families in New Zealand. A further objective was to examine the coping strategies and support systems utilised by South African families in New Zealand to serve as a buffer to immigration stressors, and to determine the efficacy thereof in terms of well-being, resilience and settlement outcomes. The practical goal of this study was utilising the themes obtained from participant narratives to develop ecomodels of assessment and intervention with South African immigrant families in New Zealand.

In this chapter, the themes extracted across all participant narratives were systemised and described by way of three thematic networks, each consisting of one core or global theme, as well as a number of organising and basic themes (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 388). The three thematic networks were as follows: (1) the phases of the immigration process (figure 3), (2) factors that influence the immigration process (figure 4), and (3) the acculturation process (figure 5). As recommended by Attride-Stirling (2001, p. 393), the networks were designed to be read clockwise from the left-hand side of the page.

Study participants indicated that they had experienced different phases or cycles during their immigration journeys that involved a prolonged period of uncertainty and constant change. The challenges of each successive phase had to be worked through without knowing the outcome. Some of these phases during the adaptation process had been managed fairly easily, whereas others had been exceedingly difficult. The thematic network of phases of the immigration process was depicted in figure 3 in this chapter. Themes extracted from participant narratives (Attride-Stirling, 2001) in relation to the global theme: “immigration occurs in phases”, clustered around six organising themes: (1) pre-migration, (2) preparation and migration, (3) arrival and survival, (4) adaptation, (5) re-migration, and (6) settlement
and growth. Each of these organising themes was further subdivided into four basic themes, and was described in terms of unfolding events and underlying processes.

**Pre-migration**

Most participants said that prior to their immigration they had never considered emigrating, and some felt that they would never be able to leave South Africa. Their underlying beliefs about themselves and the world reinforced their attachment to the country of their birth. One person believed that he was not the “adventurous type”, and as a result feared the unknown. Another viewed immigration as a significant life decision, and her tendency to second-guess herself had made her hesitant to take such a final step. A significant number of people had never travelled overseas, and one participant stated that those who do not travel have a narrower frame of reference. Consequently, they were less likely to acknowledge the shortcomings of their own country and did not see the need to live somewhere else. One participant commented on what a beautiful country South Africa was, and another loved the large, cosmopolitan city she was living in. One woman emphasised that she loved her life and had “no issues” with South Africa. Some had friends who were thinking of emigrating, but these participants had found it difficult to comprehend their reasons for leaving. Prior to their own immigration they had been critical of other emigrants, and had viewed them as part of the “chicken run” that had fled in a state of panic, based on vague fears about the future collapse of the country. A few participants had planned to travel one day to expand their horizons, but had not considered leaving South Africa permanently. In conversation, some talked about perhaps moving overseas one day, but had never given it serious thought or made any definite plans as it was viewed as “castles in the sky” that would never become a reality.
The majority of participants had built a life for themselves in South Africa and were well established in terms of employment, owning property and having financial security. A number of them had been working for the same employer for ten years or longer to build their career and accrue a pension. One person emphasised that he was a “steadfast” person who preferred stability, and had been brought up with the traditional belief that if you have a job you hold on to it. A few people were close to retirement age, and were looking forward to their pensions paying out and having more time available for their partners and families. All participants had placed considerable importance on their family relationships and were reluctant to leave children, grandchildren, siblings and ageing parents behind. Where parents decided to emigrate first, their adult children were torn between the close bond they had with their parents, and the life they had built for themselves in terms of friendships and romantic relationships.

The reasons for considering emigration varied in importance at different stages of the immigration process. One participant had left South Africa in the 1980s for the United Kingdom to avoid military conscription. He had moved back and forth between the United Kingdom and South Africa a few times, mainly because of corporate transfers, career opportunities and family obligations. A number of participants, who had been emphatic that they would never consider immigration, were becoming more unsettled owing to a perceived increased safety risk, for instance, during regular camping trips. Many described a slow process of taking progressively more steps as a barrier against crime. After immigration, they commented on how South Africans had gradually adapted to crime and violence to create a sense of normality, but in so doing they failed to acknowledge the encroaching hazard. Rudi and Hennie shared a well-known metaphor among the South African immigrant community in New Zealand to illustrate how South Africans had been conditioned by their circumstances: “Feeling under threat develops over a long time; you install burglar bars, then
an alarm, then a security gate, and then a cell phone for emergencies. It reminds us of the story of the frog who sat in a pot of water that heated up so gradually that he failed to realise that he was being cooked.”

One father who needed a security guard to enter black areas for work purposes and whose house had been burgled, despite security measures, had decided that he did not want to raise his children in Gauteng. The family resorted to internal migration, and eventually settled in the Western Cape where they had lived in a “bubble” of relative safety. Even though most participants had not been directly exposed to traumatic events, the media’s graphic display of black-on-black violence such as “necklacing”, and people being thrown off trains or stoned to death had been a constant reminder that they were living in a very violent society. One father was carrying a firearm to work every day, and checked under beds and behind doors for intruders when the family arrived home. Some lived under a “cloud of uncertainty” and felt something dreadful was about to happen, such as a civil war. Participants who had spent time in Zimbabwe were concerned that South Africa was heading the same way politically. Most had experienced a sense of anxiety, always having to be on guard and constantly worrying about their safety. They were fearful about being home alone at night and felt that their freedom of movement was being curtailed because it felt like “living in a jail”. Even those who stated that they had good relationships with black people or were in favour of the post-apartheid changes were concerned about the crime, violence, political uncertainty and corruption in South Africa. For a few participants, who stated that crime and violence were the factors that “drove them away from their fatherland”, one critical incident often served as the impetus to initiate immigration procedures.

A woman, who insisted during a family visit to New Zealand that she would never immigrate, was revisiting her resolve after she woke up early one morning, opened the curtain and saw a man standing at a window in her back yard. Another woman, who was
living in a relatively safe area, was caught up in the turmoil of shops being evacuated and closed in a hurry when a crowd of protesting “Impis” (Zulu warriors) armed with traditional weapons came running towards them on their way to parliament. More political unrest followed, which included students burning schools, public demonstrations and protest marches involving firearms. There were threats of protesters taking white neighbourhoods by force. One woman came to the conclusion: “I could not continue living by locking myself inside my home to be safe.”

A family recalled the tragic event when a young man, whom they had known since childhood, was shot and later died. Jill said: “When I heard that he was shot, I walked around the house for two hours, because I didn’t know what to do. I was just praying, and praying, and praying, because I did not know whether he was alive or dead. He was married, and he had two little children.” In a state of shock, she had spent hours trying to process the impact of the death of a dear family friend. She found that his death had “rattled her”, and she felt unable to deal with the incident because it was too stressful and “too close for comfort”. A father and his young daughter had experienced a traumatic car highjacking attempt in the driveway of their home. When the security gate opened, armed men stormed in and forced them out of the car and on to the ground before driving off with their car. The father bravely kept calm enough to ensure the safety of his child. Despite the highjacking attempt lasting only a short time and nobody being physically injured, the family had been badly shaken. The “what ifs” of what could have gone wrong continued to play on their minds. They motivated their neighbours to become a gated community, hired a security guard and installed a comprehensive burglar alarm. However, the burglar alarm “freaked out” the family when the father was away on business trips, because at night it was difficult to ascertain whether the alarm had accidentally been activated or whether an intruder had entered the home.
These traumatic incidents shifted the potential threat portrayed in the media to the “hands-on” realisation that it could happen to them as well. Those who were personally exposed to violence experienced a serious threat to their personal safety and an acute sense of vulnerability. The family who had been subjected to a highjacking attempt felt that their home, which was their sanctuary, had been violated. They were tired of living behind fences and constantly being fearful, and wanted to ensure the security and future of their children. Jill, whose family friend had been shot, felt that South Africa had become too dangerous and that she could no longer handle the threat to their safety. She recounted how many Christians had already died, and thought of her friend who had been raped. She said: “I could list twelve people I knew who had died as a result of crime, including colleagues and family members.” She concluded that she had to get out of South Africa as a matter of urgency and did not care where she went.

The backdrop to these dramatic and tragic events was a political, sociocultural and socioeconomic environment in a state of radical change and perceived decline. Squatters were taking up residence at scenic heritage sites, and people felt overpowered by a foreign culture that threatened to destroy all they had known and valued. One man’s fears of cultural loss resulted in a nightmare where he dreamt he was the only white person left on earth. Affirmative action, which restricted career and employment opportunities for whites, was increasing. Long-term employees, who had worked for government or semi-government organisations, suddenly started resigning in droves and this exodus became “infectious”. Those who found work elsewhere discovered that employers endorsed a “last in, first out” policy and did not hesitate to send employees with families to far-flung areas, such as Namibia or the Transkei. Parents were also concerned about their children having to travel long distances by themselves for work purposes, or driving home alone at night. Employees
who went to interviews to secure more suitable work conditions had little success. One man felt that circumstances had “pushed” him in the direction of immigration.

South Africa’s financial position on the international monetary market and the level of service delivery were declining. The high inflation rate, high interest on bank loans and an unfavourable exchange rate led to the demise of several small businesses in South Africa. There were reports that electricity costs to consumers were being increased by 53% and there were concerns about the adequacy of pension funds to meet the needs of the elderly as they were not on the government’s priority list. One man concluded that “if you want to remain in South Africa after retirement, you must have enough money to build a high security fence around your property and obtain private medical care”. Because he was in a middle-income socioeconomic class, he realised that financially he was not going to make it and that he had to get out of the country. A number of participants therefore had serious doubts about South Africa’s future and felt that “the writing was on the wall”.

After some elderly family members had passed away, and other family members had started making definite plans to emigrate there was “even less for them” in South Africa. An adult child had an ancestral visa for the United Kingdom, and was not expected to return to South Africa after her friend had been murdered. One person’s sister won a green card in the USA lottery. A young adult’s parents decided to immigrate to New Zealand and she felt pressurised to follow the same path. She admitted that she had used the crime and safety issue in South Africa to “prop up” her immigration decision. Likewise, one family said that despite being burgled, they had been living with crime and burglar bars for years and had not been bothered by it. They emphasised that crime was not a contributing factor to them packing up and leaving South Africa. They believed that “you can’t run away from things as they are always going to follow you”. They felt strongly that people should not assume that all South Africans emigrated because of crime, as everybody had different needs and reasons for
coming to New Zealand. One woman had grown up with the notion that she would one day live in a different country because she had been born with a birth mark shaped like the United Kingdom. She was an intrepid traveller long before her fiancée asked her to marry, and she decided to accompany him to New Zealand after he had received a job offer. One family had done some travelling to Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe, and were comfortable interacting with other cultures. A teenage girl had travelled extensively, and during childhood, had experienced back and forth migrations between South Africa and the United Kingdom. Therefore, she did not view immigration to New Zealand as particularly problematic.

Having an offer of employment was often a vital component in the immigration process as it allowed people to obtain a work visa that paved the way towards being granted permanent residency. One person who was always scanning the classified section in the local newspaper happened to come across an advertisement for work in New Zealand, and thought that it was a good opportunity to do something different. Having family members in New Zealand was an important pull factor for relocation. Often one person would take the initiative to immigrate, which was followed by successive family immigrations over a number of years when individual circumstances permitted them to make the move. Some had siblings who had been living in New Zealand for a number of years, and an older couple joined their children and grandchildren in New Zealand to reunite the family. Where parents had immigrated before their adult children, this served as a strong motivating factor for children to relocate due to the expense of frequent overseas flights, as well as perceived pressure from parents to follow them to New Zealand. Parents were often looking for a better future for their children in terms of safety, as well as educational and work opportunities. Older people found it reassuring that their South African pension would be paid out in New Zealand. A number of participants were looking forward to the freedom from danger, and
constantly having to look over their shoulder. Some visited New Zealand beforehand, and had a taste of a different way of living that was peaceful and pleasant.

People who considered emigration were often torn between their relationships and connectedness with South Africa, and the various push and pull factors that urged them to immigrate. A thread that was woven throughout most of the participants’ immigration stories was their religious beliefs, and a number of them prayed to God to provide directives and information. When things started falling into place, despite apparent obstacles, they believed that God was opening doors for them and it served as confirmation that it was His will that they should leave South Africa and move to New Zealand. One couple recounted how they had been listening to “Radio Sonder Grense” where a listener had asked whether God tells you where you must live. The conclusion was that “God made the man the head of the house, and if he thought his family was not safe, it was his responsibility to move them to a safer place”.

Prospective immigrants soon realised that deciding to leave South Africa was only the first step in a long and arduous journey. Some considered migrating closer to home, such as Swaziland, as they were assured that things were more relaxed there and that people did not even lock their doors. It was also in close proximity to Johannesburg to buy groceries and obtain medical services. The three overseas destinations that participants considered were the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. One man’s youngest son was going on a holiday to the United Kingdom with the intention to immigrate. Another woman’s daughter was leaving for the United Kingdom on an ancestral visa, but she found it “too cramped” for herself. An older person had applied for a job in Australia a few years previously, but because his application had been turned down it made him feel rejected and unwanted by Australia. For some participants, New Zealand was the logical choice as members of their family were
already living there, and one couple was being sponsored by their children to join them in New Zealand.

As financial survival in a new country was paramount, most immigrants actively searched for employment in New Zealand by responding to newspaper advertisements placed by recruitment agencies, or used employment agencies to circulate their curriculum vitae. One person had had a job offer in Auckland a few years previously, but had disliked the city so much that he had turned it down. Some people, who responded to local advertisements, were interviewed and received job offers while still in South Africa. Others had to fly to New Zealand to meet with prospective employers. Consultancy firms generally took a long time before finalising job applications owing to contractual commitments, and a professional person was contacted “out of the blue” two years after being interviewed. Another professional, who was living in the United Kingdom at the time, was invited to join a family business in New Zealand and he looked forward to the opportunity to help it grow. However, owing to its isolated location, he stated that New Zealand would not have been his first choice for an immigration destination.

A firm job offer was encouraging to prospective immigrants and “being over the first hurdle” created a sense of excitement, but it did not necessarily mean that they met the immigration criteria of their intended destination. Immigration consultants were advertising regularly in local newspapers, and a few people decided to attend these seminars to compare the different opinions and information provided. Middle-aged people soon found out that their age counted against them when it came to New Zealand’s immigration points system, and often they were already too old for Australia’s cut-off age limit of 45. As New Zealand’s age limit for permanent residency was 55 for those who immigrated via the Skilled Shortage List stream, a few immigrants were “on the cusp”. This created a sense of urgency to make up their minds quickly and finalise their immigration visas before they would not have
enough points to apply for permanent residency, or would be too old. One such couple, who came to New Zealand on a visitor’s visa at age 53, were assured by immigration consultants that they would be able to find employment easily and thus obtain permanent residency before reaching the cut-off age.

Deciding to immigrate was not a once-off or unanimous decision for families, and the pros and cons of relocation were re-evaluated and discussed as new information became available. In addition, the reaction of family members, friends and colleagues in South Africa often weighed heavily on their minds. Sometimes an early seed, which was largely ignored at the time, was sown by a family member after a pleasant visit to New Zealand. Men were far more likely to take the initiative and set the immigration process in motion. However, two married women tried to convince their spouses to emigrate as they feared that their safety was under serious threat in South Africa. One felt that her husband was not listening to her concerns. However, once spouses realised that their partners had made up their minds, they were willing to negotiate their options and focused their efforts on the immigration process.

Children were usually involved in the decision-making process, where the various pros and cons were discussed and everyone was permitted to give their opinion. However, in the end, parents made the final decision for the sake of the family’s future. Boys, pre-adolescent children and youth in their early twenties were generally more excited about emigrating, whereas teenage girls and women older than 30 were reluctant to give up their close circle of friends. Some children were too young to understand what immigration meant and were happy to go along with the rest of their families. An adult woman, whose parents had decided to emigrate, was shocked that her parents were leaving their children behind and felt abandoned. She felt that she had to choose between her friends and parents, and became rebellious when her parents used pressure tactics to convince her to relocate as well. An adult
son took over his father’s business when his parents emigrated, and followed them to New Zealand a number of years later.

Louise pointed out that “immigration is not just a personal journey as you are connected by relationships with family and friends. Everybody is affected by your decision and everybody reacts differently”. Married couples were inclined to consult with their parents and their announcement often had a mixed response. On the whole, parents were supportive and wanted them to utilise opportunities and lead the life of their choice, but others were judgemental. One person’s mother focused on the negative aspects of South Africa and encouraged the couple to leave to ensure their safety. One father thought his son was deserting him, and another man’s family accused him of “dragging” his family to a country they did not know. One individual’s family saw their immigration as a betrayal. Some participants were hesitant to tell family members and kept their immigration plans “under wraps” for a while as they did not want to upset them. Some siblings did not respond well to the news, while others encouraged them to immigrate. One participant believed his family thought they were fleeing from South Africa because they were scared. Friends were generally more supportive, and thought that as adults they should be allowed to make up their own minds. However for one woman, who was scheduled for major surgery and planned to marry shortly thereafter, the timing of her immigration was questioned. Another friend reminded a prospective immigrant that leaving your country involved more than just writing a list of pros and cons. At work, one manager was supportive, but another person reported that his colleagues were extremely angry with him. His view was that “if things really started happening”, his critics would be the first to leave South Africa. A mother, who immigrated before her young daughter, was shocked at the insensitivity of a member of her daughter’s church who accused the parents of being part of the “chicken run” at a time when she was separated from her parents and needed support. In response to the polemic in newspapers, a
sibling who remained in South Africa defended her sister’s migration by saying that she had become a useful member of New Zealand society. This participant was amused that because of her participation in a New Zealand church, a reader scathingly referred to her in the press as “your organ playing sister” in response to her sibling’s comments.

A New Zealander, who was married to a South African and had lived in South Africa for seven years, provided a unique insight into the criticism directed at South African emigrants from those who stayed behind. She believed that the lives of those who remained in South Africa were severely restricted because of the high level of crime, but they had quite a defensive stance about it. They claimed that the negative view of South Africa was an exaggeration and insisted that they loved living in South Africa. However, they were also annoyed because they had chosen not to leave or were unable to emigrate. She observed that leaving South Africa had far more emotive connotations than when people left New Zealand, as South Africans left for political reasons and they were giving up on their country on a permanent basis. Her South African husband confirmed that he felt guilty because he had been educated in South Africa and had left before he could add value to country. In contrast, his New Zealand-born spouse did not experience a sense of obligation or guilt when she went overseas. She stated that people leaving New Zealand were not deserting their country as they were already enjoying all the things that South Africans were hoping to obtain when they left. People generally left New Zealand for other reasons, such as better job opportunities, and it was seen as a temporary relocation. Hence, New Zealanders did not usually “have a go” at people who left the country or attempted to make them feel guilty.

On the whole, participants’ commitment to relocation and building a life in a new country could be described as “careful”, but with an “open mind”. Two people were adamant that they would never return to South Africa, irrespective of conditions in New Zealand, while others viewed it as an adventure and starting a new chapter of their lives. One woman
had no specific expectations of New Zealand, and was therefore not disappointed with what she found. One family “kept the back door open” by renting out their house, and keeping the bulk of their money and pension funds in South Africa. A number of immigrants were of the opinion that a person’s expectations of life in New Zealand and the commitment to “making things work” significantly affected their ability to adapt successfully, or eventually return to South Africa.

**Preparation and migration**

Two families stated that they did their own research about New Zealand, and felt that they had done their homework before they immigrated. Families who emigrated in the early 1990s explained that the internet and e-mail were not readily available at the time, and they relied on information supplied by family or friends in New Zealand or tried to read up about New Zealand. An Afrikaans man was unsure whether he would be able to pray and worship in another language, and started doing Bible study with an English bible and attended an English church in South Africa. Some consulted with an immigration advisor, and one family thought that even though these consultations were costly, the information and recommendations were comprehensive and useful. One family met with a recruitment agent in South Africa, who portrayed New Zealand as a land of opportunity. On the whole, families did not feel that they were deceived or that they were given false information, but rather that only certain aspects were emphasised or that alternatives were not provided. For instance, the option of buying a business and applying for a business visa if they could not find work in New Zealand was never mentioned. In hindsight, families said that they believed what they were told and were extremely “innocent” and “naive” at the time. One women stated that they “did not think further than their noses” when they immigrated.
It was common practice among South Africans who contemplated immigration to go on a “Look, See, and Decide” (LSD) trip to New Zealand. Two families did not visit New Zealand before they immigrated, but six families mentioned prior visits to New Zealand for a holiday, to visit family or for job interviews. As visitors, they found it useful to have South Africans available who served as guides to show them around. Finding similarities between South Africa and New Zealand helped to ease their concerns, and one man took extensive video recordings home to reassure his family. An Afrikaans person found that English-speaking people in New Zealand were similar to those in South Africa, and felt that he could accept New Zealand as his nation. One young woman, whose parents had immigrated, took a redundancy packet and booked a “round the world” plane ticket. She spent time travelling with her parents through New Zealand, did house renovations and helped out in their business. She also took temporary employment for a year while she was trying to make the difficult decision whether she wanted to relocate permanently.

Completing all the necessary immigration documentation, having academic certificates and transcripts translated and obtaining police clearance and medical certificates were a daunting and time consuming task. Some families decided to organise their immigration process independently, despite the hard work involved, whereas some New Zealand employers offered to sort out all the paperwork, which made things a lot easier. In the early 1990s there was no New Zealand embassy or consulate in South Africa, and immigration applications were processed by the London office. People who immigrated during later years were able to lodge their applications in South Africa, and one person handed in his application at the Immigration Department in New Zealand while exploring employment opportunities. A number of people reported that they were worried that their applications could be turned down because of health issues, their age or not having enough immigration points. Owing to his age, one participant found it difficult to secure employment,
despite having a number of post-graduate degrees and extensive work experience. The time from immigration application to approval was three weeks for family sponsorship, and ranged from three months to two years for work visas and permanent residency applications. Most participants found this period of uncertainty “scary”, and one person reported a decline in his enthusiasm to immigrate.

A factor that all immigrants noted was the difficulty of lining up all the steps of the immigration process so that they fitted in with the required timelines of all the authorities involved. For instance, if they had to wait too long for their immigration visas to be approved, their police clearance and medical certificates would expire and had to be re-issued. Once immigration visas had been granted, the applicant had a limited period to take up residence in New Zealand before the visa expired. They therefore had to ensure that employment was secured and travel arrangements were organised within this narrow window. Applicants expressed their sense of frustration while their applications “dragged on”, resulting in one person, who was doing temporary work in New Zealand, deciding to return to South Africa. In the early 1990s, one family came to New Zealand on a visitor’s visa while awaiting an immigration law change regarding age limits. However, with the downturn of the world economy after 2008, entering New Zealand with a visitor’s visa in the hope of finding employment and then applying for a work visa was risky. One person commented on the anticlimax of finally having permanent residency granted via a quick stamp in his passport after the long wait and numerous phone calls to the Immigration Department. However, for another family, residency approval provided some security after spending about seven months in “Never land”.

With the issuing of an immigration visa, the “idea of immigration grew” and it became easier to think of packing up and emigrating. However, moving across the world to a different country was not a simple task, and for most, it took several months to have
everything in place. With some couples, one person resigned from work to manage relocation tasks while the other continued to generate an income. Selling the family home went fairly smoothly for most families, despite a slowing down in the housing market at various times after the 1990s. Afterwards, some stayed on in their homes and paid occupational rent, while others put their furniture in temporary storage and moved in with family members. One family decided to rent out their family home, partly because they were waiting for the right price and partly to retain a home base in South Africa. They decided to only bring a third of their belongings to New Zealand, and placed the rest of their furniture and appliances in storage. In contrast, most families packed up their household goods and came “lock, stock and barrel” to New Zealand. They obtained quotes for a shipping container, made a list of their household contents and started packing up all their belongings. Invariably, everything could not fit into the container, and some treasured items collected over the years, such as tools, caravans and camping equipment, had to be sold. Some families were separated during this preparation phase as the father or husband had to go ahead to New Zealand to confirm residency. For the women who stayed behind, handling the practicalities of relocation was a daunting and physically demanding task, especially for one woman who also had surgery during this period.

Relocation was an expensive exercise, particularly because of the distance from South Africa to New Zealand, the unfavourable exchange rate and insurance premiums. Those close to retirement had to adjust their financial planning, and had to make arrangements for their pensions to be paid out after resigning from work. Some left the bulk of their savings and pension money in South Africa so that they could return if needed, while others used their money for relocation and settlement purposes. Those who had to pay for relocation out of their own pockets found that managing their immigration process without using a consultant and sharing a shipping container reduced the costs. However, those who signed employment
contracts were often fortunate enough that the employer was prepared to share some of the expenses, for instance, paying for flights, immigration medicals, visa applications and passports. Employers sometimes contributed a certain amount towards the shipment of household goods and clearance through customs, which left the immigrant with only a small excess to pay. Most participants expressed their gratitude for employer assistance, and agreed that more “organised relocations” in terms of secure employment, financial assistance and settlement support had made things much easier for them. After a period of anticipation, frustration and hard work, most people found that things fell into place at the eleventh hour, which served as further confirmation that the Lord was with them.

When the time for departure drew close, some had family get-togethers and one couple had a big farewell party with friends who would not be able to attend their wedding in New Zealand. One man in his early twenties had “big eyes” and was “rearing to go”, and another man in his late fifties reported that the process of letting go and leaving South Africa had not been exceptionally difficult for him. In contrast, one woman stated that she did not look or feel excited about immigration because they were near to retirement and enjoying their lives in their refurbished home. She was angry that they had to move at this stage of their lives and had to work for at least another ten years. A father who went ahead without his family was not too worried beforehand about leaving, but when the time came he felt extremely emotional because he was unsure whether he would ever be able to return to South Africa. Hence, he thought it was the last time he would see his extended family. One family encountered an unexpected complication when their young daughter met her partner one month before immigration, and despite her parents warning her not to get involved, they could not stop the relationship. Immigrants worried about how they were going to cope in a new country without the support of their family and friends. Some had concerns about the deteriorating health and safety of parents and siblings in South Africa, and others experienced
tragedy close to the departure date. A participant said his mother had to attend the funeral of his grandmother on the same day as he immigrated. One woman and a close friend, whom she had known for years, cried for three days before her departure as he believed that he would never have a friend like her again. She felt emotionally and physically worn out by the time she left.

There were emotional goodbye scenes at the airport with intense sadness and weeping, which one participant described as a “terrible experience”. Yet, one person who moved back and forth between New Zealand and South Africa several times felt that when she finally said “good bye”, she was emotionally more able to let go of her ties to South Africa. Once on the plane, two participants reported a sense of finality and one told herself: “You are going now, this is it”. A man who was travelling without his family still felt quite emotional on the plane, but after his first stopover in Johannesburg he started thinking about getting to New Zealand and starting a new life. He humorously commented that he hated the airplane food and was looking for a McDonalds. Another person brought her wedding cake with her on the plane to New Zealand. Most couples and families immigrated together, but one father and one fianceé came ahead to confirm their residency. Those who stayed behind followed two to three months later. One woman travelled alone as her parents had already immigrated a few years earlier. The participants did not report any difficulties with their flights to New Zealand. Some enjoyed their stopovers in “strange places”, such as Singapore, Malaysia, Dubai or Brisbane, which made one “rookie” feel like a seasoned traveller.

Arrival and survival

Participants arrived in New Zealand at different months of the year, but five who came between May and September were confronted by the “harsh Wellington Winter” and commented on how cold they felt as they were unaccustomed to New Zealand’s blistering
Southerly winds. An important factor that set the tone for immigrants’ adaptation in New Zealand was whether there was somebody to meet them at the airport after a long and exhausting journey. One man who had travelled on his own and did not know anybody in New Zealand said he knew there would be nobody to meet him, but still expectantly looked around the arrival lounge in the hope that there would be someone to welcome him. Others were met by recruitment agents, someone from the South African community, parents, children or by their partners who had come ahead two to three months earlier. One woman described how excited she had been to see her husband, and she was ready to move on and see their new place. Most immigrants agreed that having family and friends in New Zealand upon arrival had made relocation a lot easier, but the reception they had received from New Zealanders had also made a big impression on them. Through a contact, Jeanne and her family had been referred to a New Zealander whom they had hoped could provide advice on suitable motels. They recounted the following experience: “We knocked at the door of this lady’s house, and she greeted us like she’d known us her whole life; with open arms and big hugs, and it just made us feel so at home”.

Long flights across a number of time zones often played havoc with travellers’ circadian rhythms, and upon arrival, two children played Play Station games until three o’clock the next morning and slept until late in the afternoon. Their father, who had come ahead of his family, was confused when he had woken up the first morning to find sheep outside his bedroom window, which was not surprising because he was living in a small, rural town. He came to the realisation: “Okay, I’m here now!” A woman, who was taken to a supermarket to buy supplies, said that she “did not even know where she was” and was at a loss what she needed to buy. This sense of confusion and disorientation was common among new arrivals. One couple commented that despite having a map and a good sense of direction, they had found it difficult to orientate and continuously got lost during the first few weeks.
When places or towns in New Zealand were mentioned in the news, they had no idea where they were. If they encountered a local word or phrase, they did not understand what it meant and did not know how to pronounce Māori names unless they heard someone else say it. In the beginning when they went shopping, some multiplied the prices by five to factor in the applicable exchange rate. One woman said she did not even want to buy an apple after she realised out how much it would cost in South African rand. Others threw caution to the wind as they thought that if they worked out what things really cost in New Zealand it would be such a shock that they would be too scared to buy anything.

Owing to this sense of disorientation and ignorance upon arrival in a new country, meeting new immigrants and the airport, helping them find suitable accommodation and transport, showing them around and providing them with essential information had made their landing a lot “softer”. One family appreciated being shown the beautiful view from Mount Victoria in Wellington upon arrival, and they enjoyed stopping on the Rumataka hills to look at the snow, which reminded them of Europe. One person took a long walk on his first wintery morning in New Zealand to find his bearings, and when his family arrived he took them for a drive through their home town to become acquainted with the local shops. Some settled South African immigrants were willing to help newcomers upon arrival, and one man humorously said he wanted to take his “new friend” everywhere with him. Two adolescents were “shown the ropes” by teenagers of a New Zealand family who kindly offered accommodation to the family until they found their own place.

The newcomers’ first impressions of their new environment were a mixture of surprise, dismay and amusement. They were astonished at people’s apparent lack of manners and courtesy in public places, and one person felt that she did not understand the “social rules” in supermarkets as people kept bumping into her. They found the New Zealand accent and habits amusing, such as buying the newspaper at a “dairy”. One woman was amazed that
shops were filled with clothes in various shades of black, and recounted a funny story when she wore a plain skirt and cardigan with a bit of colour on a shopping trip. The salesperson in a clothing store exclaimed: “Oh, I like a loud dresser”! Her husband humorously concluded that South Africans were perhaps the “hippies” of New Zealand society. They found it strange that New Zealand homes had no burglar bars, but instead relied on flimsy window locks, and that clothing could be left on washing lines while people were at work without being stolen. They were impressed by the level of honesty of New Zealanders and told a wonderful story of a man with a criminal record who stole a car, but afterwards noticed that it contained a briefcase with important paperwork. It started playing on his conscience, and he decided to drive past the owner’s home and throw the briefcase back on the porch, which unfortunately resulted in him being arrested.

A man, who had left before his fiancée, had the unenviable task of arranging a wedding shortly after his arrival as they were to be married two weeks after her arrival in New Zealand. He urgently had to send out wedding invitations to the only people he knew in New Zealand, which were his work colleagues. He did not realise that New Zealanders were slow to rise on chilly Saturday mornings and arranged the wedding for 10 o’ clock, which also caused hairdressing complications for the bride-to-be as the shops opened late on weekends. They had no photographer and asked the person at the hotel’s reception desk to take a wedding photo before they left for church. The wedding cake his fiancée brought from South Africa met with a “little accident” after she disembarked from the plane, and was unusable. Luckily they had met a South African woman on a previous flight to New Zealand, who offered to play the organ in church.

Jill recommended that it was advisable to do some travelling in the beginning to “put things in its place”. A number of newcomers who were in “holiday mode” went sightseeing and “did the tourist thing” for a week or longer. They either rented a minibus or campervan,
or used a vehicle brought from South Africa. Immigrants often referred to this stage as the “Honeymoon” phase, but the newlyweds also arranged to go on a traditional honeymoon. They had very little money available and toured the South Island in a “budget campervan”, which turned out to be a beat up, leaky old kombi with few utensils, no linen and a wire clothes hanger for a radio aerial. Despite bad weather, the new bride developed an appreciation for the beautiful countryside, and being able to take long walks in the veldt by herself without feeling unsafe or having to watch out for snakes. Most newcomers felt that for up to a year after arrival everything was new, beautiful and exciting, and they experienced a sense of “euphoria”. They were on an adventure and did not have to face the reality that their decision to emigrate was final.

After the initial period of being a “tourist” in New Zealand, immigrants had to establish an infrastructure for their daily lives, similar to what they had had in South Africa. The first thing most of them did was to open a bank account, and some still had to obtain their Internal Revenue Department (IRD) number. A few did urgent shopping to acquire thermal wear and warm coats to protect them against the bitterly cold weather. Setting up a telephone and internet account was essential for communication and having contact with people in South Africa. Despite an adequate public transport system, most South Africans bought a car soon after arrival, and as the market was flooded with second-hand cars imported from overseas, cheaper Japanese models could be acquired for a very reasonable price. Finding suitable accommodation was an essential survival element for new arrivals, and their lodgings varied from being quite Spartan to covering most of their home comforts. For two families, temporary accommodation was provided by the employer in an apartment, or a shared house with another South African immigrant. One couple who had come on a tourist visa brought their well-equipped “bakkie” (campervan) from South Africa to live in, and another couple stayed in a caravan on a family member’s property. The prospective bride
started off at the backpackers and was grateful when a colleague, who was going on holiday, offered his home to them for a month after their honeymoon. Some newcomers initially lived with their parents or children, or stayed in the home of a family member who was abroad. One family was taken into the small family home of New Zealanders until they could find a place of their own.

Since temporary accommodation was for a limited period only, the next step was to find a rental property or to buy a home. Rental properties varied widely in quality and price, and one family lived in five rental homes before buying their own home. Sometimes colleagues at work provided leads for suitable rentals. One family rented a home from the friend of a family member. Two families bought houses shortly after arrival because they found rental prices too expensive. Others did not have the funds available owing to South African Reserve Bank limits on taking money offshore, or their money was tied down with properties in South Africa. Some families realised that the sum of their funds was not enough for a deposit on a home. Temporary accommodation often came to an end before shipping containers with household goods arrived and were cleared through customs in New Zealand. The experience of “camping out” in an empty house was a well-known phenomenon among newcomers. One family moved into their home with a laptop and two camping chairs, and another bought a mattress so that they did not have to sleep on the floor. People who came on a visitor’s visa were in a predicament when employment offers did not eventuate and their shipping container was already on its way. They had no assurances that they would be able to remain in New Zealand when their visitor’s visas expired. Families living in empty homes were grateful to churches and the South African community who loaned out household items, such as mattresses, cutlery, crockery and linen. Participants reported that this practical assistance made them feel at home.
Going “flatting” was a rite of passage for young people in New Zealand, and was one of the first steps towards independence. Young people enjoyed the hustle and bustle of Wellington and preferred living close to the city centre rather than further up the coast, which was quieter and more restful. Because good rental properties were often expensive, it was common practice for one person to sign a rental agreement and then to get flatmates to share the rent and other costs. Usually an advertisement was placed in a newspaper or on the internet, with a contact telephone number. Prospective flatmates were invited to view the property, meet the other flatmates and discuss flatting arrangements. A single South African woman in her late thirties, who lived with her parents after immigration, responded to an advertisement from a New Zealand man for a flatting opportunity. She also viewed another property, but decided to enter into a flatting agreement with him, which worked out extremely well for both of them.

Parents explored school enrolment options soon after arrival, and advice on zoning requirements and recommendations on suitability of schools for their children were appreciated. Children had to go for enrolment interviews at schools and most started attending within a week. Some went to private or religion-based schools, and others attended government schools that were usually in the same area as where they were living. Two mothers stayed home for the first few months to help their children settle in at school. Most of those with adult children, or who were single, started working straight away and appeared to enjoy their new jobs. Couples and families usually immigrated on the basis of the husband’s or father’s work visa or permanent residency visa, and therefore the man usually commenced work almost immediately after arrival. One man remembered being thrown in at the deep end at work, despite him having jet lag. He hoped and prayed that the people at work would not ask “clever” questions because his mind was “not working properly” at the time. Another man who was offered a project at a consultancy firm, subject to satisfactory
performance, described how hard he had to work to convince his prospective employers of what he could offer them before he could secure a contract. A father who joined a family business had a long commute every day, while the family was sorting out where they were going to live. One couple tried various options for commuting to work, and settled on a plan where the husband took his wife to work in the car, left the car at the train station and then took the train into the city. One man did not take up his initial job offer in Auckland and decided to find alternative work in Wellington where some of his family lived. Others worked for a while and then switched to a different job that was more suitable, or that was in a more preferable location.

After a couple of months of intense activity to re-establish the structure needed for their everyday lives, most families managed to settle into their daily routine. A few men reported that that life in New Zealand was all right, that they were not experiencing any serious problems and thought that it was good being in New Zealand. One woman said that with the children being at school she got used to all the new things and living in a small town, and she had started knowing a few people. She knew that once they had permanent residency they would move to a big city, which was more in line with what she had been used to in South Africa. People generally had a sense that they were establishing themselves and that things were going fine. The single woman who went flatting found that she and her flatmate were compatible, and they tolerated each other’s “quirks” very well.

Participants agreed that immigrants often went through a process of denial as they were trying to adapt to a new country, as well as a new social and working environment. As time progressed, the factors of everyday life started to have an emotional impact, and the reality of their situation started dawning on them. Andries said that, “at the age of 57 I had to rebuild my life in New Zealand from nothing”. Usually from about two months to two years people realised that immigration was not as easy as they thought it would be and they reached
an emotional low point. The woman who married in New Zealand said that reality already started setting in during their honeymoon as the stressors of having surgery, immigrating and marrying within a short time span took its toll. Psychological adaptation was required on multiple levels as explained by Rudi: “Being a new immigrant is not like the first day at a new job or moving to a different town. Your whole environment is new; you are in a different country, the culture is different, the shops are different, everything is different”. Another person found the first year emotionally tough, and described his life as a constant struggle and a nightmare as he tried to adjust to a new country and a new working environment. The majority agreed that, contrary to the view of some South Africans that immigrants were cowards, moving to another country was a huge undertaking and was definitely “not for cissies”. Some indicated that they “had their moments of difficulty” after immigration, while others shared dramatic and emotional accounts of their experiences as their lives entered a crisis phase.

The factors that led up to people’s emotional difficulties often depended on their personal circumstances and relationships, but centred around work-related problems, financial worries, cultural shock, multiple changes in their surroundings, missing family and friends or having a family health crisis. A participant reminded us that immigration was a multifaceted and intertwined process. One person found all the changes difficult to manage as he was a person who preferred stability. Another stated that relocation became more difficult the older you got as you found that making new friends was much harder. On the whole, work-related and financial difficulties were more salient factors for men, while loneliness and missing family and friends back home were significant causes of distress for women. Jill felt that starting work immediately prevented people from finding their feet first, such as investigating their environment and making friends, which could lead to problems later on.

366
Three men believed that their age had made it harder for them to find employment and had made adaptation to the working environment more difficult, as they did not want to go through the struggle to prove their worth again. Those who were employed in school environments were shocked by the lack of discipline, and children’s appalling language and disruptive behaviour. Professional men who worked in government or semi-government organisations in South Africa found it difficult to work as consultants, instead of having the security of permanent employment. As a consequence they could not rely on a regular income via a salary, and had no paid holiday leave or sick leave. Because consultants were only paid upon completion of work, those who had to take care of others financially “just had to hang in there and make it work”. Furthermore, consultancy firms “pushed projects through” because they were focused on making a profit and improving company shares, which left consultants feeling that they were merely “pawns that had to produce on demand”. In specialised fields, sufficient time was required to do quality work, and pressure to rush tasks led to mistakes being made and getting into trouble. Some ran into difficulties with professional ethics, as they felt strongly that one should take great care when working with expensive equipment and people’s safety. Becoming annoyed and arguing about these issues resulted in negative consequences for employees. Open communication was essential for some job roles. However, speaking too hastily and being too direct, frank and outspoken according to New Zealand cultural norms, led to “saying the wrong things at the wrong time” and having to apologise afterwards. It was thought that the best course of action was to “keep quiet and just do the job”, but this was also not acceptable as interacting with others was often a role expectation. In addition, an expanded job description, such as taking on sales and marketing roles, caused great discomfort for professional employees. Professional identity also differed in the sense that local consultants had little field experience and seemed quite arrogant, while South Africans usually had extensive practical experience. South Africans
were willing to help someone on request, whereas New Zealanders expected people to make a prior appointment.

Those in consultancy positions poured their hearts and energy into their projects, and worked harder than ever before in their lives. However, the pressure to complete work and feeling that “nothing was going right” and “everything seemed wrong” had a negative psychological impact. After lengthy university studies and a long and successful career in South Africa, not being valued or respected and having to prove themselves all over again was extremely stressful. Being employed below their level of expertise, and with performance-based increases and bonuses being withheld, or extensive additional hours of work not being rewarded served to reinforce their sense of invalidation. Being obliged to honour their contracts, they had no option but to continue in a stressful, paradoxical and unrewarding work environment. Frequent work-related travel and long hours of commuting to work, or for extra-mural studies added to hardship during this phase.

At the other end of the spectrum were those who came on tourist visas or sought alternatives to the job offer that brought them to New Zealand. Some immigrated with their spouses who had work visas, and others were retired. One participant, who managed to secure employment, was later made redundant when the company could not obtain enough clients to maintain its business. These people subsequently could not find work in New Zealand. One person discovered that job opportunities for her line of work were not readily available in New Zealand as the jobs were outsourced to Singapore. Another, who managed to obtain permanent residency, found that whereas he had run a successful business in South Africa, he could not compete with large companies who had the monopoly in New Zealand. The retiree applied for work in his professional field, but discovered that employers did not accept him and thus were not keen to take him on. He could only secure short periods of temporary employment that did not utilise his skills. One person was willing to do any kind
of work and had no difficulty obtaining a job offer, but owing to the recession, all job applications had to go through Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ). Consequently she was told that she could not get the job, as a New Zealander could do the work or could be trained for it. Because her husband could also not find employment, despite assurances from immigration consultants that work in New Zealand was readily available, he felt that their expectations of New Zealand were not fulfilled. He emphasised that "you cannot really settle in a new country if you are unemployed or if you are unhappy in your work". Owing to safety concerns, they were adamant that they would not return to South Africa, and felt that any South African that managed to get to New Zealand was worth his or her salt. They approached the office of their local member of parliament to discuss their dilemma, but were summarily told: "You South Africans, we don’t want you here! If you’ve got no skills, we don’t want you here. You have to pack your stuff and go back". They were advised to return to South Africa and ask their daughter, who managed to secure employment, to sponsor them after three years. They found themselves in an extremely precarious position as they had only a visitor’s visa, and the container with their furniture was already on the way to New Zealand. In the end they decided to buy a business franchise, which involved physically exhausting work, as well as the stresses and challenges of running a business without prior experience. Running a business felt like “being hit by a bus” and was akin to “running the Comrades marathon” on a daily basis.

Those who could not find employment had to rely on their pension funds and the limited amount of money brought from South Africa. One family used their South African credit cards and inadvertently exceeded the Reserve Bank limits that got them into trouble with their bank. One participant mentioned a family that had used up all their life savings coming to New Zealand. Another family described how they had waited in uncertainty and without an income for a year after buying a house and a car. They were “in limbo” for
another two years while awaiting permanent residency. It would appear that people felt ashamed about not being able to find work as they told family in South Africa that they were “still on holiday”. Another took exception to church members asking him why he was sitting at home while his wife had to work.

Some participants experienced family upsets or crises, such as an adult child moving back and forth between South Africa and New Zealand as she could not make the final decision to immigrate, which resulted in accusations and worrying about her safety in South Africa. The young woman who met her partner just prior to immigration wanted to return to South Africa to marry, and was pressurising her parents to go back with her. They tried to talk her out of returning to South Africa, but in the end had to accept it. One man’s father died nine months after they had emigrated from South Africa. Another family’s son was stabbed with a knife in his garage and was taken to hospital, but they could not help him as they were unable to return to South Africa. While visiting his parents in New Zealand, one person had a heart attack, and being on a visitor’s visa he was not eligible for government-funded medical care. He required urgent cardiac bypass surgery in a private hospital and was too ill to return to South Africa, with the result that the family had to try and raise the necessary funds. One participant found that a long-standing condition, that was so well stabilised by medication that she had nearly forgotten about it, deteriorated and resulted in numerous tests and changes of medication without obtaining a satisfactory result.

The narratives of female immigrants revealed that they found the separation from family and friends in South African extremely hard and it had contributed significantly to their emotional difficulties. They longed for their parents and siblings, and missed the little things they shared on a regular basis. One recalled how terrible she found the first weekend in New Zealand as she was used to going to the local shopping centre for coffee with her sister on Saturdays. Two women missed their Xhosa domestic workers, who had been part of their
lives or had lived with the family for many years. One recalled the times they would just sit together or have a chat over a cup of coffee. The woman who married in New Zealand missed the excitement and teasing by family and friends that made a new marriage fun. After their honeymoon her husband had to concentrate on his work and had little time to spend with her. She felt that they were supposed to be newlyweds, but everybody thought they were an old married couple. Another woman found it problematic to live with only basic household goods as if she was starting off in life again. She missed all the small items that she had collected during the years to make her life more comfortable, because they were now in storage.

A few of the women mentioned that the cold, wet weather and their unfamiliar surroundings had an adverse effect on their emotional state. One was acutely aware that nobody in New Zealand shared her memories, and experienced intense sadness that “none of her birds or trees” were in New Zealand. She realised that she did not know the names of any of the New Zealand species and was aware that she was in a completely strange environment, despite still being on earth. While walking to work one day she realised that all the buildings were unfamiliar and she felt like “a stranger in a strange land where nobody knows me”.

These women reported an acute sense of loss, as well as feelings of homesickness and nostalgia. These people had lost the familiarity of their natural and human-made world, their history, their Afrikaner culture, their language, their familiar foods, their friendships and their careers. Even listening to a compact disc of a South African comedian caused sadness and nostalgia as it represented a small piece of South Africa. For some, their feelings of homesickness started when the children went to school and they were alone at home. One mother felt extremely sad when her young, adult child decided to leave home to go flatting, in contrast to her cultural norm where children stayed with their parents until they married. Another person’s homesickness was related to not being able to go home if things did not work out in New Zealand, and she reported that it continued for years after immigration.
A number of women described their loneliness, feelings of isolation, intense grief and lack of support in New Zealand. One reflected on how she had experienced intense, recurrent and overwhelming bouts of sadness that came “out of the blue”, followed by inconsolable weeping and sobbing. She was unable to explain to her family why she was so upset, as her grief seemed to be “nonverbal”, and she was as perplexed about its origins as her family was. They became quite concerned about her acute distress and tried to comfort her, but she often went to bed at night still in tears. One day she started crying uncontrollably on her way to work and was struck by the lack of concern for her welfare from bystanders who made no eye contact, took no notice of her distress and walked straight past her without offering any support. She commented that in South Africa a black person would most certainly have walked up to her, saying “sorry, sorry” to express sympathy with her distress. She found the complete disinterest of the general public and sense of invisibility extremely traumatic.

Aletta, who married in New Zealand, said that, “during my wedding vows I looked down at my bouquet, and recognised the little flowers that used to grow on our farm in South Africa and I just started to cry”. She cried so much that the organist turned around in concern, and on some of her wedding photos the tears were clearly visible on her face. She realised that, “it is only the two of us here, and nobody else even knows me”.

Several women felt extremely lonely because they had nobody to talk to, and one said that she phoned her sister in South Africa every other day and cried as if her heart was breaking. Another used the internet, and regularly telephoned and sent e-mails to family and friends. These women were acutely aware that they were “miles away from everything” and could not readily visit friends and family, which exacerbated their sense of loneliness and isolation. One person commented that she had met other South African families who also felt that they were living in isolation in New Zealand. A woman told how she wrote numerous letters to family and friends in South Africa and checked her post box on a daily basis, but
received only a few letters in return. A few faithful friends wrote occasionally, but most of
the replies came from people whom she did not expect to hear from. Out of desperation she
said to her husband that perhaps if she tried to phone her mother, who was deceased, she may
be willing to listen to her. When members of the South African community eventually
became aware of her plight, she found that the more they telephoned her, the more she cried.
Two women reported feeling depressed, and one sometimes lay in a dark room for hours.
Another was worried about her husband’s state of mind as he was distraught that neither of
them could find work and felt that they had made a mess of things. He would not unpack his
things as he thought they might have to go back, and said if the Immigration Department did
not have their passports he would have booked a return ticket. His wife did not want to leave
him alone at home during a weekend visit to friends as she “did not know what he might do”
as he was in a “bad state due to things not working out”.

It was difficult establishing new friendships in New Zealand as Kiwis were friendly,
but they were not as warm and hospitable as South Africans were. Meeting other South
Africans was not always helpful because of differing interests and political views that
resulted in irritating conversations that focused on artificial similarities. One person reported
that a friend of theirs came to New Zealand and started working immediately, with the result
that two years later she realised that she did not know anybody and had no friends.
Difficulties connecting with like-minded people and not having close friends contributed to
the lack of social support during times of distress. For one person, despite being born in New
Zealand, having lived in South Africa and the United Kingdom for a number of years made it
difficult to slot back into New Zealand society. Owing to her experiences during extended
periods abroad she found that she had little in common with New Zealand friends upon
return, and that those who had never travelled were parochial and suspicious of people who
had been overseas. In addition, she viewed their casual dress style “scruffy”, and they did not like it being pointed out to them.

Some of those who were in regular contact with family in South Africa were encouraged to “make the best of it”, and others could lean on family or members of the South African community in New Zealand during the worst periods. The possibility of being able to return to South Africa, if they wished to do so, gave one person some peace of mind and eased the homesickness. Another found that when she stopped working she had the “space” to get out and meet people and that made her feel better. One man decided that it would be best to look for alternative work and approached other companies, but as businesses moved slowly in New Zealand, most companies could only accommodate him after several months. He felt he could no longer continue at his workplace and resigned at the end of his contractual period, while his wife continued to generate an income. One of the immigrant women warned that even though the emotional difficulties of the crisis phase were largely overcome with time, they had a tendency to make a comeback.

Adaptation

After spending a more extended period in New Zealand, people gradually got used to the idea of being here, adjusted to their new surroundings and adopted new ways of doing things. They became familiar with New Zealand’s food culture, such as the “sausage sizzle”, ordering your own food in restaurants and the lower quality of furniture. One woman, who initially found New Zealand just a bit too “green and soft”, started feeling that the green landscape was “okay now”. They became complacent with the lower levels of crime in New Zealand, and occasionally left doors open with no detrimental consequences. Strangely enough, nobody reported being particularly concerned about the frequent, low rumbling and gentle shaking of deep earthquakes in the Wellington region. Even a man who worked in
Christchurch took his cue from the locals who no longer dived under tables when the city was rocked by repeated aftershocks. Some reported that they got used to their quieter lifestyle and having “their own life” in New Zealand, in contrast to South Africa where they were accustomed to frequent knocks at the front door from friends and family dropping in for a visit. Away from the censure and opinions of family members, they became less concerned about their appearance and doing things correctly. One family loved living on the Kapiti coast and said that the place “grew on them”. It felt like being on holiday every day and it was wonderful to return home after a stressful day at work. Rainy weather was managed by putting on a rain coat and carrying on with garden work, and it never kept them from going on outings during weekends.

Participants gradually got used to the Kiwi accent, and enjoyed the local expressions and sense of humour. One man said one day he stood in the foyer of a concert hall and suddenly realised that he understood what the people around him were saying. A woman commented on how pleased she felt the first time a neighbour greeted her in a shop. Andries remarked:”I don’t know how it happened, but one day the New Zealanders did not seem like strangers anymore, and when they looked at me they did not see a stranger in their midst”. His explanation was that, “Kiwis start accepting you as one of them when you start to look like them and dress like them. You are not viewed as being different and they realise you are one of them”. Fitting in better socially and getting used to the work environment made things “easier and better than in the beginning”, and people had a sense that things were starting to improve. The consensus was that after immigration people first had to crawl before they could learn to walk.

Mastery of the essential tasks of immigration, and slowly starting to build memories and a new history in New Zealand helped people to develop a more secure home base in their new country. A father commented that his family had settled better than expected,
particularly his teenage daughter who had been reluctant to immigrate. Another father observed that his pre-adolescent children had adapted well and “went with the flow”. He explained that children pick up from their parents how to adapt to a new country, and said that transition was easy for him as he focused on his own business, which was exciting, interesting and fun, despite the stress and challenges. People found that they had a better understanding of the unspoken social rules of society, particularly in public areas. One couple suggested that when you have shared experiences with people, you are no longer a stranger in a strange land. As you develop expertise and share knowledge, for instance, at which second-hand shops one can find the best bargains or being able to recommend a good hairdresser, you become part of the country.

One family accepted that their son had gone “flatting” and was not going to return as he had become independent, and was living his own life. The woman, who went flatting with a New Zealand man, was happy with the arrangement and they were able to live together harmoniously. Families were eager to get onto the property ladder after renting for a while, and some started off by buying a section (a residential stand) or buying and renovating an old house. One man embraced the Kiwi “do it yourself” spirit and, after subdividing his property, bought a commercially supplied wooden “kitset” house and built his own home. “Vrystaat” (pseudonym) humorously remarked: “I hired a concrete mixer to build my own home and had to enlist my wife’s help, but the first day I glanced up and down the road to check if someone perhaps noticed that I had my wife mixing concrete”. A couple, who lived in a number of rental properties for two years while saving for a deposit, decided to buy their own home as they realised that their mortgage repayment would equal their rental fee. For some, the arrival of their shipping container was like Christmas, despite one woman recalling humorously how she missed her domestic helper when she was told by the shipping company that it was up to her and the delivery person to unpack the contents.
As time progressed, mothers who stayed at home to help their families settle decided to return to the workplace, and children who finished school or tertiary education managed to find employment. Some people changed to a more suitable work environment, which improved their quality of life. The couple who bought a business had a positive attitude and focused their energy on making the business succeed, instead of ruminating about their decision to relocate to New Zealand. Over time, clients started respecting them and realised they were business people who provided good client service. Hence the couple felt that by Kiwi standards they were doing quite well in their business. They recalled an incident where they proudly handed out their business card and felt that they were finally “somebody” in New Zealand as they were business owners. When families could rely on a second income, were able to afford their own home and were surrounded by their own belongings, they felt more settled and thought they were getting somewhere financially and building a new life in New Zealand. The final hurdle for some was obtaining permanent residency in New Zealand to achieve their immigration goals. The business owners employed more than their required business visa quota of employees, and felt that they had done everything they could to ensure that they were granted permanent residency. Being able to work and having permanent residency gave people roots and helped them to rebuild their social networks. Andries recalled what the Afrikaans poet, Elisabeth Eybers, wrote about her immigration journey to the Netherlands. In her poem, “Step by Step” (Eybers, 1973) she summed up the slow adaptation process: “You learn migration step by step, you see strange and familiar objects, somehow stranded on the artificial terrace where you landed yet did not settle irrefutably”.

The time it took for immigrants to reach a level of consolidation and achieve a sense of peace varied widely according to people’s attitudes and circumstances. One man reported that after one year, he felt calmer and realised that he had to carry on and live his life despite his workplace problems. Another couple advised that if you can pull through the emotional
lows, some problems would be resolved by the third year, and you would feel more settled and have a clearer idea of what awaited you in the future. Some also found that after three years it no longer mattered that they were viewed as immigrants as they did not care so much what others thought of them. At that stage they had made new friends and could make their own way in New Zealand. They explained that they had stayed and carried on, and had thus learnt and succeeded. After three years they were happy in New Zealand and had no desire to return to South Africa, and had thus made the choice to stay in New Zealand after obtaining their permanent residency. One woman found that after three to four years her homesickness had lessened and things had become easier. She said that after six years in New Zealand, homesickness was “not that bad” anymore. A couple who had been in New Zealand for seven years said they had moved on to other things and immigration did not seem like a “biggie” anymore. They accepted that they were in New Zealand and it was what they had chosen, and they were therefore not sorry that they had made the move. For one woman, who had moved back and forth between South Africa and New Zealand several times, found that after eight years in New Zealand it was easier to live here. Her brother’s immigration “completed the family picture” and meant there was less in South Africa to return to. A retired man felt that he eventually settled down after nine years, and adapted to things “as they are today”. His wife said that she had initially had a terrible time being separated from her family, but “got over it”. One couple concluded that their three children, who had settled better than expected, may have chosen of their own accord to immigrate even if the family had not immigrated 16 years earlier. A couple, who had immigrated and married in New Zealand sixteen years before, concluded that they “are here now and have to make a success of it”. The couple, who had been here the longest, namely 19 years, reported that they felt relaxed and were living well in their comfortable Wellington home. They appreciated the many privileges they had in New Zealand.
Nonetheless, adaptation involved acceptance of inevitable changes and reaching a compromise regarding others to achieve some sense of balance. One person stopped reading South African newspapers, such as *Die Burger*, because she found the contents too upsetting. In contrast, another person said that he accessed South African websites almost daily. Participants emphasised that they could not cut off their roots, and fond memories of their lives in South Africa could not be taken from them. During conversations with family members in South Africa, one person was acutely aware that something had changed and that because of their different circumstances, is was difficult to relate to those who had remained behind. Topics that her family talked about during conversations no longer bothered her, and she did not share her stories about what she had been doing in New Zealand. She felt that they had moved on in New Zealand, and their family in South Africa had moved on as well. In New Zealand they had to follow their own path and fight their own battles, and had learnt to let go and give up on things. Some participants had to choose alternative careers or start business ventures owing to a lack of opportunities or being unable to find employment. One man, who ended up working with a broom and mop on a regular basis, wondered what his deceased father would have thought of him. One family had to relocate from the sunny city, where they had settled, to the inclement weather of Wellington to help their son with his business. A woman commented that she had always worn dresses in South Africa, but in New Zealand she had resorted to wearing slacks permanently, and in winter relied on a track suit and six layers of clothing to stay warm.

Some reported that they had to adapt the way they behaved in social situations, and others observed personality changes. Hettie explained: “I have a very assertive personality, but here I’m not as assertive as I was in South Africa. I walk my path in a much quieter and calmer way, and I keep myself to myself. I am much more careful here”. She found that in New Zealand she behaved with less excitement and exuberance. Later on, she realised that
this was a part of her that she had left behind in South Africa as she did not feel comfortable enough to bring it along to New Zealand. Another woman said that she tolerated what was being said about South Africans, even when it was not true, and had learnt to keep quiet without sharing her views. These attempts to avoid conflict left one person with a sense of dishonesty and not addressing important issues. She developed a habit of swearing in Afrikaans, which she had never done before. Her behaviour shocked her husband and she felt quite ashamed about it, but concluded that it was a form of protest against what was happening in her life. A person commented that you realised you were “not one of them” and it took time to process being an immigrant and coming to terms with it. One woman’s way of coping with this sense of isolation was to invite other South African immigrants to her home, which took her out of her comfort zone as she did not consider herself to be an “entertainer”.

As participants slowly adapted to circumstances in New Zealand and settled into a new way of life, they found that they regained their sense of humour and many recalled funny incidents that occurred during the adaptation phase. During periods of self-reflection they started thinking about their priorities and what the most important things in life were. One man, who had experienced ongoing difficulties at work, decided that his family came first. After an early start and working his required eight hours, he went home to his family, despite others working until late in the evening. Some found that their losses had become less painful. Others found that memories of their grief were still painful after nine years, and that nostalgia was still present after 18 years. One woman still ensured that doors were locked as she pointed out that New Zealand also had thieves and murderers. In general, an Afrikaner identity and the Afrikaans language were maintained. Hennie believed that, “in your heart you will always remain an Afrikaner and a South African”. Understanding that she felt like a stranger in New Zealand because she did not share any memories with people here, made things easier for one woman. She realised that she could not expect New Zealand to be the
same as South Africa, and because nobody asked them to come to New Zealand, they did not have to thank them for their contribution. Most found that when they focused on getting the most out of the positive aspects, the negative ones seemed less stressful. Whatever the reasons were for leaving, it was advisable to focus one’s energy on making the most of what was available and what could be created in the new country. Annabella stated that, “there will be days that aren’t so good, but with the right mindset you are half way there”.

After immigration, some participants travelled back to South Africa for short visits to family and friends, or for special occasions such as a 70th birthday party or a wedding. The responses to their visits varied. One couple wanted to visit after one year, but instead gave their parents the opportunity to visit them in New Zealand. Sometimes family members were willing to make their car available during visits to South Africa. Another couple said that their family expected them to visit every one to two years because they could not afford to visit them in New Zealand, but believed immigrants had sufficient funds. Their experience was that family members were unwilling to travel to a different location in South Africa to see them during visits, and said they would understand if they were unable to get to them. Participants concluded that there was an unspoken rule that as they were the ones who had left South Africa, they were expected to make the effort to see family members. One woman also noticed that family members were apparently not interested in their new life because nobody asked questions about her house, what they were doing, or whether she was happy in New Zealand. She found it hurtful that friends, who did not answer her letters from New Zealand, accused them of running away. Another person also reported that during return visits people “had a go at him” for leaving South Africa, and confirmed that it was the people who remained behind that “attack you and make you feel guilty”. Yet, later on some of the “accusers” changed their opinion and said they were lucky to be in New Zealand, and that they would also have left if they could.
After two years, one family preferred to send their children to South Africa for a visit. The parents had not been back for eight years because it would have set them back financially while trying to build a new life in New Zealand. People in South Africa kept asking when they were visiting and they felt bad telling them every year that they were coming, and then changing their minds. The mother believed their parents understood that they had moved on and made a new life. Her husband said his father understood that he would “come over to South Africa when he was ready”. They also wanted to see other parts of the world, such as Australia and the Pacific, before returning to South Africa. However, the woman mentioned that her parents had aged and that their health had deteriorated after they had visited New Zealand about five years previously. She felt that her husband had other siblings in South Africa who could take care of his parents, but she felt guilty and thought she should see her parents every two to three years because they were missing her. However, on reflection she wondered if she was looking for reasons to return to South Africa. One man expressed his concern about the health of his younger sister. She was very sick and required frequent injections to manage her condition, which also involved her being boarded from work. It was good to see her again, but she had been extremely emotional and had cried during his recent visit. A woman said that her husband wanted to visit his friends and children in South Africa, but she felt that they should come to New Zealand if they wanted to see them. She had no desire to return to South Africa, but said she might change her mind later on. In the meantime, they had visited the United Kingdom, where her daughter lived, and had enjoyed exploring various holiday destinations in New Zealand.

A family who had emigrated from South Africa via the United Kingdom had regular return visits every two years, and their daughter visited her grandmother and cousins in South Africa in her “gap year” after finishing college. She was also eager to see friends and their families whom she had known since childhood, and was surprised that people whom she had
not seen or spoken to for a while called her and took her out. She was quite nostalgic about South Africa, and wanted her cousins to move to New Zealand. However, her New Zealand-born mother preferred to go on holiday to the United Kingdom to retain her connections and contacts there, rather than having stressful family visits to South Africa. One person initially stayed in New Zealand for short periods only, and returned to South Africa three times. After she had immigrated and married a New Zealander, she had visited South Africa with her husband four years later. He was eager to meet her relatives and to experience part of her life in South Africa. Two families made return visits about every five years. “Vrystaat” (pseudonym) found that people were surprised that he wanted to visit South Africa after he had immigrated. He explained that he had returned to South Africa to experience the sights, sounds, tastes and smells of his home country once more.

The changes that occurred during their absence from South Africa depended on how often they visited and their original reasons for immigration. A woman, who had been absent for periods of up to 18 months, noticed that after returning from short visits to New Zealand her friendships were unaffected and it was easy to slot into her social life again. Her main problems were practical in nature, such as not having a car, having to find work and having financial worries. However, she found that adaptation was more difficult after spending nearly two years in New Zealand. A family who had left in 1992 commented on the political changes, such as voting rights for all and a different national anthem. They acknowledged that the South African population consisted mostly of black people and that today’s children grew up in a different world, where it was commonplace for white children to have black friends and for managers at work to be black. One person visited his parents’ old home, and was shocked and saddened about the dilapidated condition of the house and how dirty Durban had become.
The young girl who had previously been involved in a highjack attempt was fearful at night because of the lack of adequate security gates at her aunt’s house in South Africa, and night sounds made her feel panicky at the thought of being attacked by burglars. She also commented that in South Africa she had a lot less independence because of the safety risk. In New Zealand she could take a bus or taxi home after going out at night, but in South Africa she had to rely on transport provided by family members. She noted how different things were for her cousins in South Africa because they were limited to walking up the road to visit their friends. Her brother, who was about nine at the time, was not particularly concerned about security issues or the lack of independence while visiting South Africa. She believed that up to the age of 15 years, children in South Africa still enjoyed swimming and playing on the trampoline with friends in their back yard. Because they had not reached the legal age to drive a car, they did not experience significant limitations to their independence owing to the safety risk. At the age of 16, young people can drive a motor vehicle in New Zealand, and by then the lack of independence in South Africa became more noticeable because parents still had to drop them off and pick them up. The New Zealand man, who visited with his South African wife, had safety concerns after watching documentaries and listening to what South Africans told him. He thought it was more risky to go as a tourist, and that staying with people who were living in South Africa would be safer. He thought that as long as he was sensible and alert, and “kept eyes in the back of his head”, he would be fine. In addition, previous trips to countries with a higher risk profile than New Zealand had provided a measure of resilience.

One family found the home security systems in South Africa cumbersome, and being constantly on alert tiring. They were surprised that they had considered this way of living “normal” before immigration. Another woman worried about her sister living alone at home, and thought it was terrible for her to live with a “panic button” and relying on her dogs to
keep her safe. Others also commented on the ongoing violence in South Africa and they found the conditioning to accept abnormal circumstances, such as highjack attempts and armed robberies, upsetting. “Vrystaat” (pseudonym) said that “to accept kidnapping, assault and robbery as normal life circumstances one must have blinkers on; you must be conditioned”. He added that in South Africa an entire family can be kidnapped or attacked in their home, and have their belongings stolen. He recalled an incident where a man had to fetch his wife after she had been left on the side of the road by a robber who had highjacked and stole her car. He believed that conditioning prevented people from being overwhelmed, and said that typical responses, such as “only the car was taken” and “praise the Lord we are all alive and nobody was hurt” were probably uplifting for Christians. A participant who had left South Africa in the 1990s was shocked at the theft of patients’ belongings, as well as chrome taps, copper pipes, and electrical wiring at hospitals. He was not accustomed to locking car doors when driving or the “smash and grab” theft of visible items, such as cell phones or handbags. Still, he recalled humorous stories about a “snake warning” on a car that was ignored by thieves at their peril, and burglars apologising for stepping over their hostages, lying face down on the floor at gunpoint, during a burglary in the Western Cape. The consensus was that if this burglary was in Gauteng, the burglars would not have been so “polite”. One of the burglars asked the home owner’s overseas visitors why they came to South Africa when they knew about the crime risk.

Despite the majority of participants reporting shock and disappointment at the level of crime and deterioration of conditions in South Africa, some were more positive about their return visits. One woman, who had experienced an exacerbation of an existing health problem in New Zealand, found that her condition had improved considerably during a four week visit to South Africa. One couple enjoyed being able to buy biltong (dried meat) and having a braai (barbeque) with meat from their “own butcher”. For another person,
everything seemed like a bargain in terms of the strong New Zealand dollar. A few
participants reported a renewed burst of energy during visits, but others found it an extremely
emotional experience and spoke of their nostalgia and sense of loss. A father reminisced
about the fun he used to have with friends at sporting events, and was concerned that his son
was missing out on these experiences and spending time with his cousins. He commented that
his children would be “all grown up” when they visited South Africa after about five years.
Hettie said that “even after all this time when we return to South Africa and I walk along its
streets, it still feels as if I have wings under my feet and I float in the air. It is a strange
experience”. She quoted a well-known South African poet who apparently said that whenever
he returns to South Africa he “runs on all six pistons again”. Some people enjoyed a visit to a
game reserve, and one commented that seeing the landscape and animals again was “almost a
primitive experience”. The Kiwi man, who visited South Africa with his wife, said that Cape
Town and Stellenbosch reminded him of New Zealand and he enjoyed visiting the places
where his wife had grown up. Visiting South Africa allowed him to “feel” the environment
and the people, which helped him to understand her better because it “grounded” his sense of
connectedness with his wife. It also provided him with a better understanding of certain
aspects of his wife and other South Africans he met, and he developed a new appreciation for
South African humour.

Upon returning to South Africa after spending a certain amount of time in New
Zealand, participants had to re-evaluate their perceptions of “home”. For one young woman,
going back to South Africa felt “a bit like going home”. The person whose family friend had
died after being shot stated that “your home is where you are safe and secure. If you are not
safe and secure here, you have to find another home”. One woman realised that, “it was hard
for me to admit that the country I longed for does not exist anymore. My beloved country has
completely changed; it is gone and to a certain extent I am now stateless”. Some commented
that they would never forget South Africa and even though they could not cut off their roots, they could look back with fond memories. One participant reiterated that she missed certain things, but that the problems in South Africa remained unchanged. Hennie said that “many South Africans do not realise how things have deteriorated in South Africa” and Rudi believed that, “people have a false sense of safety as they don’t notice the subtle signs of increasing danger”. One woman confirmed that, “looking back now, having armed guards and living in a gated community was a weird way to live”.

Return visits also urged immigrants to review and reconsider their reasons for and the wisdom of their decision to emigrate from South Africa. A person who had struggled to make the final decision said that she wanted things in South Africa to get better and better with time, instead of deteriorating like the rest of Africa. However, she admitted that when things were going backwards it was easier to feel relieved about no longer living in South Africa. She had therefore opted to hold on to some South African ties and return for short visits to confirm that immigration was the right decision. At the time of the interview she stated that she had no burning desire to return to South Africa permanently as she did not want to live in such a violent society. A father said that there was enough “good” in South Africa to survive, and that the country could serve as an example for other African countries. He felt a bit sad that he was “sitting on the outside” and missing out on the opportunity to be part of effecting change in South Africa. His teenage son said he would not mind living in South Africa again as he enjoyed the sunny climate.

Two participants recommended that people should ask themselves whether the reasons that had motivated them to immigrate had changed, or had perhaps worsened. One person said that she had reminded herself why she had immigrated and “that’s that”. An older participant commented that she had become too scared to drive a car in South Africa. The woman whose friend had been shot said she knew why they had come to New Zealand, and
because she was adamant they were not going back, she had never considered it as an option. She explained: “We are grateful and will always thank God for letting us get out of South Africa”. The father who had experienced a highjack attempt felt they had good reasons for leaving South Africa and they were “sticking to the process”. His New Zealand-born wife said she loved South Africa, but would not choose to live there again as it was “too hard”. Four families, who had been in New Zealand for between 16 and 19 years, felt that they had made the right decision to immigrate and stated that they definitely did not wish to live in South Africa again. One couple, who had immigrated nine years before, said that even though they missed their family in South Africa, they would not return. Three participants expressed their appreciation for New Zealand and said that they were happy living here. One family said that they enjoyed the relative safety of New Zealand and were thankful for the level of care offered by the government. They felt that they had made the choice to live here and that their place was in New Zealand. One woman mentioned how pleasant it was to breathe in the nice, clean air of New Zealand after returning from South Africa.

Re-migration

Two families who had relocated to New Zealand were not sure whether they would stay. Despite difficulties, one woman thought that since she had decided to come to New Zealand she would “stick it out” and start over again. After seven years they concluded that even though South Africa offered opportunities, these were easier to obtain in New Zealand. Their parents had considered moving to New Zealand to join them, and would probably do so if they were invited to live with them or other family members in New Zealand. However, as the family might not remain in New Zealand permanently, they were reluctant to ask their parents to move. Their son loved New Zealand and they did not want to relocate until he had finished school in about four years. This family was happy to stay in New Zealand for the
time being and were not making any specific plans to move back to South Africa. Another family “kept the back door open” for returning to South Africa, but despite workplace difficulties found that after three years they had mixed feelings about returning to South Africa to be with their daughter. They loved living in their coastal town, and wanted to stay on in New Zealand to find out if this was the place for them. Reflecting on their decision to immigrate, families agreed that leaving South Africa had been a big and an extremely difficult decision. After a period in New Zealand, some participants were still “in two minds” and once more weighed up factors in South Africa versus New Zealand to decide whether they would stay in New Zealand, or make definite plans to return to South Africa. This resulted in one woman feeling “stuck” between South Africa and New Zealand, which led to her returning to South Africa three times during a ten-year period before finalising her immigration. Emotionally letting go of her friendship ties in South Africa and marrying a Kiwi had made it easier for her to stay in New Zealand.

One couple, who had decided to go back to South Africa after three years, said that returning had been a “deep and complex issue”. Even when the time drew closer to leave, the husband had said that he was “unpredictable” and that there was still a small chance that he would change his mind about returning to South Africa. A factor that contributed to their return was that they “kept the back door open” so that it would be possible to return to South Africa. Their “back-up” plan, in the event of things going wrong in New Zealand, was to bring enough money to buy return tickets and “not cutting off” all their options in South Africa. However, his wife found it difficult having their household goods in storage and living with the “bare necessities”. She decided that they either had to move all their belongings to New Zealand, or return to South Africa so that she could have access to it. There was consensus among the South African immigrant community in New Zealand that one cannot stand with one foot in South Africa and one foot in New Zealand. If people
immigrated with the notion that they were coming “to look things over”, they would probably return with the conviction that they had tried their best and that it had just not worked out. Settled immigrants agreed that being committed was one of the most important factors required for successful immigration. One family concluded that newcomers sometimes did not fit in and were destined to fail, irrespective of the amount of help offered, as they had the wrong mindset and expectations.

When a return migration to South Africa was being considered, the push and pull factors of both countries were weighed up against one another to reach a conclusion. Factors that motivated people to remain in New Zealand centred on family relationships and marriage, and having permanent residency and satisfactory employment. Immigrants who already had family members living in New Zealand, particularly elderly parents, or had considered bringing their parents over were more likely to stay in New Zealand. Some found that parents living in New Zealand were pressurising them to stay, which caused conflict in the family. A father, who was still living in South Africa, told his son that it was better for him to remain in New Zealand even though he had initially been against their immigration. A factor that added to this family’s ambivalence was that they loved the coastal region in New Zealand where they had bought a home. They had made good friends among the South African immigrant community in New Zealand, and some of these friends had tried their utmost to convince them to stay in New Zealand. Their friends argued that they would encounter the same problems upon their return as what had motivated them to leave. They were also concerned about their safety. They felt sorry and sad that their friends were leaving and said they would miss them, but they respected their decision because it was their lives and their choice to make. They decided to let them go with their love and blessing, and would remain friends with them. A female friend said “as long as they don’t forget us, I’m happy for
them to return to South Africa. I just hope they will stay alive so that they are able to come back to New Zealand”.

Some of the original push factors that had motivated people to leave South Africa, as well as financial limitations, had contributed to immigrants remaining in New Zealand. A family who had considered a return migration was unsure of what was happening with South Africa’s political system. People who had returned to South Africa on holiday mentioned that they had to watch their children all the time, and because they had become used to the level of safety in New Zealand it would be hard for them if they returned. They had also adopted the more laid-back lifestyle and dress code of New Zealand, and thought it would be difficult getting used to the scrutiny and critical comments of friends and family in South Africa again. Some South African immigrants, who had adjusted less successfully and were unhappy in New Zealand, were forced to stay as they only had enough money to immigrate once. Other families thought that they could not return as they would be unable to start over financially “from scratch” in South Africa. They had sold their homes and vehicles, and brought all their money to New Zealand. There were also more obstacles in South Africa for finding employment than when they had left. After receiving a letter from the South African government, one person realised that if he returned to his previous employer he could be placed anywhere in South Africa. The conclusion was that without a house, a car and a suitable job they would forever remain tourists in South Africa.

No participants reported any specific push factors for leaving New Zealand, but provided insight into the acculturation difficulties of newcomers who fail to settle. One participant believed that people’s reasons for leaving South Africa had influenced their adaptation to New Zealand. He said that people often felt that they had been forced to leave South Africa because of a lack of job security or the political situation, and as a result, many South Africans focused on what they had lost by leaving South Africa. The conclusion was
that if you kept looking back, you were “facing the wrong direction”, and you would thus remain unsettled and might as well return. One woman said that if you did not adapt, you would either die or return to South Africa. She observed that many people “could not handle it” and those who had enough money ran back to South Africa. Some South Africans were unwilling to manage domestic chores without assistance. Men who had been used to a title, their own office and a secretary at work, sometimes could not cope with the hands on, “primitive kind of equality” in New Zealand. One settled immigrant voiced her annoyance with South African immigrants who no longer wanted to live in South Africa. They had been received by New Zealand and had been given another place to live, but had reciprocated by criticising everything and not having a single good thing to say about New Zealand. For some marital couples, different pull factors and rates of acculturation had hindered settlement. One participant knew a couple that had returned to South Africa three times, because the husband wanted to stay and the wife wanted to return. One family could not make things work in New Zealand, and felt that they had made the biggest mistake of their lives leaving South Africa as they had used up all their life savings to come to New Zealand. Another family, who initially did not have the option to return for financial reasons, had felt after seven years that they were financially able to go back if anything should happen to family in South Africa. One participant found that an existing health condition that had deteriorated significantly in New Zealand, had improved considerably after returning to South Africa.

Immigrants who had been in New Zealand from three to seven years reported on their sense of isolation from family, ongoing homesickness and concerns about their ageing parents in South Africa. One person decided that he would return as soon as things settled in South Africa. Parents with married children in South Africa found the separation particularly difficult, resulting in parents and children pressurising one another in an effort to reunite. Some adult children had wanted to follow their own path and had become rebellious when
they felt that their parents had resorted to “emotional blackmail”. Those who had a close-knit circle of friends, had been romantically involved, or had a spouse with a successful business had been unwilling to leave South Africa. The sense of separation had become more problematic once grandchildren had been born, and grandmothers in particular did not want to lose out on spending time with their grandchildren. Immigrants with ageing parents commented on their parents developing more illnesses, being on more medication and looking more frail and fragile after each visit. One man said that the last time he had phoned home, his father had been lying down and had been too ill to speak to him. He was hoping that his father would be well enough to fetch them at the airport and help them settle in after returning to South Africa. Particularly those without siblings in South Africa felt that they could not leave their parents to cope on their own, and were wondering what they were going to do with them. Returning to South Africa would give them the time to make a thorough assessment of their parents’ future needs, and attempt to organise sufficient care for them.

One woman said that she or her sister, who had also been living in New Zealand, might “make the sacrifice” to return to South Africa to care for her parents. She was hoping that her husband would agree to her returning to South Africa, while he and their children remained in New Zealand. Another woman, whose mother had initially encouraged them to emigrate from South Africa owing to safety concerns, could not wait for them to return after they had decided that they wanted to go back. She believed that her mother had realised what it was like to live without her child in South Africa, and she had also realised what it was like to be without her mother in New Zealand.

Important factors that had led to return migration were people’s frustration about waiting for permanent residency approval or being unhappy in their work environment, coupled with the belief that South Africa had something better on offer. One person had found it difficult to adjust to the disrespectful and aggressive behaviour of New Zealand
children, while another had found it stressful not being valued as a competent and experienced professional in New Zealand. He was reluctant to struggle again at his age to prove his worth. Despite friends in New Zealand believing that if he tried harder and was more patient, he could have found alternative employment, he had resigned and decided to explore employment options in South Africa. Before he had left South Africa, a number of employers had been keen to employ him, but he had declined as he had already decided to emigrate. He had approached a company in South Africa that had previously offered him a position and informed them that he was available again. The company had made him “an offer he could not refuse”, and he had been promptly re-employed. He stated that he would have to get up to speed again when he returned to South Africa as he had become “a bit rusty”. He commented on how pleasant it had been returning to a company with colleagues with whom he had grown up, and with whom he had studied and worked for a number of years. He appreciated that in South Africa he was valued and respected, and hence did not need to prove himself. Some of his friends were also happy to hear that he had decided to return to South Africa. What had made returning seem like the “easier route” was that they still had a “whole life” in South Africa, including their family home, most of their money and their pension funds. They also believed that the Lord had been opening doors for them to return to South Africa. They felt that “Somebody” was looking after them, and that there must be a reason why they had been unable to sell their house in South Africa.

This couple, who had decided to return to South Africa after about three years, reported that the move to New Zealand had been more difficult than moving back to South Africa as they only had to arrange a few things for their return. However, they acknowledged that a return migration would cost a lot of money, which was confirmed by another person who had migrated back and forth between the two countries a few times. Despite a return migration being easier in some respects, it was not without complications and adaptation
difficulties. The returning couple had rented out their home in South Africa with the option to buy, which had not been taken up by the tenants during their absence. However, once they had planned to return to South Africa their tenants had decided that they wanted to buy the house, but it was too late by then. It transpired that their tenants were enjoying the house so much that they did not want to move out. The tenants had also become overly involved with the couple’s parents in South Africa, and had phoned their parents to ask why they had to move out. The next door neighbour in South Africa had also sent nasty e-mails to the couple in New Zealand to find out what was going on with their rental home. Upon their return, the husband would have to start working again immediately. However, his wife who had been used to being employed full time would not be working immediately after their return. She had experienced considerable health problems in New Zealand and had been considering whether work-related stress was a contributing factor. She had to decide whether she should pursue a different career in South Africa.

Immigrants, who had decided to return to South Africa, went through another adaptation process upon their return. One man, who had resorted to pumping petrol in New Zealand, had been offered a lucrative position with the large company he used to work for in South Africa and they were prepared to pay for his relocation. The South African immigrant community warned him about the details of the job offer and the eagerness of the company to recruit him. The family packed up everything and returned to South Africa, only to find that the responsibilities of the job had changed completely in their absence. One couple reported that because about half of the New Zealand population (two million people) lived in Pretoria, they felt that the city was like an ant’s nest with not enough breathing space after living in a small coastal town in New Zealand. They said that the crowded nature of their surroundings had been one of the reasons why they had preferred to stay at home. After experiencing considerable problems at work in New Zealand, the husband had enjoyed working for a
South African organisation where he had been in the company of “his own people”.

However, he was still on the lookout for job options in New Zealand, and was hoping to receive another job offer that would allow them to return to New Zealand.

Therefore, despite returning to South Africa after immigrating to New Zealand, this family may decide to return to New Zealand after a number of years. Prior to their return they stated that they liked New Zealand, and that it was a beautiful and wonderful place. They felt that New Zealand was a different country from South Africa, and that they had many good experiences here. They emphasised that they wanted to return to New Zealand at some stage to continue their lives and retire here. Therefore, they did not “want to break down what they had built up” in New Zealand and, similar to when they left South Africa, they were keeping the “back door open” for returning to New Zealand. They had decided to rent out their family home in New Zealand, and to keep their New Zealand dollars in a New Zealand bank to have a “home base” to return to. Because they had made good friends in New Zealand, they would have a temporary place to stay upon their return if their house was still being rented out.

Their first option about six years after returning was to move between New Zealand and South Africa, spending equal time in both countries. A further option was to sell their house in South Africa and make New Zealand their home base as they could stay with family while living in South Africa. They had left New Zealand a few days after obtaining their permanent resident visa that allowed multiple entries into New Zealand. This meant that there were no conditions placed on them leaving and returning to New Zealand, and both parents and their adult daughter could return in ten years’ time if they wished to do so. They were hoping that their daughter, who had returned before them to marry in South Africa, might feel differently once the grandchildren had been born. The young couple might want to raise their children in a better environment, and might see the benefits of coming to New Zealand. Hence, they might bring their daughter, her husband and the grandchildren with them to New Zealand. If
their parents were still alive at the time, they might also want to come along to New Zealand. They emphasised that at their age they would not consider immigrating to another country, and had no intention of using New Zealand as a stepping stone to gain entry into Australia. A man in his early fifties also said that at his age he could only “do the immigration process once” as he did not ever “want to endure it again”. His wife thought that if her daughter immigrated and set up home somewhere else far away from them she might consider moving again, but her husband indicated that he would be unwilling to accompany her.

Yet, other families did consider onward migration from New Zealand to a different country. The family who had migrated from South Africa via the United Kingdom believed that if they were struggling in New Zealand and had to leave, it would be a much bigger decision to return to South Africa than returning to the United Kingdom. In addition, the New Zealand-born mother was eager to return to the United Kingdom. The family, whose elderly parents had thought of immigrating to New Zealand as well, were unsure whether they would stay in New Zealand, return to South Africa or immigrate elsewhere, such as Australia. They noted that other South Africans who had left for Australia initially had complained about the heat, but once they had started making good money they had no further complaints about their life in Australia. This family explained that they now had the “travelling bug”, and would like to move to another country before their fifties when they would be “too old to go places”. They were unsure where they would end up and had an attitude of “wait and see what happens” in terms of job opportunities, which was similar to the attitude and circumstances that had brought them to New Zealand. Once their children had grown up, they would consider their options for an Overseas Experience (the big OE) or living elsewhere after finishing college (high school). In the meantime, the family was planning a holiday to Australia to do some exploring and fact finding. They concluded that if they decided to move
countries again, they would be better prepared as they were much wiser after their first immigration experience.

*Settlement and growth*

The criteria for achieving success in a new country were different for everyone. Andrew stated that “you always strive for better; are we better off this year than what we were last year, are we making progress, can we change or are we just doing the same things over and over again?” One person commented that the adaptation process had not been easy, but after eight years she was extremely happy and counted her blessing every day. A family that had immigrated about eight and a half years previously said that they were doing something different in New Zealand, and that they were getting on with life and were content with where they were. A couple who had been in New Zealand for nearly 18 years stated that they had “assimilated well”, and that they were stable and had found a place for themselves in New Zealand. Participants reported that they had become self-sufficient in their work, home and social environments. The couple, who had bought a business franchise after being unable to find employment, thought it had worked out well in the end; instead of being employees, others were now working for them. They had convinced two other South African families to become franchisees as well, and they were also quite satisfied with their business ventures. Yet, in South Africa this couple had not viewed themselves as “business people”, and had not believed that they could ever run a business.

Some families felt they had been “spoilt” in South Africa by having the help of a regular domestic worker, but in New Zealand they had to get used to do everything by themselves. Some embraced the Kiwi “Do It Yourself” (DIY) culture, by taking on building work or modernising their properties by installing new light fittings, new blinds and digging out a new parking space. One man took pride in his wife’s expert skills with paint removal
and organising new tiles for their home, instead of relying on a builder. She reciprocated by stating that in New Zealand her husband had become a good cook. One woman found that after about 18 years, she had regained her assertiveness and was no longer so hesitant to speak her mind. Another woman, whose prized belongings were stored in South Africa, realised that her previous sense of status and importance that had been based on her belongings fell away in New Zealand. She concluded that if her guests were unduly bothered by her haphazard collection of crockery and therefore did not wish to remain friends, it would probably be for the best. A family commented that their son, who had immigrated at the age of 21, had been living independently and enjoyed travelling for work purposes. Two couples were convinced that if they had to move again, they would be better prepared as they were “wiser” about the process. Andrew concluded that, “it doesn’t matter where you came from, or the way things were done there. Here you must fight your own battles, and if you succeed you know that you have accomplished something”.

As immigrants became more settled they started realising that they were adding value to their new country, and that they wanted to help others by offering practical assistance, information and support. Two people felt that they had made a contribution to New Zealand society by having their own businesses, and by being involved in the activities of their respective churches. One man said that he had worked for a number of years on a large scientific project in New Zealand, and now wanted to help people in a different way. A family reported that because of the kindness of a New Zealander who had helped them on arrival, they had changed their outlook on reaching out, and providing assistance and accommodation to other newcomers. One woman said if she knew South African immigrants were coming, she would be happy to meet them at the airport, and help to familiarise them and find their feet, as she thought it would make things much easier for them. Another woman had a contact in Auckland who referred people who would be living in Wellington to
her, and they rented out two bedrooms on the bottom floor of their home to new arrivals. Most people stayed from three to eight months, and the participant became quite involved with these families, for instance, one little girl had started called her “granny”. Another family had a few people knocking on their door for help, and they had ended up helping two families to settle. A number of settled immigrants kept a stock of household items that they lent out to new arrivals if they had not brought their household goods with them, or were waiting for their shipping container to arrive.

Some participants reached out in friendship to others, or initiated group activities among the South African immigrant group. One man had provided support to a friend who was divorced and did not have many friends in New Zealand. He was willing to be telephoned on a daily basis as he thought his friend needed someone to talk to as an emotional release. A woman said that her own difficulties after immigration had made her empathetic towards the struggles of newcomers. She was willing to go to their homes, listen to their problems and provide support, while maintaining confidentiality. She observed that these people experienced a roller coaster of emotions as they talked about their experiences, and that they used plenty of her tissues. Another woman had done Lifeline counselling for a while. Two families had taken the initiative to organise regular group get-togethers, such as a braais (South African barbeque) or outings to restaurants. These functions maintained a sense of connectedness in the South African immigrant group, and helped newcomers to make new contacts and establish friendships. When asked about their reason for participating in this research project, most stated that they wanted to offer others the benefit of their knowledge to enable them to cope better with immigration and settlement in New Zealand. One person was hoping to prevent others from having to experience the same hardship he had suffered. A New Zealand man wanted to provide his personal insights about meeting, sharing a flat and
marrying a South African woman as his life partner, as he thought their story could provide a wealth of different information.

One person said that one’s life was always a “two-possibility situation”, indicating the difficult choice immigrants had to make between staying in South Africa and coming to New Zealand. A man said that if they had known in South Africa what they knew now, they may have never embarked on this journey as they would have been too scared to take on a business venture in New Zealand. However, his wife was convinced that she would have made the decision to immigrate again, because she was too scared to live in South Africa. Despite their misgivings, people realised that immigration represented a new future where everything would change. Andries explained that, “immigration involves radical changes to your frame of reference, as well as your psyche and your soul. You encounter unfamiliar situations and face a new future; regardless of how you deal with it, you have to adapt or you will perish”. He added that irrespective of whether your encounters were good or bad in a new country, it would add to your life experience.

Some participants were willing to reflect on the challenges and ambiguities of their journey, whereas others appeared to avoid thinking about their immigration experience and what they had learnt. One woman commented that immigration was more about the people than the place, which emphasised the importance of relationships. Some reported that they viewed their own culture in a new light, for instance, that South Africans in New Zealand were “the noisy people” during get-togethers, similar to other immigrant groups in South Africa. They also reported an increased tolerance and compassion for other cultural groups in South Africa, as well as immigrant groups in New Zealand in terms of poverty, cultural ignorance, and loss of identity and language. It was often difficult to predict which newcomers would settle successfully, but participants felt strongly that even those who faced difficulties could adapt well if they had the right mindset. It was vital to focus on making the
most of opportunities, and putting energy into what could be created in a new country. A few stressed the importance of not continuing to look back at what has been lost, but instead trying to move forward. Jill cautioned that “Lot’s wife turned around and looked back and she turned into a pillar of salt”.

Participants were asked to reflect on the story of their immigration journey and Louise believed that, “it is a process of loss and dying of many things; you just have to work through it and for some people it may take years”. One man commented that life is a book with many chapters and that past chapters in South Africa shaped future chapters in New Zealand. Another person confirmed that it was an ongoing journey. “Vrystaat” (pseudonym) called his journey “Chicken or Pioneer?” indicating his retrospective questioning whether immigration had been the right decision, even though he felt it had been the best decision at the time of migration. Aletta felt like a “stranger in a strange land”, but added that one cannot remain a stranger forever. Someone, who had felt pressurised to immigrate, had experienced her journey as “the long, dark night”. Andrew emphasised his philosophy of “don’t look back”, while Jaimie reflected on the results of her multiple journeys across the globe: “Identity unknown - home is where the heart is”. Her brother, Harvey, suggested that she could depict her story with a picture of the pieces of the world coming together. He would illustrate the book of his own journey with a picture of him as a small child in South Africa on the front cover and the way he looked now in New Zealand on the back cover. Fred thought that he would like to record the relocation of his family from a man’s viewpoint, while his wife reflected on the difference in cultural habits by calling her story “to braai or to barbeque?” One family called their story: “Our journey from Africa to Kiwi land”, with a picture of a Springbok on the front cover and “something Kiwi” on the back cover. Jo said his father had written his memoirs before his death, and he would call his own book “the wanderings of a modern day Jew” to illustrate the experiences of being a Jew in the different countries where
they had lived and travelled. His son suggested that he illustrate the book cover with a picture of David and a travel trail across the globe. His wife, Annabella, who had been born in New Zealand and had lived with the family in the United Kingdom and South Africa, pictured her travels as that of a woman looking out at the world in front of her, consisting of hills, mountains, lakes and oceans without referring to a particular country. Three participants mentioned that they had considered writing and publishing a book about their immigration experience. One had already started writing in South Africa, but she had lost all of it when her laptop had been stolen. Others had started writing in New Zealand and one had had discussions with a publisher about the title of her book.

One couple concluded that their coming to New Zealand had been from God and that their lives had changed for the better. Even if they had known about all the hardships and loneliness that they would have to go through, they would do it again if they had the choice. A couple who had immigrated in 1994 said that “South Africans have forged a path, and found a place for themselves in New Zealand”. A man who had left South Africa a year later said the following: “I’ve moved on, and I am well settled. I’m very much at home here”. The challenges they had faced in New Zealand have encouraged people to explore alternatives and start new ventures. Two families had started their own businesses, and during the recent economic downturn, some had been exploring new business opportunities. One woman had decided to change her career and had embarked on further studies in healthcare. One long-term immigrant had initiated an Afrikaans radio programme that had continued for about nine years, and had been joined by another immigrant woman later on. Because it was initially a live broadcast it was hard work and kept them extremely busy, but they thoroughly enjoyed it. The woman who had joined later had also created her own radio programme in English as she needed something meaningful to occupy her time. She asked God to indicate if someone was listening to her “words of wisdom”, and she found it gratifying when a young boy at
church commented on the broadcast and what it meant for his life. She had also published an Afrikaans book with similar contents as her radio broadcasts. Her husband commented that she was a good writer, but just needed to believe in herself. She admitted that she would never have done radio broadcasts or published a book if she had remained in South Africa.

The participants concluded that life is a never-ending journey, and many contemplated the next part of the process. One family was eager to travel, and was waiting to see if their children would stay in New Zealand or go overseas after finishing school. Despite enjoying New Zealand, they wanted to move to another country, depending on “what comes up”. A woman in her forties, who was happily married to her Kiwi husband, was exploring in vitro fertilisation to start a family. Two couples were close to retirement, and were looking at their options for living in a retirement community. Andries was glad to have more time available after the completion of a major project at work, and was eager to pursue new interests and social activities with his wife. He said that the illustration for the book of his life journey would be of two people walking hand in hand towards their future, and said fortunately they did not know what the future held for them.

Factors influencing the immigration process

The thematic network of the various factors that influenced the immigration process was depicted in figure 4 in this chapter. Themes extracted from participant narratives (Attride-Stirling, 2001) in relation to the global theme: “Ecological factors influence the immigration process”, clustered around seven organising themes: (1) individual; (2) family; (3) social; (4) cultural; (5) physical environment; (6) economic, and (7) political and government. Each of these organising themes was further subdivided into basic themes, which will be described below.
Figure 4. Thematic network of factors that influence the immigration process.
Individual factors

Individual factors that had an impact on adjustment after immigration were age, gender, level of education and marital status.

Age

The age at which a person immigrates can affect his or her ability to let go of the country of their birth and to adapt to the host society. As one participant commented, “a person of thirty will tell a different story than a person of seventy two”. The age of participants at the time of immigration varied from seven to 63 years, and they were divided into five groups to describe their experiences of immigration: (1) children, (2) adolescents, (3) young adults, (4) adults, and (5) older adults. Two participants had moved from South Africa to the United Kingdom when they were five and eight years old, and had relocated to New Zealand at the ages of nine and 11 respectively. Another young person had emigrated from South Africa to New Zealand at the age of seven. Children between the ages of five and nine did not remember much about events surrounding the family’s emigration, and one boy said that he did not remember much about South Africa because they left about seven years ago. His memories appeared to be sense based as he distinctly remembered the smell of New Zealand on the day of his arrival and that his parents had bought him M and M’s (candy). The young woman, who had immigrated at the age of 11, made the observation that New Zealand was a great place for children to grow up because it was not burdened by the security risks of South Africa. As a result, children had a lot more freedom in New Zealand than in South Africa while growing up. She believed that a restrictive environment like South Africa did not have such a great impact on young children as it was commonplace for them to play in their back gardens, and they had to be picked up and dropped off by adults.
There was a general perception that children younger than 12 viewed relocation as an adventure and a new place to go, and hence adapted more easily after immigration than adolescents. Jamie explained that, “the younger you are the easier it is to move, because you don’t really know what is going on”. She added that, “even if young children are not enjoying it, they don’t really understand why and just get on with things”. Aletta recalled that Elisabeth Eybers had felt envious when she had seen her child playing with her Dutch friends soon after their arrival in the Netherlands, and concluded that her child had adapted more easily than she had. Apparently later on, when the child spoke of her own immigration experience, Eybers realised that her child had found it harder to adapt than she had. Similarly, South African immigrant parents were also under the impression that their children had adapted easily. One woman who had opened her home to newcomers often did babysitting for parents. During conversations with her, immigrant children had revealed that they found it extremely difficult to adapt. These children often felt they could not tell their parents about their adjustment difficulties as they observed that their parents were struggling as well. At school, Afrikaans children initially could not understand what teachers were saying, but with repetition eventually “figured it out”. One family had expected their oldest daughter to experience difficulties as she was more introverted. However, their youngest daughter, who was more spontaneous, underwent a complete personality change and became extremely introverted as she experienced more adaptation difficulties than her older sister. Some children, who had more severe or ongoing immigration-related difficulties, had required medical or psychological treatment.

One participant, who had immigrated as a teenager, and two participants, who had been teenagers at the time of the interview, gave their views on the immigration experience of adolescents. The families of three other adolescent immigrants, who did not participate in the research, reported on their observed adjustment. Jaimie, who had moved to New Zealand
from the United Kingdom when she was nearly 12 years old, said that she remembered more about the move than when they had relocated from South Africa to the United Kingdom at the age of nine. Being close to 12 years old, she was at an age when she was starting to make long-term friends. One family was concerned that their 14-year-old daughter, who was in her first year in high school, would find the transition hard as she was against their emigration and had good friends in South Africa. A female participant, who had frequent discussions with teenagers, believed that adolescents from 14 to 15 years old might experience more sorrow than their parents as they missed their friends and peer groups. Jaimie added that, from 17 onwards you know that you are leaving your friends behind for good. Some adolescents experienced considerable hardship after immigration and a number of them required treatment for immigration-related psychological problems. In contrast, two siblings aged 14 and 16 years, were eased into their adolescent social circle by teenagers of the Kiwi family they initially lived with. The 16-year old boy was “not in with the cool crowd” in South Africa and was keen to make a new start in New Zealand. Both these adolescents befriended Kiwi and South African teenagers, were accepted by their peer group, and adapted well to their school and social environments. Jaimie, who as a young child had relocated twice between the United Kingdom and South Africa and had also travelled extensively, was able to adapt to New Zealand and make good friends again.

Two people had been in the young adult age group (20-30 years) at immigration, and one participated in this study. A young woman, whose parents had immigrated first, had extended visits to New Zealand during her late twenties as she struggled to reconcile the close relationship she had with her parents with the friendship bonds she had in South Africa. A young man, who had immigrated with his parents at the age of 21, had initially found it difficult to leave his friends behind. However, his parents reported that in New Zealand he had proceeded to find employment, make friends and live independently shortly after
immigration. Ray, who was married to a South African partner, stated that people in their late twenties have the life experience to realise that it is not the end of the world when things go wrong and that things will not stay that way.

Ten participants were between the ages of 30 and 50 when they immigrated to New Zealand. Some older participants in this age group found that their immigration options were more limited owing to age restrictions imposed by immigration legislation. One person commented that most Afrikaans-speaking South Africans, who were still young enough, preferred to immigrate to Australia. Most believed that the older one becomes, the harder it is to manage the trauma of immigration and to make new friends. As a result, one couple in their late forties said that they would not consider immigrating to another country from New Zealand. They also did not enjoy the hustle and bustle of Wellington suburbs, and preferred to live in a quieter, coastal town. A man in his forties had found it difficult to adjust to his work environment as he had not wanted to go through the struggle again to prove his worth. One woman, whose life had been disrupted by family migration, found that after she had married in New Zealand, her age had counted against her when she had wanted to conceive. By contrast, a couple who had immigrated in their early forties had found it easier to leave South Africa as they no longer had close family or siblings with young children at home. The woman, who had struggled to take the final step during her late twenties and had finally decided at the age of 37 to follow her parents to New Zealand, had found that her greater maturity had helped her to cope better with the immigration and adaptation processes. Another woman, who had arrived in New Zealand at the age of 49 had been able to find employment and had integrated well socially. A couple in their mid-forties had been eager to buy property as they thought it would be an investment for their old age.

Nine participants had immigrated when they were older than 50 and at the time of conducting the interviews, 15 participants were in this age group. One couple in their fifties
commented that when they immigrated they had already gone through the process of building a life for themselves in South Africa. They had fitted out their family home to suit their requirements, and had worked their entire lives to ensure that their finances were in order for retirement. When they felt that their safety was under serious threat in South Africa, they realised that if they did not make an immediate decision they would be too old to immigrate. Since the cut-off age for Australia was 45, they concluded that New Zealand was the only option for older, Afrikaans-speaking people as they generally did not have ancestral visas for the United Kingdom. This couple felt that at their age they could only do the immigration process once and never again. Two couples found that age was a barrier for residency approval owing to the immigration points system, despite having sufficient academic qualifications and extensive work experience. To secure a work visa or obtain permanent residency, immigrants required a job offer. Older adults reported that they had more difficulties being employed and found adaptation to the working environment in New Zealand harder. Some people in their sixties still wanted to work, but after being turned down by several employers they had felt rejected and that nobody wanted them because they were too old.

After immigration, older immigrants had to start at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder again, and had to rebuild their lives step by step. They also had to recoup the financial losses of immigration, which made home ownership and paying off a mortgage challenging. One couple, who were house sitting after arrival, enjoyed the view from a beautiful, old, double-story home on a mountain vista, but climbing a hundred steps on a daily basis to reach the house was taxing. Older participants reflected on their role in New Zealand society, and some commented on the differences between South Africa and New Zealand, as well as between different cultural groups. One person believed that after a certain age people were considered too old to know anything worthwhile, and were thus no longer deemed to be
useful. He asserted that the younger generation were not interested or respectful towards the knowledge of older people. Andries illustrated this attitude via a caption he saw on a T-shirt: “Retiree, beware! Knows it all, and have plenty of time to tell you”. He concluded that older people just make themselves unpopular by trying to impart their wisdom and experience to the younger generation. Instead of forcing knowledge upon young people, it would be better to step back and let them do it their own way, and to wait for them to approach you for advice. He observed that in some countries, such as India, the wisdom of the elderly is still valued. Unlike youth from Western cultures, he found that Indian and Chinese youth in New Zealand would approach him for advice. However, older people had to get used to a role reversal when younger people would try to discourage them from undertaking certain tasks, and attempted to assist by doing things for them.

Nevertheless, the observation was made that the elderly in New Zealand had a more active role in society than in South Africa as they were more inclined to do volunteer work. In addition, retirees often joined local tour groups and participated in social and educational activities for older people. Those in their seventies could still travel if they had enough money, which became more difficult for people in their eighties and nineties owing to health problems. Older immigrant couples found that if one person had a health scare or underwent major surgery, the spouse found it difficult to care for the person without the assistance of family or long-term friends. One couple said that this had prompted them to sell their house and move to a retirement village while they still had a choice where they wanted to go, instead of waiting until later when they were frailer. At the retirement village they would be living in their “own little house”, but extra help would be available when needed, for instance, with meals. In the event of illness, they could move into a high care section where they would be taken care of until the end. However, one woman thought that her husband’s view that the next phase of their life journey was accepting that they had to go to an “old age
“home” was premature. She was not ready to leave yet and admired the independence of their neighbour, who was 92 years old and still driving her own car and living alone in her own home. Another couple expressed their admiration for an elderly friend who was still quite active and transported people to church on Sundays in her car.

A man in his seventies noticed that he often forgot people’s names, but that he was better at remembering childhood experiences. Similarly, Placido remarked that “even if you made a new life in New Zealand and shut away the memories of your earlier life in South Africa, a time will come in your life when these things will come back to you. Your time with friends and experiences you’ve had is not something that you just forget completely; it is part of you and it has uplifted you as a person”. Andries commented that the elderly have more wisdom, as they have more life experience. He spoke of a friend of theirs, who was in her nineties, and was being cared for in a retirement facility after she had a stroke. There was nothing wrong her with mentally, and she silently allowed others to talk and do things for her because it made them feel important. Despite being bedridden, she influenced those around her with her life attitude and was thus not useless to society. With her softness and prayers she affected the lives of people, and they often had tears in their eyes when she prayed for them. People felt better when they visited her, and she was regarded as “an angel”. Even though her body appeared to be useless, her spirit was much stronger and she had something useful to share. Andries concluded that it is true what the bible says: “As you get older your spirit will become stronger, as it does not reside in the brain and therefore cannot age.”

**Gender**

As far as gender was concerned, the differences between males and females were not as clearly demarcated as with age. From the immigration stories of participants it would appear that five men were the main driving force behind the immigration process, whereas
two women took the lead. Men were motivated by an advertisement in a newspaper, getting a job offer, joining a family business or for a family reunion in New Zealand. One recruitment agent from New Zealand had brought his wife along to provide information from a woman’s perspective and another man had collected extensive information during a job-seeking visit to New Zealand to put his family member’s minds at ease. However, the two women who had initiated the immigration process felt strongly that they wanted to leave South Africa because of safety concerns, and both already had a family member living in New Zealand. Two couples had decided together to immigrate after the husband had received an offer of employment in New Zealand. Even where the women had initially sown the seeds for immigration, once the decision had been finalised the men tended to direct the practicalities of the immigration process.

Men generally adapted more easily and quickly than women, particularly those who were employed, or in their own business, as they were inclined to focus all their energy on mastering the challenges and achieve success. However, in the case of one couple where the wife took the lead to immigrate, the husband had more adaptation difficulties than she did. This was partly due to him being unable to re-establish his line of business in New Zealand. On the whole, women found immigration more problematic than men and took much longer to settle in New Zealand. The main reason why women did not cope as well as men with immigration was that their entire social network was interrupted by relocation. Women preferred to have close and longstanding relationships with one another, and hence experienced the loss of friendships differently from men. Although men were inclined to surround themselves with a group of helpful acquaintances that were easier to re-establish, one man said that he missed the network of friends he had known most of his life. A common factor for both men and women that affected their ability to settle was the importance placed on family connections. Most participants reported that they found being separated from their
family extremely difficult. One man said that he would not have immigrated if his parents were still alive. Three women and one man reported that they missed their sisters who were still living in South Africa, and they were concerned about their safety. Women generally felt that if their children were married and had grandchildren, they did not want to be separated from them. One woman found her daughter’s back and forth migration between South Africa and New Zealand over a ten-year period extremely difficult. One young woman, who had immigrated when she was about 12, said that she missed family friends and cousins in South Africa, as well as the good friends the family had made while living in the United Kingdom.

A major factor that affected adaptation and settlement in New Zealand was whether South African immigrants managed to secure employment and were happy in the workplace. For both men and women, being unable to find employment affected their self-confidence and resulted in them feeling rejected and unwanted. Some were employed below their level of expertise and felt forced into doing inferior or mundane tasks, which limited their career development. Men who were in senior positions in the South African workforce, and those with professional qualifications and years of work experience, often had the most difficulty adjusting to the culture and politics of the New Zealand work environment. In South Africa, they were well known and respected for their seniority and knowledge, and were financially rewarded for their hard work and leadership. Hence they felt that they were valued employees. In New Zealand they found the level of invalidation at work stressful, and despite working hard to prove their worth, it was never good enough. When employers found excuses not to award salary increases or pay out the bonuses stipulated in their contracts, it reinforced their belief of not being valued professionally and “just being a pawn” for employers to exploit.

Not being valued and respected had a significant detrimental effect on these employees, and it had a major impact on their well-being. Being expected to communicate
with others during the execution of team projects and then to be reprimanded for being too direct or outspoken left these men with a paradoxical dilemma that could not be resolved, which further undermined their confidence. Women, however, appeared to experience more problems in the workplace in terms of office politics and overt prejudice against South Africans. Some were interrogated or “told off” by colleagues about events that had occurred during apartheid. Women had a tendency to keep quiet to avoid an escalation of conflict, but this sometimes led to a continuance of workplace bullying. In contrast, men addressed conflict more assertively and directly, which meant that disagreements were usually short-lived and quickly resolved. One woman, who started a business with her husband after being turned down by employers, found that she could not keep up with the physical demands in their business, which made her wonder whether she had become so useless that she could not even manage a relatively low-skilled job.

Men and women tended to differ in the way they managed their memories of South Africa and the resultant emotions and sense of grief. For one woman, a history of loss, and her tendency to cling to what was familiar compounded her mourning process. She was hesitant to immigrate as she was scared of the unknown and preferred her “safe zone”. She also did not think she was the “adventurous type”. She had lost her mother as a very young child, her father in her twenties and her stepmother while contemplating immigration. Hence, she found leaving her sister behind in South Africa fairly traumatic. During interviews, women were inclined to reminisce about the good things in South Africa, and expressed a sense of nostalgia. They experienced a deeper sense of loss and mourning regarding South Africa, which was more abstract and generalised than that of men. Men, however, had a more concrete and practical approach. As a rebuttal during interviews, some husbands focused on the exceptions to their spouses’ nostalgic views of South Africa. For instance, when one woman stated that she had been close friends with most of her neighbours in South Africa,
her husband pointed out that the interaction with one person in their block of flats was limited to saying “hello”. He preferred to focus on the positive aspects of New Zealand and reminded his wife that they also had good relationships with their Kiwi neighbours, who assisted them when they were locked out of their house. By focusing on the practical benefits of having good neighbours, he failed to recognise that what she needed was to be able to drop in for a cup of tea and a chat after a shopping trip. During interviews, some men appeared anxious and uncomfortable about the distress expressed by their spouses, and this “here and now” approach could have been a deflection strategy. Men confirmed that they do not usually talk about difficult emotional issues, even though some of them also experienced a sense of loss and “missing out on things” in South Africa that made it harder to adapt to New Zealand. Women noticed that boys and men tended to hide their emotional pain or responded with humour, anger or aggression. In contrast, women were inclined to talk about their feelings, and Afrikaans girls in particular would confide in their mothers. Women expressed their emotional pain more openly, and responded to loss and grief with sadness and crying.

Men tended to be future focused and were generally more positive about their move to New Zealand. However, it was interesting that the two women who had prompted their families to immigrate “did the move more wholeheartedly”. One woman rescinded her South African passport in favour of New Zealand citizenship, whereas her husband, who still had strong attachments to South Africa, preferred dual citizenship. The other woman was prepared to relocate again to be close to her grandchildren, but her husband stated that he “would not be going with her”. These two women, who had both left South Africa for safety reasons, were still concerned about their personal safety in New Zealand. One woman still checked that doors at home were locked, even though her husband would often forget. After a youth had burgled their unlocked sleep-out at home, the other woman had become concerned
that New Zealand would eventually experience the same problems with crime as South Africa.

*Educational status*

Many South Africans who entered New Zealand were granted permanent residency on the basis of their qualifications, and their profession being on the Long Term Skilled Shortage List. Among the families who were interviewed, all the adults had completed Matric (Standard 10) in South Africa. One young person was a “well-qualified” researcher and the other a qualified beauty therapist. One person mentioned that she had attended a training college in South Africa and a young man had done a Damelin course. Four were teachers and had either a BA degree or a diploma in education. One was a chartered accountant with two degrees in commerce, and another person had a university diploma in the information technology field. Three people had trade-related qualifications and two had technical certificates. One person had an honours degree in engineering and another had a Master of Arts degree. A scientist had a number of honours and master’s degrees, as well as a doctorate. At first glance it would appear that the level of education of South African immigrants was similar to that of mainstream New Zealand society. However, some participants believed that South Africans were generally better qualified than the average Kiwi, and therefore posed a threat as they were afraid that South Africans would take their jobs.

*Marital status*

Participants agreed that it was harder for single people to immigrate, especially if they did not have any friends or family in New Zealand. However, most found that immigration was “hard on a marriage” and asserted that your marriage must be strong when you immigrate. Five of the married participants had been married before, and had adult children
from their previous marriages. Four participants were divorced, and one woman’s husband had died when her child was a toddler. From their current marriages, three couples had adult children and three couples had children who were of school-going age at the time of immigration. Two couples married in New Zealand and had no children from these marriages: one had immigrated with her South African fiancée and another had married a Kiwi in New Zealand. One South African man, who had immigrated with his young family to New Zealand, had married his Kiwi wife in the United Kingdom.

When it came to decision making about immigration, only two couples appeared to reach the conclusion at the same time. In the case of seven couples, one of the partners had been more eager to immigrate, while the other had been reluctant to make the move. Four men had been motivated by job offers and one by reuniting with his family, and two women by fears for their safety in South Africa. Two of the husbands had made a concerted effort to allay the fears of their families about immigration and had consulted extensively with their partners before making a joint decision. One man had agreed that his wife could return to South Africa if she needed to take care of her mother. One of the reluctant immigrants had decided to relocate to be with her husband and because her son was keen to go. Another was asked by her fiancée to marry and accompany him to New Zealand. He had to make wedding arrangements shortly after arrival, while she was packing their shipping container and recovering from surgery in South Africa. At the time, she felt as if they were discussing someone else’s wedding and that she was not in the picture at all. The New Zealand born wife viewed herself as nomadic and was willing to return to New Zealand, even though she preferred living in the United Kingdom. The two men whose wives had wanted to leave South Africa because of safety fears had needed much more convincing to make the final decision. One woman regarded her husband as her friend whom she could relate and talk to, but felt that he was not listening to her safety concerns and her reasons for initially wanting to
relocate to Swaziland. Her husband was unwilling to move to Swaziland and said that if they had to relocate, New Zealand would be the logical choice because his wife’s mother and sister were already living there.

After immigration, some couples had experienced a shift in marital roles in order to manage the demands of their particular situation. In eight families, the man was the main breadwinner and was committed to finding employment in New Zealand. They took their responsibility to take care of their spouses and families seriously and were task and future oriented. Five men had managed to secure employment, but three had eventually started their own businesses after struggling to find suitable employment. One wife, who was 14 years younger than her husband, was in full-time employment while her retired husband took on part-time jobs. A husband, who was extremely unhappy in his job, had eventually resigned, and for a few months, his wife has been the breadwinner. Unemployment and financial concerns after immigration were stressful, and caused financial hardship and placed a strain on marriages. During interviews, men displayed discomfort when this matter was discussed by shuffling around in their chairs, fiddling with the recording equipment or deflecting the impact of this issue by stating redeeming factors or using humour. It would appear that these men felt ashamed that they could not find or retain employment, and that they caused distress to their families because they could not take care of them adequately. This had a negative impact on their identity and mental health. One man stated that competition regarding career and income created difficulties in marriages. Even though his wife was the “boss” at home, it would have been hard for him if he were unemployed and his wife was more qualified and earned a good income. One couple who, out of necessity, had bought a business franchise found that it put a strain on their marriage. Even thought they enjoyed spending time together during holidays, they were now together all the time in their business because they did not have a choice. The wife said she became “rattled” when her husband asked her to repeat tasks
that she had already completed, which invalidated her contribution to the business. She felt suffocated and that she needed some space.

Some traditional gender role changes and reversals occurred after immigration. One man, who was in his own business, said there were times when he was working with a broom and mop that he wondered what his deceased father would have thought of it. One couple said that initially they had found these role changes a bit strange. In South Africa, the husband had enjoyed cooking and had often done the washing up. He had also made dinner for his family on the day they had arrived in New Zealand. During the first two years in New Zealand, the wife always did the cooking. However, after seven years in New Zealand she had taken less responsibility for household chores, and her husband had taken over some of the household duties from her. He had become more “homely” and usually made breakfast for the family. The family reported that it was “not a big deal” to do household chores; everybody lent a hand to keep the house clean and tidy. If someone noticed something that needed to be done, they “just did it” automatically without feeling rushed or stressed about it. Their 14-year-old son also helped with vacuuming and washing up. Another wife reported that her husband had become a good cook in New Zealand. She, however, became skilled at mixing concrete and doing paint stripping during home renovations. One couple were used to doing their own household chores in South Africa, and continued helping each other in New Zealand.

The woman who had married her fiancée in New Zealand during her late fifties said that he did not understand that it was difficult for her to stay at the “backpackers” upon arrival. He also did not appreciate why she wanted to stay in a motel during their honeymoon when they were touring through a cold and wet South Island in a leaking Kombi. They stayed over on the farm of a colleague and slept in the kombi some distance away from the house, which meant that they had no access to a toilet. After the honeymoon, she had spent most of
the time on her own as he had worked long hours and often only returned home at 11pm. He was too busy to talk to her because he was concentrating on the completion of a large scientific project. She walked with him to work every morning and returned home alone. Sometimes she joined him at the office and wrote e-mails to South Africa while he worked. They were supposed to be newlyweds, but everybody thought they were an old married couple. In the beginning they took out their frustrations on each other as they had nobody else to talk to. Later on they realised that the underlying source of the problem was sadness and longing for the people back home.

One woman concluded that if people’s marriages were not strong, they should not even attempt to immigrate. They had had a strong marriage before immigration, but after a while in New Zealand she had started thinking that things were just too hard. Some reported that their marriages had their “ups and downs”, like all families. One man felt resentful towards his wife, who had her brother close by in New Zealand and hence adapted more easily than other family members who missed their siblings and friends in South Africa. Participants reported that they knew of five marriages that had failed within their circle of South African friends in New Zealand. Some marriages were not strong to begin with or there were tensions in the marriage prior to immigration, and couples thought that their marriages would improve after immigration. In the case of others, the implications of immigration had not been talked through before immigration. In one case, the wife could not cope with immigration, while the husband sought “a new road” for himself in New Zealand. Participants cited the example of the marriages of two couples that had ended when two people had left their partners to marry each other. This infidelity and marital breakup had a negative impact on the cohesion and companionship of their close-knit South African group. When one of the “guilty” parties attended a social function, it created a sense of discomfort as nobody knew what to say. There were also double standards because most blamed the “other
woman” for destroying these marriages. Apparently, the two people who had been deserted by their partners were better off in the end than the two who had started a new relationship and remarried. The break-up of these marriages gave people a new appreciation of their partners and reminded them to take care of their own marriages. They confirmed that marriage is not moonshine and roses, and that immigration had a significant impact on marital stability. One couple said that despite the hardships and strain on their marriage, they still loved each other and were still together. One man said that his wife was his best friend and they supported each other through thick and thin. Two couples stated that immigration had brought them closer together as they only had each other to rely upon. One woman commented on the lovely poem her husband had written for her birthday and how impressed she has been with it. He talked about looking forward to having more time on his hands to spend with her and doing new and interesting activities together.

A South African woman and her Kiwi husband provided a unique perspective on cross-cultural marriage after immigration and overcoming cultural, language and religious differences. Both provided accounts of their earlier life history, and how their paths had eventually intersected and led to marriage. Ray believed there was a psychological aspect to people’s relationships and that marriage did not just happen out of the blue. A number of experiences as a young boy had shaped his future relationships and choice of a marriage partner. As a pre-adolescent boy he had had “crushes” on two same-aged Dutch girls and thus always thought as an adult he would fall in love with someone from the Netherlands. He humorously commented that he never counted on it that Dutch people immigrated to South Africa. He believed that, “when Louise came along it was like a set of coincidences that were based on a young boy thinking about the person he is going to fall in love with and marry one day”. As a child, when Ray had heard his parents fighting and arguing, he had decided that his marriage was going to be one of discussion and not one of confrontation. He was
therefore “turned off” by a previous partner who had evoked reactions in him, similar to when his dad had argued with his mother. He felt that if people were too much alike they were unable to “be their own person”, because they would always be competing. Ray had never lived together with previous girl friends and thought he would only marry in his forties or fifties.

He met Louise for the first time when he placed an advertisement for a flatmate, and said he could tell straight away on the phone that she would be an ideal flatmate. He was happy to take her as a flatmate and they were off to a “rip-roaring start”. Ray explained that it was best policy never to have a relationship with a flatmate, because otherwise they would not stay long. However, flatmates had to be able to live together amicably under one roof. They felt relaxed and enjoyed each other’s company, and “could tell each other anything”. Slowly, over time a friendship had developed between them and they had lived as flatmates for two years. Out of the blue Louise announced that she needed to move in with her parents to help them out financially as her brother was having problems with his business. Ray recalled standing outside on the balcony with a cigarette and a cup of coffee, and having a “weird sense of loss” at the thought of her moving out. This was the first time he had an inkling that he might have “feelings” for her. He knew he was going to miss her and was hoping she would change her mind, which she did. After flatting together for another 12 months Louise once again announced that she was thinking of moving out. Ray was out on the balcony once more and wondered whether he was meant to be with her or not. After giving his feelings for her “deep thought” over the next few days he made up his mind that he was going to tell her that he loved her. However, he was fearful that he may have gotten things wrong and could make a big blunder by declaring his love. However, she may have felt something for him as well, and they could have a chance to start a relationship. He bought a big bunch of flowers and a card, and waited for her to return after attending a
training course. He did not want to “step on her thunder”, and waited for her to show him the work she had done during her course, which had emotional connotations for her. After “telling the story” behind her work, he “unleashed” his big surprise and told her that he loved her. His declaration of love absolutely floored her; she was stunned as she did not know how to react, and burst into tears. Ray said, “I thought that when I eventually have a relationship and marry, there will be a personal love story and it will be better than watching romantic encounters in a movie”.

After the excitement of the marital proposal, this couple faced the task of reconciling religious differences as Ray was Catholic and Louise was Protestant. It was important for Ray to have a nuptial mass in the Catholic Church, and Louise was happy to forego a marriage in her church. Both took their marital vows seriously, because Ray explained that if they married in the Catholic Church and got divorced, he could not remarry in the eyes of God and the church. He would thus get only one shot at marriage. After some in-depth discussions with the bishop, they were married about four years ago. According to Ray, getting engaged and married did not change their relationship, as they were still in love and felt the same way about each other as they had before. They reflected on their differences, the nature of their relationship and how they communicated. There was a six-year age gap between them, and both agreed that if Louise had met Ray when she was 20 years old they would not have been compatible as he had more life experience, and their values were different at that stage. Ray felt that when you are mentally, emotionally and spiritually mature you are more relaxed and have a broader view of things. He believed that age and maturity played a major role in the success of their relationship across the barriers of nationality and culture.

Ray asserted that there was no need for people to compromise in a marriage as it would eventually lead to the break up of the relationship. He felt strongly that if Louise had
compromised, she would no longer have been the same person he had met and fallen in love with. He stated that if people continuously had to compromise, nothing would eventually be left of their identity and one day they would look in the mirror and ask: “Who am I?” He believed that compromising was working in the wrong direction as it focused on differences, and attempted to change the other person to be acceptable and fit in with who you are. Instead, he preferred to focus on the similarities and connection that had attracted him to Louise in the first place and had led to marriage. However, he cautioned that “opposites attract, but you can’t be so different that there is no synergy between you. You must have some core values in common or otherwise it is not going to work”. He believed that you cannot change somebody, and you therefore have to love someone for who they are to allow the relationship to grow. He said that visiting South Africa and meeting Louise’s family had grounded his nonverbal “knowing” of the connection and sense of comfort he has with her.

Louise said that her marriage to Ray was the “cherry on the cake” and had facilitated her settlement in New Zealand. According to her, the cultural differences between them were not really problematic. She experienced minor frustration and annoyance when they had visitors at home, for instance, when he offered coffee to their guests, but then kept them waiting while cleaning the kitchen first. Even though she was Afrikaans, she spoke English to Ray and he managed to learn a few Afrikaans words and phrases, such as when she warned him to eat fruit before it goes vrot (rotten). When they had started going out and planned to marry, she thought that the differences between their religions did not matter. She had a naive sense that by them getting together, they would change the divergent elements of their religions on some level. They hardly ever talk about it now, but she has accepted the fundamental differences between their religions. Accepting that his faith was something he had grown up with and was part of him meant that she accepted him for who he was as a person.
Louise stated that Ray was her best friend and that he compensated for her lack of friends in New Zealand. He made all the difference in her life and made everything worthwhile. She believed that things were more tolerable if you were with the person you loved. However, she was concerned about her emotional dependence on her husband and what would happen if he was not in her life. She had a sense that all her “eggs were in one basket”. She also recognised some loss of autonomy, for instance, having less control over where they lived as a result of Ray’s work. Louise had migrated between South Africa and New Zealand several times over a ten-year period, which had disrupted her social life and emotional connections. She had married Ray at the age of 42. She had always longed for children, but had difficulties conceiving. It was a source of great sadness for her, and during periods of acute distress, she often refrained from calling Ray as she did not want to upset him at work. In-vitro fertilisation had failed and after doing much soul searching, she had started to accept that they might remain childless.

Family factors

Most participants had grown up and lived in large towns and cities, such as Johannesburg, Pretoria, Sasolburg, Springs, Pinetown, Queenstown, Kimberley, Cape Town, Port-Elizabeth, George and Pietermaritzburg. Three participants had a farming background.

Structure

Five people has been married previously and had children from their first marriages. From their current marriages, six couples had between one and four children, and four couples had no children. Four couples had children living in New Zealand as well as in other countries, three couples had children who were all living in New Zealand, and three couples had children living in South Africa. Most of these children were either married or living
independently, but three couples had children between the ages of 14 and 22 who were still living with them. One woman, who had grown up in a family with three children, said that she preferred big families as there was always someone around. She was concerned that when their two children left one day, they would have no other children to keep them company. Two couples had grandchildren in New Zealand as well as in other countries, one couple had grandchildren in New Zealand only, and two couples had grandchildren in South Africa. Eleven participants reported that both their parents were deceased, and six people had one or both parents, or a step-parent still living in South Africa. Two adult participants had one or both parents living in New Zealand and three young people were living with both their parents in New Zealand. Fifteen participants had siblings or half-siblings living in South Africa, eight had siblings in New Zealand and two had siblings living in the USA or the United Kingdom. Six mentioned that they had grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins or nephews and nieces living in South Africa, and four had a grandparent, aunt or uncle in New Zealand. Four people had an ex-wife or ex-husband still living in South Africa.

*Dynamics*

Existing family dynamics played an important role during the immigration journey and placed a strain on family relationships. In a number of families, one parent had been the main driving force behind the immigration process, but most families had had a conversation where the pros and cons had been discussed and all opinions considered. Those who were eager to leave tried to encourage and allay the fears of those family members who were unwilling or reluctant to immigrate. Once the final decision has been made, most families had focused on the benefits and were committed to work together to make immigration successful. However, immigration also affected those family members who had stayed behind and most were ambivalent about their family members leaving South Africa. One
participant said that it was hard for parents when their children emigrated, and suggested that as a result they probably went through their own phases of adaptation. Some families encouraged prospective immigrants to leave for safety concerns, while others accused them of abandonment. One woman recalled her shock when she found out that her brother “wrote them off” because they had come to New Zealand. In his mind he “put them in a box” and pushed them aside as he felt that he had nothing to do with them anymore. When he realised that they were planning to return to South Africa, his “mindset” changed and he was willing to “take them out of the box” again. One man said that his sons had confronted him about packing up and leaving them in South Africa. He told them that he would have encouraged them if they had wanted to leave South Africa, and hoped that by going to New Zealand he could help them to immigrate as well. When his youngest son had viewed his father’s immigration in terms of “opening doors” for his children, he had been more supportive. Some, who had initially been against the move, later changed their minds and encouraged family members to remain in New Zealand. A few declined to comment on the planned migration or said that they did not mind where their family members lived.

Family bonds can be a motivating factor for immigration, but separation from family can cause considerable distress and conflict. In a number of cases, the children had immigrated first and the parents and siblings had followed. People who had family members already living in New Zealand had an advantage as they had ready access to a reliable source of pre-migration information. They also had post-migration support to facilitate settlement, such as being fetched from the airport, and having temporary housing and transport. Jo emphasised that having family in New Zealand made a difference, as they were people you had known your whole life. One participant added that your family was obligated to help you, whereas your friends had a choice. One woman recalled how her husband’s daughter and daughter-in-law had helped her to understand her immigration experience as they had been
through the same process. After arrival, they had also taken her shopping for thermal 
clothing, suitable for New Zealand weather conditions. One family had assisted their son 
financially when he had had a heart attack during a visit to New Zealand, and later on when 
he had experienced problems with his business.

Participants who had immigrated to New Zealand often expressed concerns about the 
health and well-being of their ageing parents in South Africa, particularly if they did not have 
siblings in South Africa who could take care of their parents in their absence. They had to 
weigh up the option of either returning to take care of their parents or helping them to 
immigrate to New Zealand. One person found that every time her parents had visited them in 
New Zealand, their conversation about moving to New Zealand had become stronger.

However, some thought their parents might struggle financially in New Zealand because they 
would have to live off their South African pensions. An option was to ask parents to live with 
them in New Zealand, but some families did not want to make any promises as they were 
unsure whether they would remain in New Zealand or move elsewhere. One older couple’s 
immigration had been financially sponsored by their children in New Zealand for the purpose 
of reuniting the family. In some instances, people had been encouraged by siblings already 
living in New Zealand to visit the country and to consider immigrating as well. One man 
recalled how his brother had gone through the whole immigration process, which had been 
expensive and time consuming. In the end there were not enough compelling reasons for his 
brother to leave South Africa. He believed that an immigration visa merely served as an 
“insurance policy” for his brother. He thought that despite their family bonds, immigration 
may not have worked out for his brother as they were not ready in their “heart of hearts” to 
leave South Africa. One woman said that her younger brother had considered moving to New 
Zealand, and would have come if he had been able to do so.
In one instance, where the parents had immigrated first, some of the children had decided to utilise their ancestral visas to immigrate to the United Kingdom. However, one woman had been shocked by her parents’ decision to move thousands of kilometres away to New Zealand and abandoning her and her brother. She believed that this was not the natural way of doing things because children were supposed to leave first, and that parents should follow. Her mother’s critical stance towards South Africa and abrupt severing of ties had felt like a betrayal to her. For instance, her mother supported the All Blacks and commented that the South African team did well in matches because they had a New Zealand coach. These divided loyalties within the family had led to sarcastic remarks that perhaps her mother should become an ambassador for New Zealand. When the daughter went on holiday in South Africa with the family of a friend, she was blamed for preferring them over her own family. Telephone conversations from New Zealand felt like emotional blackmail that resulted in her becoming rebellious because of the perceived pressure tactics by her mother to follow them to New Zealand. She was fond of the city she was living in, and had a well-established circle of friends from her university days. However, they were a close-knit family and she did not want to live so far away from her parents the rest of her life, especially when they became elderly. She had considered immigration, but had changed her mind a few times which was extremely upsetting for her parents. They had accused her of lying to them and she blamed them for putting her in this position, but her capriciousness had not been intended as deliberate deception. On the contrary, she had felt confused and fearful of making the wrong decision. In retrospect, she realised that if the roles had been reversed and she and her husband had decided to relocate from New Zealand, her parents could not blame them because “that’s just how things happen in life”. Another couple recounted how their adult daughter had become romantically involved a month before they had emigrated. Despite their warnings not to get involved with the man, they could not stop the relationship. After
immigration their daughter had continuously pressurised them to return to South Africa as she wanted to marry her partner. Her parents wanted to stay in New Zealand and tried to talk her out of it, but in the end they had to “let it be as young people think they know best”. Their daughter had returned to South Africa to marry her fiancée and when their efforts to convince her to return to New Zealand failed, they had moved back to South Africa to be with their only child.

Relationships

After immigration, family members had experienced a variety of stressors and had adapted at different rates, which had led to a lack of communication and taking out their frustrations on each other. One man had found it much harder to adjust to New Zealand than his wife, whose brother was living in New Zealand, as he missed his sisters in South Africa. A woman talked about marrying in New Zealand without having family members at their wedding as they could not afford to travel to New Zealand. Another recalled how angry she had been with her daughter as she felt vulnerable and scared waiting alone on a cold and misty night to be picked up. Some youngsters did not want to come to New Zealand in the first place, but blamed themselves when things went wrong. Children often had difficulty adjusting, but felt that they could not tell their parents. One person commented that young children often realised that their parents were struggling and perhaps heard them arguing. One mother recalled how “she could not believe it” when her young son announced that he was moving out to go flatting. In South Africa, according to customs of die outyd (old-time values), young men stayed with their parents until they married. They told him that because he had a job he would have to take care of his own food and washing if he went flatting. If he did not return home within six months, they would consider him to have reached
independence and would make their own arrangements at home. His mother humorously remarked that he moved out nine years ago and was still looking after himself.

Participants endorsed involved parenting, consistent discipline and support from extended family. One family talked about their “surprise” family outings during weekends where family members took turns to select a suitable destination and activity. The others were only told how to dress for the occasion, but were not told where they would be going. While living in South Africa, one father had taken his young children to kindergarten in the morning, and in the afternoon the children had stayed with their grandparents. His young daughter had spent a lot of time alone with her grandparents for seven years prior to immigration and had been extremely close to them. She has thus been sad to leave her grandparents behind when they had immigrated. Two families commented on being worried about the safety of their adult children in South Africa. One father always worried about his daughter’s safety when she was driving on her own for work purposes, and she therefore only told her stepmother when she travelled because she did not want to trouble her father. One family who had lived in South Africa, the United Kingdom and New Zealand concluded that the discipline in South African homes was stronger and considered more important than in New Zealand or the United Kingdom. They thought that the level of discipline in the United Kingdom was similar to that in New Zealand. Another family endorsed the view that New Zealand youth did not have the discipline of South African children. In South Africa, parents placed importance on children having good manners and children would generally “give way” to adults when required. Discipline varied between individual families in South Africa, but most were strict about children being polite and greeting adults. Afrikaans families were inclined to be stricter than English families in terms of showing respect and what behaviour was deemed acceptable or unacceptable. One girl recalled a wooden spoon with a sad face at
a friend’s home that has been used to discipline naughty children. However, she commented that the wooden spoon had been used more as a deterrent than for frequent smacking.

One woman, who had been born in New Zealand, said that upon returning to New Zealand the “political correctness did her mind in”. In New Zealand, school teachers had to be careful all the time with children’s rights. The anti-smacking law in New Zealand prohibited parents from using smacking as a form of discipline, and in New Zealand, the South African family with the wooden spoon in their home would have been reported to the authorities. Two people, however, did not believe that the anti-smacking law was achieving its main purpose of preventing child abuse. One person thought that the law was not necessarily a bad thing, but it made parents more prone to emotional abuse of children. She observed a parent telling off a child after nearly being run over by a car. She felt that the mother had demeaned herself by berating her child like that, and that it was more detrimental to the child than a smack. She emphasised that smacking a child on the hand as a deterrent was not the same as giving the child a hiding. Another woman said that in New Zealand you could not grab your child in public as you would be reported to the authorities. She believed that the anti-smacking law was ridiculous, because lawmakers had done nothing to prevent the appalling incidence of child abuse in New Zealand. The anti-smacking law possibly made people think twice before hitting a child, but it would not change the behaviour of the majority of people who abused children because they often did it behind closed doors. A mother believed that children wanted to please their parents, and a parent expressing disappointment was a reliable method to discourage unacceptable behaviour. She expressed her concerns about the lack of discipline and alcohol abuse by New Zealand youth, but added that it had become a worldwide phenomenon. She acknowledged that alcohol abuse by South African youth had become more prevalent during the last 17 years. Boredom stemming from a lack of adventure and reliance on computer games, instead of initiating their own activities,
were partly to blame. She nevertheless felt that assigning blame was not helpful in solving problems with the youth, and believed that something was “missing” in their home environments. She observed that a lot of parents and working mothers used the television set as a “baby sitter”, and that families lacked a sense of respect, love and connectedness.

South African parents realised New Zealand parents did things differently, but preferred to parent the same way they did in South Africa. People with young children found that childcare in New Zealand could be extremely costly. Some mothers stayed at home after immigration or took part-time work so that they could be at home for their children. One couple paid for grandparents to come to New Zealand to assist with the grandchildren after the birth of a new baby. Parents commented that they found it strange that children in New Zealand organised their own sleepovers, because in South Africa they would have phoned the other parents first before allowing a stayover. They raised their children in a South African manner, but were less strict in New Zealand because there was no longer a need to be so protective. They thought it was important not to “wrap them in cotton wool” and to allow them more freedom, but sometimes it was hard to let them go. Other parents made it clear to their children that they could not have everything they wanted and had to save up for luxury items, such as a PlayStation. Andrew said: “he understands that he can’t just get things on a whim. He has to put in some effort if he wants something. I’m not just going to go out and buy it”. One family reported that they were supportive and proud of their children’s achievements. Andrew concluded that, “being successful in New Zealand does not just imply financial success. Success also means that you raised your children in a way that portray the same values as your parents and the way you were raised, and you hope to hand that down to the next generation”. Despite the differences in parenting styles between South Africa and New Zealand, the Kiwi man who had married a South African woman remarked that they had similar upbringings in terms of family structure, family values and family bonds. He said that
both their backgrounds were family oriented, with values of honesty, integrity, hard work and doing the right thing. There was a shared belief that, “if you take short cuts and don’t stick to your guns, you always lose out in the end”. He commented that close relationships with extended family and large family gatherings were typical of New Zealand society when he was growing up, and that it was still quite strong in his wife’s family roots in South Africa.

All participants reported that they had close-knit families, which included members of their extended family. One couple said they were lucky that their families in South Africa loved them. One woman confirmed that she has always had a close relationship with her parents, and had always tried to live near her parents in South Africa as well as in New Zealand so that she could see them on a regular basis. Mother-daughter and father-son relationships were generally based on mutual respect and understanding. Afrikaans girls were inclined to talk to their mothers about their feelings. A woman remembered how she and her adult daughter used to cry together while watching Leon Schuster movies. One woman, who was struggling to fall pregnant, was reluctant to contact her mother during periods of distress as she did not want to upset her about being childless. A mother, who was extremely upset that her daughter was reluctant to follow them to New Zealand, had gained a better understanding of how she felt after observing her social life and interaction with friends during a visit to South Africa. A man said that his father had been his mentor for many years, and he believed that a son should be better than his father. He felt that he had worked hard and proved himself professionally, which would make his father proud. His father had some staunch beliefs, and he commented that his wife’s mother had been easier to talk to than his parents when they were considering immigration. Two women reported that they got on well with their adult stepchildren, and one woman was assured that her stepchildren liked her as they were always friendly and loving towards her. Her husband’s grandchildren liked her and accepted her as their grandmother.
It was important for grandparents to have regular contact with their grandchildren, and grandparents experienced sadness when their grandchildren immigrated. After immigration they missed their grandchildren and were longing for them. One couple, whose only daughter had recently married, said that they did not understand yet what it would be like to be grandparents. The woman said she did not want to lose out by not being close to their grandchildren, and might feel differently about living in New Zealand once the grandchildren has been born. Another woman, whose children had gone to the United Kingdom, said that she did not want her future grandchildren to live somewhere else, and was willing to move again to be closer to them. A Kiwi grandmother, who had never lived in the same country as her grandchildren, was overjoyed when the family had decided to move to New Zealand.

A number of participants said that they were close to their sisters in South Africa, and missed seeing them and were worried about their safety. One woman reported that when her brother had moved to New Zealand it had made the “family picture fuller”, and it had become easier to live in New Zealand. A man said that despite them settling well, having his brother in New Zealand had made a difference. A woman mentioned that in South Africa she used to arrange the weddings and do the flowers for all her cousins’ weddings, and she could rely on a cousin’s support after surgery during the pre-migration period. Another man’s cousin had acted as his financial advisor and had handled some affairs on his behalf in South Africa after he had emigrated. A young woman was excited about returning to South Africa to spend time with her cousins. Participants commented on have watched their nephews and nieces grow up in South Africa, and some had returned to South Africa for their wedding ceremonies.
Social factors

Many South African immigrants had come from large, metropolitan cities and had found it difficult to adjust to social attitudes in small towns, for instance, about homosexuality. One person said it felt like going back 50 years in history. Most preferred relocating to large cities in New Zealand where a large percentage of inhabitants had also come from somewhere else.

Friendships

One would assume that upon arrival most South African immigrants would seek out other South Africans in their community to re-establish community links. One woman recalled attending a meeting held in a small South Island town for South African immigrants. She found that she had different political views and interests from the rest of the group and that they were not the kind of people she would have befriended in South Africa, for instance, surfers and farmers. She experienced the South Africans in her district as extremely conservative or racist. At social gatherings, people made efforts to connect with each other via superficial commonalities, for instance, making biltong and boerewors, and interactions felt artificial to her. She became irritated with their regurgitation of South African “horror stories” and their reasons for leaving South Africa, or the “good old day stories” of “braaivleis, sonskyn and rugby”. She purposefully avoided contact with other South Africans as she also found that ongoing contact made her sadder about leaving South Africa. She thought that she had to let go, instead of clinging to things. She eventually cut herself off from the South African community in her area. Instead, she joined the Labour Party to meet like-minded people. She found that she was the youngest person at Labour Party meetings, and ended up going to a Labour Party conference as the representative for her region.
Another family did not join any South African groups in New Zealand or Kiwi groups while living in the United Kingdom as they viewed themselves as nomadic.

However, one woman had a need to look out for other South Africans when she came to New Zealand as it helped to make her feel at home. For instance, she met a South African couple in a restaurant and they talked about mutual friends. She believed that in the beginning, new immigrants found it helpful to mix with South Africans to “get a bit of normality” and a sense of belonging. New immigrants might befriend other South Africans they meet, or might eventually go their own way. She took the initiative to organise a braai every two months for a group of South Africans via e-mail. People looked forward to these occasions as it provided a day of fun for everybody, and the chance to catch up with each other. If she encountered new arrivals who were lonely and wanted to make new friends, she invited them to the braai to see if they would “click” with someone. However, she did not run after people or try to force them to attend. She was nevertheless concerned that there were probably a “whole bunch” of South Africans out there that they did not even know about. The group she organised went to a public venue for braais as most homes were too small for the number of people, and it also removed pressure from a particular family to play host for the day. Each family brought a picnic basket with their own food and braai utensils, and everybody pitched in. After the braai people, returned home and went their own way until the next get-together. One family found that there were not a lot of South Africans in the small town where they had initially settled, but once they moved to Wellington they made an effort to connect with the larger South African community. They got together as a group to have “their own little parties”, and would have a lunch or barbeque on festive days, such as New Year. They also utilised a South African rental agent who had a good reputation among South Africans in the Wellington region, and hence received referrals from satisfied tenants.
Community

A family, who had immigrated nearly 20 years before, said that they still missed some of their close friends in South Africa, but that their social life was not that different in New Zealand. However, a number of South African immigrants said that they missed the hospitality they had enjoyed in their communities and the habit of people of dropping in unannounced for a visit. Others commented on how the South African community in New Zealand shared resources, supported each other and helped newcomers to settle in. In contrast, snobbishness was a common feature of life in South Africa and people were inclined to “do their own thing”. Most had the attitude of “what is ours is ours” and people were expected to take care of themselves. A Coloured family recalled how they had to live in their “own communities” as a result of racial separation during the apartheid era. Owing to the political changes during the Mandela era, they could live where they wanted in the so-called “grey areas”. They enjoyed living in a New Zealand community that had full racial integration.

South Africans generally had a positive view of Kiwis and integrated well in the New Zealand community. One participant was amazed at the lengths to which women would go in New Zealand for their children, for instance, a mother who pushed her bicycle laden with “junk mail” that she delivered on behalf of her children for pocket money. One couple expressed their admiration for people’s willingness to volunteer their services, for instance, suburban community police often utilised retirees for office duties. New Zealand was reliant on volunteer services, and volunteering kept elderly retirees busy and engaged in the workforce. By contrast, one retired man said he felt uncomfortable when strangers were prying or tried to interfere in his private life. For instance, tellers at supermarkets were inclined to ask personal and intrusive questions, presumably in an effort at making small talk with customers. He remarked that New Zealanders would consider similar questions about
their personal lives to be extremely nosy. Hence the participant felt no obligation to offer answers and explanations to people he did not know. One couple commented on “problematic communities” in New Zealand, particularly some areas of Auckland where poverty played a role. They empathised with Pacific Islanders, who were also immigrants experiencing cultural and language loss, and were “thrown to the wolves” in a struggle for survival. They compared community life in New Zealand with communities in the USA. They found that despite commonly held beliefs about the USA, people in the community where their daughter lived were friendly and warm-hearted. Positive communities in the USA provided good structure for children, had good moral values and had a strong church affiliation. However, they acknowledged that the USA was a large country and that one cannot generalise, as the country consisted of good as well as bad areas.

Some families found that their children’s sport activities helped them to meet other parents and to become more involved in sport clubs, for instance, coaching a soccer team. One woman joined a quilting club to get out and meet friends. However, one couple said that they did not join any clubs or organisations as most of their hobbies were solitary, for instance, kayaking or reading. All participants were religious and most found church members of considerable value in helping them to integrate. One couple spoke of the supportive Catholic community in the small town where they had initially settled, and how a “lovely lady from church” was the first person who had invited them over for Sunday night tea and had made them feel at home. Another family confirmed that the Kiwis at their church were extremely friendly and made them feel welcome by inviting them over to their homes.

One couple noticed that Kiwis had a network of people who had vegetable gardens and who knew where to find the best bargains. They felt that when you started sharing knowledge about the best second-hand shops and sales bargains, or could recommend a good hairdresser, you become part of a community. They travelled to Napier each year to buy
apricots, and one year at a restaurant some Return Service Association (RSA) members invited them over to their table. Since then they had been accepted as part of the group, who consisted of people their own age, and they were welcomed back each year. The RSA was well supported and was a “jolly bunch” that enjoyed music, singing, dancing and having a beer and a meal together. This couple realised that they had become Kiwis after 16 years; they were able to participate in conversations and share old stories as they had experienced these events with Kiwis, for instance, when New Zealand won the Rugby World Cup.

Cultural factors

New Zealand permitted people to stipulate more than one ethnicity and cultural identity, and the choices of the participants reflected this trend. It was interesting that their identity was often related to their decisions around citizenship and the sports teams they supported.

Group

One couple stated that they were Afrikaans-speaking South Africans of European origin. A woman stated her ethnicity or cultural group as “Afrikaans”, while her husband identified himself as an Afrikaner of European origin. He said that, “in your heart you will always remain an Afrikaner and a South African”. Louise explained that, “White South Africans are all of European descent, but considered themselves to be of African origin”. She was of Dutch and French descent and considered herself to be an Afrikaans-speaking South African, living in New Zealand, who still felt strongly connected to Africa. She believed that despite her New Zealand citizenship and passport, she would never be a Kiwi in the true sense of the word. Another Afrikaans-speaking couple said they still regarded themselves as South Africans even though they were living in New Zealand. An English-speaking couple
identified with the “European” cultural group, while their son, who had left South Africa at the age of five years, retained his South African identity. An English-speaking business man still considered himself a South African, despite having New Zealand citizenship. His Kiwi wife of European ethnicity commented that he was utilising all the advantages New Zealand offered, but could not identify with being a New Zealander. She jokingly commented that, “well, we won’t want you anyway”. He retorted that he paid taxes and employed 300 people, and that the Prime Minister, Mr John Key, would want more people like him in New Zealand. She stated that even though she had lived in South Africa for six years as a permanent resident, had a South African-born child and had voted in the elections prior to 1994, she was not a citizen and did not regard herself a South African. She had also lived in the United Kingdom for ten years, but still identified herself as a New Zealander because that was where she had grown up. Her son stated his ethnicity as “European” and was adamant that he was a South African and not a New Zealander, despite only living in South Africa for the first five years of his life. Two families stated their ethnicity as “Coloured” or “Cape Coloured”, and one family called themselves South Africans. They explained that similar to the Māoris in New Zealand, South Africa had the Cape Coloureds as a distinct cultural group. Their South African identity was important to them, and they stated that they would always be South African and could not get away from that. Accordingly, their son who had immigrated with them at the age of six still identified himself as being South African.

One man, who had dual citizenship, said that he was a South African as well as a New Zealander, whereas his wife, who had rescinded her South African citizenship in favour of New Zealand citizenship, stated that she was a New Zealander. She said the issue of dual citizenship indicated the difference between them regarding their feelings about South Africa. She jokingly said that her brother called her a “Jingo”, which indicated that she was no longer an authentic Afrikaner. A young woman, who had been born in the United Kingdom and had
lived in South Africa for six years, stated on official forms that she was a New Zealand European. When people picked up her British accent or asked her where she was from, she gave a history of living in different countries, rather than offering a single identification. She stated that she liked all the countries she lived in and would not like to cut out any of them from her identity. Louise confirmed that identity was temporary and changeable, and that strictly speaking she was no longer a South African. She explained that her South African identity was based on an outdated version of South Africa, and as time progressed she had been left behind and was no longer part of South Africa. She said that “the moment you leave South Africa, you cannot be a South African in the true sense of the word, because you don’t live in the country anymore. Your South African identity and your perceptions of being a South African become historical, because the country and circumstances in the country have moved on”. A couple who had returned to live in South Africa concluded that they were “immigrants” in New Zealand as well as in South Africa, as it was now under new rule.

Families mentioned that they missed some of the other cultural groups in South Africa. One woman said that she missed the Coloured people from the Cape and their special sense of humour, as well as the black people. She said that their Xhosa domestic worker has been part of their life for about nine years. She reminisced about their chats over a cup of coffee, and how they would sometimes just sit together. A Coloured family talked about their Xhosa domestic worker who had lived with them for years, and how sad they were to leave her behind. They tried to find alternative employment for her, but she stated that she did not want to work for black people because they were “dishonest, rob you, and don’t pay you on time”. They advised that she should get used to working for black people as they would be earning the money in future. Families broached the delicate subject of cultural bias and racism. One man stated that he was “not a racist” and got on well with black people. Another participant said that she had been a missionary in Zimbabwe and did not mind mixing with
other racial groups. One woman commented that her political views had always been more leftist than the typical Afrikaner, and she had always been on the perimeter of social circles. However, in New Zealand she was probably perceived as more conservative because she made evaluations based on her own background and what she was accustomed to. Another participant acknowledged that South Africans were raised with certain racial attitudes and therefore had a tendency to interpret things from a white, South African viewpoint. It was felt that one should have more compassion for people from other cultures. One couple said that the problems in South Auckland paled by comparison to some areas in the Cape, such as Heideveld and Matroosfontein. One person acknowledged how some of the Cape Coloureds also lost their way due to poverty and alcohol abuse. A participant stated that white people often did not understand black people, because they did not understand their culture. One person explained that white children learnt from a young age to take charge and give instructions. Hence, they were inclined to take control as it was a habit they acquired while growing up. This ability to assume responsibility could, however, be beneficial during the immigration process as it allowed people to “manage the whole situation”.

Participants, however, commented on the cultural and political changes that had occurred in South Africa after they had emigrated. One participant noted that the Afrikaner culture had become less visible and the African culture was much more prominent. She acknowledged some discomfort with the majority African culture as it was not her own culture. However, she rationalised that this was the way it should be, because in the past a minority culture had suppressed the majority culture. One couple found that in the 20 years since they had immigrated, things had changed dramatically in South Africa. They noticed that South African children did not know “Die Stem” anymore as Nkosi Sikelel’iAfrika was now the national anthem. They remembered how they had stood to attention and sang “God save the Queen” during childhood, and said they preferred it to Nkosi Sikelel’iAfrika.
Rugby was an important factor of national pride in South Africa and New Zealand, and an immigrant’s sporting allegiance was also indicative of his or her sense of identity. One person observed that during the Rugby World Cup, New Zealanders had displayed the All Black flag more than the New Zealand flag. He said that supporting the All Blacks was like a religion in New Zealand, and that the New Zealanders were bad losers. If the All Blacks lost a game, the whole country went into mourning. Three participants, who still felt strongly connected to South Africa, supported the Springboks and wanted them to win. One family still supported South African cricket and rugby teams, irrespective of whether they won or lost. One young woman said that her teenage brother was a “die-hard fan” of South African sport teams. She teased him about his little “shrine” of South African memorabilia he treasured during the Rugby World cup, and said he was in his element when he met the South African team. However, when the Springboks did not make the finals, he shifted his allegiance to the All Blacks and shut away the memorabilia in his cupboard. His sister, who had been born in the United Kingdom, supported New Zealand first, then the United Kingdom and then South Africa, but sometimes changed her loyalty to the team most likely to win. One woman said that she used to watch rugby and cricket with her stepfather on television, and was a staunch All Black supporter even before she had left South Africa.

New Zealanders also originated from a variety of backgrounds and cultures, and a large number of people in the Wellington region came from somewhere else. Ray, a New Zealander who was married to a South African woman, was of Swiss and Polish descent. He had a stronger sense of his fifth generation European descent than most Kiwis, which gave him an understanding of his wife’s Dutch and French heritage. He had grown up in the Taranaki district, which was home to many Swiss and Polish immigrants to New Zealand. The sons of these pioneers had taken their traditions, heritage and accumulated wealth, and built a new life for themselves in New Zealand. The rural background and conservatism of
Taranaki helped to keep his cultural heritage alive. New Zealanders were still connected to their pioneering background through their parents who could tell them about their forefathers. When he was young, he had made an effort to talk to his uncles, aunts, grand uncles and grand aunts during family gatherings. They had opened up and started telling him their stories, which had strengthened his sense of European heritage. The children of the original settlers who heard the stories about Poland and Switzerland wanted to visit these countries to re-establish their European links.

Ray said that he had previously had a South African flatmate and thought he was a nice chap. His South African wife enquired whether he was aware when they first met that they had different nationalities and languages. He replied that what he had noticed straight away was her values, attitudes and the sense of where she came from. Her attitude and passion reflected her pioneering spirit in South Africa, and it helped him to form a connection with her. Even though they had different European ancestry and were from different nationalities, they had similar upbringings in terms of family values and family bonds. He stated that there were commonalities between people from different countries; everyone needed to work and everyone had family. He preferred to embrace other cultures and languages, because he focused on the commonalities rather than the differences. He felt that irrespective of culture, there were different ways people could communicate with each other. Some people were quite shallow or kept up a façade, which made it difficult to have a decent conversation with them. However, others wore less of a mask or had similar values, which made open communication easier. A visit to South Africa, and sharing jokes and stories with her extended family, allowed him to feel what it would be like to live in South Africa as he could start identifying with them. His wife reiterated that “if you are married to someone from a different culture and live in another country, you want them to develop an
appreciation for your background, your country of origin and your culture; you want to build a bridge between the two countries and the two cultures”.

Social integration was fairly easy for South Africans as they had a similar appearance and educational level to mainstream society and thus “blended in”. Nevertheless, participants were reminded at their citizenship ceremonies that they should not forget their roots, which confirmed that they could not change who they were and where they had come from. Some participants noted that despite being New Zealand citizens, it became quite apparent that they were not Kiwis as soon as they started speaking. One person spoke of a South African man who was in the news because he painted some delinquent youngsters after they had tagged his fence, and jokingly said that South Africans can be a bit rough sometimes. However, one person felt that being an Afrikaner in New Zealand could be an asset as some Kiwis appreciated their difference and liked their accent. Some Afrikaners, however, were concerned about negative stereotyping by Kiwis and South African English speakers. Some participants expressed their frustration with fellow Afrikaners putting on a social mask in New Zealand and starting to behave differently. One woman recalled with amusement how someone had adopted an artificial Kiwi accent to hide her origins. Some modern, young Afrikaners were ashamed to acknowledge their Afrikaner heritage as traditionally Afrikaans-speaking citizens were regarded as inferior to English speakers. Prior to immigration, some people had not been aware that certain historical issues between English- and Afrikaans-speaking South Africans still existed, but after arrival these old issues resurfaced. Based on Boer War conflicts, some English-speaking people, especially in Natal, still did not regard Afrikaners as their equals and their Afrikaans accent was looked down upon. That sense of Afrikaner inferiority was brought to New Zealand by immigrants. One Afrikaans family recalled an incident where they had invited a large group of South Africans to their home. One of their guests was an Afrikaans friend who spoke English eloquently and without an
accent. Another guest was an English-speaking woman from Durban, whom they did not know. The English guest mistook the Afrikaans-speaking guest for being English, and conveyed her surprise at the unexpected level of sophistication of her Afrikaans hostess. The Afrikaans guest enquired whether she expected the host to be barefoot, pregnant and in the kitchen. Apparently the English-speaking guest was never seen again. In response, Hennie said that “the Afrikaner does not want to fight the Boer War all over again here in New Zealand”. One English-speaking family said that they had friends who spoke Afrikaans, but they tried not to class them as “Afrikaans” friends. A participant commented that he found Kiwis less discriminating towards Afrikaners than English-speaking South Africans.

Participants agreed that there were different groups of South Africans in New Zealand. Some Afrikaners excluded themselves from mainstream society because they only wanted to interact with other Afrikaners and have nothing to do with Kiwis. Others preferred to mix only with Kiwis to blend in with New Zealand society. One woman recalled an evening when they had been to a restaurant with South African friends, and found that another couple kept looking at them. One of their friends made a funny comment in Afrikaans to see if they would respond, but they did not. When the participant walked past their table she suspected the couple were South African, because they used the word “dankie” (thank you). She approached the couple and asked them in Afrikaans why they did not come over to talk to them. The couple said they were “too scared” as some South Africans told them that they came to New Zealand “to get away from the South Africans”. They ended up chatting and she gave them her business card for future contact. Another man said that they suspected that the owners of a barking dog in their neighbourhood were South Africans. However, during conversation, the dog owners had not offered any information about their origins and they had been reluctant to ask. It was also noted that some South Africans who had been living in New Zealand for a long time could not be bothered to interact with
newcomers as they were well settled, and did not want to listen to all the things newcomers had to say about South Africa. In addition, it was hard work helping newcomers to settle. One woman was nevertheless committed to assisting new immigrants and said she had considered finding another job after helping her husband to get their business up and running, but was hesitant as it meant she would not have the time to lend a helping hand to newcomers.

South Africans commented on the plight of other minority immigrant groups, as well as the cultural bias and racism in New Zealand society. A family said that Kiwis informed them about Samoans, Māori and Asian cultures in New Zealand. One woman empathised with Māori and Pacific Islanders in South Auckland who suffered cultural, language and identity loss and were experiencing high levels of stress and poverty. She noted that Pacific Islanders came from a totally different culture, and in New Zealand they were removed from their strong cultural roots and social structure. It was acknowledged that Māoris had lost their identity largely because of the British influence, for instance, prohibiting them from speaking their own language. It was believed that the average South African got on well with Māoris as they understood their psyche and the Māoris were also “direct” like South Africans. One participant said even though she had never been a racist, in South Africa, she was still aware of another person’s race. In New Zealand, a person’s race was less prominent for her and she became almost “colour blind”, which she felt positive about. Another couple attended a church that consisted mostly of Samoans, but the congregation were representative of 12 nationalities, including Holland, the USA, the United Kingdom and the Pacific Islands. They said that at their church all nationalities prayed for each other, and she hugged the Samoans and Māoris the same way as she would hug whites. They were thankful that they had the opportunity to befriend other cultural groups in New Zealand. One woman believed that South Africans were less racist than everybody thought they were. South Africans were sometimes surprised that they were actually less racist than some Kiwis.
Some participants believed that in South Africa, white and black people could exchange mutually racist jokes without causing offence. They stated that racist jokes were the way South Africans had learnt to laugh at themselves. Racist jokes, however, were frowned upon in New Zealand’s politically correct society, and one participant stated that Kiwis were unable to laugh at themselves. However, political correctness had an element of dishonesty. One person said that if you got to know New Zealanders really well, their true feelings were revealed and she sometimes had to censure some of their derogatory comments. When challenged, New Zealanders claimed that people were generalising and that they were not racist at all. However, Andries and Aletta admitted that “it takes a long time before you become friends with people from another cultural group, and to really care for them and love them”. One man said that when a crime was reported on television he still wondered about the racial group of the person as it was difficult to change preconceived ideas about race and the incidence of crime. One couple pointed out that some South Africans claimed that they were no longer racists, which was not always true. They believed that some South Africans reinforced the negative view of New Zealanders by referring to black people in a derogatory way or behaving arrogantly, and they were often ashamed of the behaviour of some South Africans.

Habits

New immigrants often scoured the aisles of supermarkets for South African goods, and for some the old favourites, such as Jelly Tots, Koo’s fig jam, Mrs Ball’s chutney, All Gold tomato sauce, Koffiehuis, Cremora, Ouma rusks, biltong (dried meat), boerewors (traditional sausages) and mieliepap (maize meal porridge) were still important home comforts. South African goods were more readily available than they had been 20 years before. One settled immigrant expressed her amusement with new arrivals who fretted about
not being able to obtain Moir’s custard powder or vanilla essence in New Zealand. A family confirmed that in the beginning, they had bought South African foods, but had found it a bit pricy. After seven years, they no longer bought that many South African groceries, because they no longer needed them. However, they still favoured Cross & Blackwell mayonnaise, and bought Peppermint Crisp and Tennis biscuits during the festive season to make a Peppermint Crisp tart.

A number of participants expressed their dismay at their first experience of a New Zealand “sausage sizzle” that consisted of a “plastic” pre-cooked sausage, topped with bits of fried onion and mustard, and folded into a slice of white bread. It compared poorly with a boerewors hot dog, but some said they had learnt to eat it. One man nevertheless said he had been overjoyed when he had discovered a South African butcher in Wellington. Another man recalled how he and a South African colleague had devised their own braai from odd bits in the garden the first Friday night after their arrival in New Zealand. After his family arrived, they had a braai on their deck every weekend, despite the rainy, winter weather. Their neighbours came out to see what was going on, and found their behaviour exceedingly strange. Even though they had since acquired a gas barbeque, they still liked to braai on coals. They also enjoyed making a “potjie” (stew in a cast iron pot) regularly, and searched the internet for new recipes. However, their family meals were “a bit of everything”, including pastas and stir fries. Their son loved his coffee, and they commented that they still “had a lot of South African in them”. Another couple, who had been in the country for three years, said that they still ate South African foods, and regularly bought “boerewors”, “droëwors” (dried traditional sausages) and biltong from Springbok meats in Wellington. One family said that in New Zealand they ate lunch at 5 pm on Sundays, instead of midday as they had done with their family in South Africa. When their parents visited from South Africa,
they felt that it was important for their parents to realise that they were doing things “their own way” in New Zealand.

Certain goods, such as rusks, were not readily available in New Zealand and most participants started baking their own. Some participants brought a milk tart and rusks along to their interviews to enjoy during a tea break, and were happy to share their recipes. One couple organised a three-monthly saamtrek for the South African community that involved taking a plate of South African home cooking or baking, such as a milk tart or koeksisters, and dancing to South African music. Participants were generally eager to introduce the Kiwis to South African cuisine. One woman had baked 12 milk tarts for her colleagues, but was unsure whether they would like it. She explained that a custard tart and a milk tart were not the same thing. The people at work loved her milk tarts and polished them off, and she had provided them with recipes. One person said that a colleague of his loved biltong, and the researcher was often urged by a Kiwi friend to bring along “some of that dried meat stuff”.

One family took boerewors to a shared barbeque with Kiwis and Americans, who looked at it with big eyes but nevertheless tucked in. However, a Kiwi woman who had married a South African said that boerewors gave her indigestion because it was too spicy. The Porirua City Council regularly organised the “Migrating Kitchen”, which afforded immigrants from various countries the opportunity to exhibit traditional food to celebrate their unique cultural identity. It enabled them to tell the stories of their heritage via food demonstrations and tasting, as well as sharing recipes. One family commented on the Ikhaya or “home away from home” established by the South African High Commissioner during the Rugby World Cup in 2011. Visitors from all countries were invited to the Amora Hotel hospitality centre to have something to eat and drink, including South African wine and beer, Five Roses and Rooibos tea, biltong, boerewors and tomato and onion “smoor”.

452
One couple commented on the appearance and social style of South Africans. A husband said that when he returned to South Africa he was amazed by the beauty of South African women. It was generally accepted that South African women were fastidious about their appearance, such as clothing, make-up and hairstyle. His wife recalled the demeanour and distinct expressions of female shop assistants in South Africa, such as “ag mevrotjie, néé” (no, my dear lady). She commented that young, Afrikaans women in shops were generally kind, amicable and endearing, which was not the case with New Zealand shop assistants. The couple also noted that in South Africa, friends and neighbours dropped by unannounced for a visit, and that it was part of Afrikaner culture to be hospitable and take care of guests. One woman observed that their Kiwi friends had initially found the South African way of hugging and kissing each other strange, but later on adopted the habit with enthusiasm. New Zealanders also found the security consciousness of South Africans amusing. One man recalled how perplexed Kiwis had been when he brought a lockable South African-bought fridge to his business. He commented that they did not understand that in South Africa they would steal the milk from your coffee.

Language

Of the 23 people who were interviewed, 12 had Afrikaans as their first language and were fluent in English as a second language. Eleven had English as their first language, of which two had been born in New Zealand. In a family where one parent was from an Afrikaans background and the other was English, the family spoke English at home and the children went to English schools. The Afrikaans person still spoke Afrikaans to her extended family, and even though she enjoyed speaking Afrikaans when the opportunity arose, she did not really miss it. Most of the English participants understood Afrikaans and utilised Afrikaans expressions at times. One South African man was also fluent in Zulu. None of the
participants could speak Te Reo Māori or any of the Pacific languages. Two Afrikaans women had attended English schools in South Africa, and one thought that it had made her adjustment in New Zealand easier. An English-speaking immigrant was surprised that this woman still spoke Afrikaans to her husband, but the participant thought it was unlikely that she would have started speaking English to her husband after 50 years of marriage. The other woman who had attended an English school in Natal had a British accent, so it was not so obvious that she was an Afrikaner. Two couples had Afrikaans-English marriages, and appeared to alternate between the two languages. One woman said because she did not speak English with a pronounced Afrikaans accent, she often had to explain to people that she was English and her husband was Afrikaans. She noticed that when they got together with their regular group of South African friends for a braai, only three people spoke English.

Some Afrikaans speakers initially found it difficult to follow what New Zealanders were saying, particularly on the phone or in the workplace. The telephone etiquette of Kiwis differed from what was customary in South Africa in the sense that they spoke very fast, without pausing, and then promptly ended the conversation. The Kiwi accent made it even harder, and a number of South Africans became concerned that they had possibly developed a hearing deficit. One woman found it difficult to take minutes at a work meeting, because people spoke too quickly and used unfamiliar abbreviations. She felt panicky about her apparent loss of English fluency, and found it difficult to focus as her attention was all over the place. One man recalled a humorous incident when a telephone sales person had become annoyed and slammed down the phone when he, after repeatedly attempts, told her that he could not follow the conversation because of her accent. He commented that “I suddenly realised that in this country, I’m the one with the foreign accent”. Most agreed that after a while they became “attuned” to the Kiwi accent and it sounded normal, which made it easier to understand people. However, New Zealanders found it difficult to pronounce Afrikaans
names and surnames, and often immigrants had to anglicise them to facilitate pronunciation. For instance, “Elise” and “du Toit” were often mispronounced as “’n Luis” and “de Twit”, which required some tweaking to “Elizabeth” and “du Twa” to avoid mispronunciation by Kiwis.

One family was a source of amusement to friends by imitating the Kiwi accent, including greetings by a Kiwi boss and the habit of shortening place names, such as “Pram” for Paraparaumu. However, Kiwis did not find their jokes about the Kiwi accent funny because it sounded normal to them. One person mentioned that when someone said “Vrystaat” in South Africa, everybody cheered up as they knew what it meant. A South African couple said when they told their new employee from South Africa to wear her “tekkies” (sneakers) to work she understood exactly what was required. In New Zealand, expressions such as “a shout” to celebrate something at work, or being invited for “tea” in the evening had been confusing in the beginning. Participants agreed that the Kiwis’ sense of humour was different from that of South Africans, and that only an Afrikaner could understand “a Boer’s” sense of humour. The reasoning was that one’s sense of humour reflected what was amusing in one’s own culture, and some aspects of humour were based on the vocabulary of a language, which was not translatable. Kiwis also did not understand the South African habit of sharing jokes to build relationships and relieve stress. One man recalled how his South African general practitioner in Wellington always greeted him with, “what joke do you have for me today” because he felt that New Zealand was a “joke desert”.

South Africans, including English speakers, experienced problems with articulation in New Zealand. South Africans were often criticised by New Zealanders for being arrogant and aggressive. One man said at work he was perceived as being too frank and outspoken, or he spoke too hastily and often felt he had to apologise for what he had said. Other participants agreed that Afrikaans speakers in particular got into trouble because they said things exactly
as they experienced it, and their directness and assertiveness were misinterpreted. For Afrikaners, directness stemmed from their Dutch heritage and was seen as a culturally appropriate way to address each other. Hence these statements did not sound aggressive in Afrikaans. An Afrikaans tourist to Holland said that she had experienced the same level of directness there, and it was accompanied by the same sense of humour as in South Africa. Scottish people displayed a similar kind of directness and humour. However, sometimes South Africans took exception to something the Kiwis said, particularly in the beginning. This could have stemmed from a lack of cultural understanding, and sometimes the concerns of South Africans may have been unfounded. One person said that speaking English was not such a huge culture shock for her as she was an English teacher. She suspected that it would probably have been more difficult for a person who was more staunchly Afrikaans or from a conservative background.

A number of Afrikaans participants expressed their concerns and sadness about attrition of their home language in New Zealand. They explained that because most Afrikaans speakers were bilingual, it was easier to switch to English than in monolingual cultures. One couple said that they had observed similar language attrition among Dutch-speaking immigrants. Older cultures and monolingual cultures, such as Polish, Hungarian and Portuguese, were more inclined to maintain their languages after immigration. One couple expressed their irritation and disbelief at Afrikaans immigrants faking attrition after a short settlement period. They cited the example of a person who was obviously Afrikaans-speaking, but insisted on speaking English at a social event and apologetically said that he could no longer speak Afrikaans after one year in New Zealand. Afrikaans parents reported that they were asked why they continued speaking Afrikaans at home, and were perplexed when people would query them continuing the use of their “home language”.
The main cause of language attrition appeared to be the lack of opportunities to use the language or not speaking Afrikaans at home. One woman still spoke Afrikaans to her extended family in South Africa, but her children, who had been raised in an English home, only spoke English to other family members. In South Africa, her daughter was able to have a conversation in Afrikaans, and their son knew the basics. After immigration their daughter still had the odd conversation in Afrikaans with friends, but their son ceased having any social interaction in Afrikaans. The parents agreed that their children had lost most of their Afrikaans language skills.

One woman was married to a Kiwi and did not have Afrikaans friends available in New Zealand. She was worried about her loss of language fluency and noticed that she sometimes could not think of the correct Afrikaans word or expression. She spoke English to her husband, and the only time she used Afrikaans was with her parents in New Zealand. During a visit by Afrikaans friends from South Africa, she spoke English when her husband was present because of her loyalty towards him. She had tried to teach him some Afrikaans words and expressions, and he used some Afrikaans expressions with her parents. She said it would be nice if he could learn more Afrikaans, but that it was not a big issue. Her husband said he would like to understand and speak Afrikaans better, as it would improve his insight and connection with his wife. To him it was important the way she communicated when she spoke Afrikaans, and he noticed the difference in her demeanour when she used Afrikaans nuances and jokes. For her it was like meeting an old friend and she suddenly became more relaxed. He emphasised that he did not mind her speaking Afrikaans during family visits as he did not feel excluded from the conversation. Instead of zoning out, he tuned in to the nonverbal aspects of the interaction to pick up on the feelings and emotions behind what was being said, and how people related and reacted to each other. He believed that we are constantly giving verbal and nonverbal cues about our character, and revealing things about
ourselves that people had not seen before. He had learnt to read nonverbal cues when he visited countries such as Thailand and India. He also found that in non-English-speaking countries, writing things down on paper was useful to bridge the communication gap, as most people could read and understand English better than speaking it.

Because Afrikaners were exposed to English while growing up in South Africa, it was easier for parents in New Zealand to speak English to their children at home. As children became used to speaking English at school and in social environments, the “death” of Afrikaans in New Zealand was feared if parents stopped speaking Afrikaans at home. Alienation occurred in families where parents continued to only speak Afrikaans with each other as it became a “secret language” that the children did not understand. Some participants felt that it was difficult to prevent the loss of Afrikaans at a group level owing to acculturation differences and language preferences. However, committed individuals could do something to maintain Afrikaans in New Zealand. One couple asserted that the loss of Afrikaans could be prevented by parents speaking Afrikaans with their children, and cited the example of their grandson who was a small child when he had arrived in New Zealand. His parents continued to speak Afrikaans to him and he was still able to read, write, understand and speak Afrikaans proficiently after many years. Despite being fluent in English, he still considered himself “Afrikaans”.

Some South Africans embarked on more public efforts to strengthen and maintain Afrikaans in New Zealand. One woman financed and presented an Afrikaans radio programme for 11 years with the signature tune “Waterblommetjies in die Boland”. She had the best collection of Afrikaans music in New Zealand, and even included music she did not like in an attempt to meet the preferences of her audience. She therefore felt frustrated that her Afrikaans friends did not listen to the broadcasts with the excuse that they did not like Afrikaans music. She hoped that some people might be interested in the programme, even if
she did not know who her listeners were. Despite the apparent lack of appreciation for her efforts, she found that she ended up liking Worsie Visser’s music. She felt that it was a good time in her life that added to her life experience. She was later joined by her husband and another South African woman on the programme. Her co-presenter recalled a humorous incident where she had made a comment in Afrikaans to the listeners about the electrician working in the studio being “under her feet”, and he had replied in English that he had better get going then. Both families kept the tapes of their broadcasts and still listened to the music, for instance, when they travelled. One person published her “just a minute” radio broadcast snippets of wisdom in Afrikaans, and also wrote a few articles for Rooi Rose. One man wrote a regular online newsletter, called “Brokkies” and two families mentioned meeting each other at an “Afrikaanse aand” arranged by him.

Afrikaans speakers explained the benefits of retaining their language in New Zealand. Speaking Afrikaans made South Africans readily recognisable to other immigrants. One woman cited an example where she was meeting new immigrants at the airport, but had never seen them and did not know what they looked like. However, when she spoke Afrikaans to her husband in the arrival hall, the relieved newcomers turned around and gave them a big hug. Afrikaners can also understand Dutch, Flemish and some German, and speaking Afrikaans helped to maintain cultural heritage and identity. Hennie said that “Afrikaans is the language of your heart and without it you lose part of your soul”. English could be a stumbling block for emotional expression. Participants agreed that Afrikaners needed someone to talk to in their own language, and it was useful to let off steam in Afrikaans.

Having an Afrikaans general practitioner made it easier to explain ailments without the stress of having to translate symptoms. One woman had an understanding boss who allowed her to express herself in Afrikaans, and to translate afterwards. She also used this technique in subsequent jobs. She had a colleague who bothered her when she had work to do. She could
tell her in Afrikaans to “leave her alone” and then politely asked in English if she wanted to go and sit down, which worked well. She humorously stated that perhaps it was her tone of voice that did the trick.

_Spiritual_

A man who was concerned about practising his religion in English said the following: “your father land and your mother tongue are two things that you cannot get out of you system as they are your head and your heart”. As a re-born Christian and a committed member of the Reformed Church of South Africa, he was worried about his ability to practise his faith in English, even though he could speak English. He bought an English bible and researched translations of the “Declaration of Faith”. He joined an English congregation in South Africa for bible study and learning to pray in English to prepare for immigration. Initially, it had been difficult practising his religion in English, but he concluded that attending an English church had not been an insurmountable problem. All families in this research project were religious or endorsed spiritual beliefs. Nine participants stated that they were Christian. Four participants were Catholic, two were Anglican and two were Presbyterian. Four people were Jewish, and one person said she respected all religions. One person was agnostic, and was more interested in Eastern philosophies. Two people had worked as Christian missionaries in Zimbabwe.

Four families clearly indicated that their immigration journeys had been guided by their religious beliefs. After the violent death of a family friend, one woman reflected on how many Christians had been killed in South Africa. She said that a number of events provided confirmation that it was the right time to leave South Africa. She believed God was in their plan as things had fallen quickly and smoothly in place for them. Her sentiments were that, “if God opens a door, we are walking through”. When things did not work out as planned
after immigration, her daughter believed that God let them come to New Zealand and would not disappoint them afterwards. Jill said: “God you let Moses go through the Red Sea, and you are going to help us through immigration, because we are not going back”. One man, who had taken a leadership role in bringing his family to New Zealand, relied on God to provide guidance by opening doors, providing information and directing them throughout the immigration process. He continuously sought confirmation from God that they were doing the right thing and that it was “of Him”. When things started to fall into place, they decided that the Lord was with them and that settling in Wellington was God’s will. They thanked God that things had worked out for them, and prayed for family members who were struggling with their residency applications. One couple believed that if one door closes, God opens another. They trusted in God and accepted that everything “works together for the good for those who love God”. Their connection with the church and their own in-depth bible study, as well as the acknowledgement of their dependence on God helped them to cope with their situation after immigration. They testified to the truth that He had never left them or forsaken them. One family said they always knew that their continued faith would be a telling factor in their success in New Zealand. One man had some “deep thoughts” about returning to South Africa and believed that each of our paths in life has been “worked out for us”. The family decided to see if the Lord would open the doors for them to return to South Africa, and thought that if it was God’s will they would return.

South Africa was a religious society and as churches were concerned about their members, they had a supervisory and caregiving role. People had a sense of responsibility and accountability because of the presence of the church and their families. This was illustrated by a mature, adult couple who were engaged, but lived in their separate homes prior to marriage. One person believed that some South Africans had used immigration to escape from their faith and religion, and the control the church had exercised over them.
Hence, they thought that they could do as they pleased in New Zealand. Some lost their religious identity, and owing to diminished responsibility it had been easier to divorce. However, two participants felt that they had been harassed by churchgoers in New Zealand. One retired person found that Kiwi church congregants in New Zealand had been critical and made hurtful comments about him being retired while his younger wife was still working. He thought that their criticism was unfair as he could not dictate to his wife whether she should work or stay at home, as the decision was up to her. He felt that despite the congregation praying together, they had been insensitive and pried into his personal life. He threatened that he would tell people their fortune, and if they did not change their attitude he would leave the church. Another person in a stable, long-term marriage stated that he had been nagged and hassled about religion during his youth and disliked being questioned about it. He became annoyed and frustrated at being cornered by other South Africans in New Zealand and subjected to persistent enquiries about his church affiliation. He found this line of personal questioning intrusive and felt that he was “dragged in” and criticised. He thus responded with avoidance tactics or a rebuff. He was reminded that church connections were of crucial importance to Afrikaners, and that they had perhaps expressed interest in his affiliation because they needed a recommendation or contact details for a suitable church for themselves.

New Zealand was regarded as a Christian state, but religion played a much smaller role in society than in South Africa. Most participants, however, felt that religious affiliation and churches had played an important role in society and facilitated their settlement. One woman was unsure what to enter on forms in New Zealand regarding religious affiliation as she always associated being “religious” with born-again Christians. However, as she was Catholic and went to mass, she regarded herself as “religious” in New Zealand. Another participant stated that her religion was crucial to her, and that the church was one of the
places that helped her to settle in New Zealand. Her beliefs had only changed in the sense that she had to “justify” for herself why she was a Christian as religion was not such an integral part of New Zealand society as it was in South Africa. However, she found that it was a good process for her. She was concerned about the lack of moral integrity and spiritual nourishment because New Zealand is a secular society. She observed a total lack of respect for their elders and the absence of a moral compass among the youth. Hence, adolescents were confused and without direction in life. However, she agreed that moral values were not necessarily dependent on formal religion, but felt that a sense of spiritual beliefs was important. Churches in New Zealand were also necessary to establish caring communities and to take care of children. Most participants agreed that church affiliation helped newcomers to establish connections with people who shared common beliefs, and it provided an infrastructure and a support network. A few participants indicated that it was a member of their church who had first invited them over to their home. A New Zealand woman, who had provided a South African family with accommodation, had invited them to attend her church. She indicated which neighbourhoods were in the “Christian belt” and recommended a local school with a Christian principal. Another Catholic family sent both their children to Catholic schools. A pastor’s wife suggested to one couple, who could not find employment, that they should buy a business. A couple who had married shortly after arrival said that a Christian friend they had met on the plane had played the wedding march beautifully at their wedding, and the minister had allowed them to have their wedding reception in the church hall.

Of the 23 participants, 17 stated that they had attended church regularly, while three said that they attended church less frequently than in South Africa owing to less family influence. Afrikaans speakers had not automatically joined the Afrikaanse Christen Kerk (ACK) of New Zealand, but instead had explored various options to find a church that suited
their needs. One family’s daughter had married a Portuguese man and had converted to Catholicism. A couple stated that they did not feel at home with South African churches in New Zealand. Instead, they preferred to attend a Kiwi church because it was similar to their church in South Africa. They found that the Kiwis at their church were extremely friendly, had made them feel welcome and had invited them over to their homes. The man who belonged to the Reformed Church in South Africa had found the contact details for the Reformed Church of New Zealand in the telephone directory. He found out that the church had also been established by Dutch settlers, and was similar to his church in South Africa. Church members visited them in the caravan park, welcomed them and offered assistance. He took the bus to visit the church and when he found that the church suited him, a big stumbling block was removed. He was happy to be a member of the Reformed Church of New Zealand, and felt that his participation was as meaningful to him as it was in South Africa. He had become a member of the church board and felt useful in service of the Lord. His wife had made a useful contribution by playing the church organ. He stated that he had retained his sense of responsibility and accountability in New Zealand, and had submitted to the authority of the church. He humorously added that the Reformed Church of New Zealand was more “Dopper than the Doppers in South Africa”, indicating that they were even stricter. One person said that after hearing a Samoan minister pray at the Knox church, she concluded that he had a personal relationship with God. She wanted to attend his Presbyterian church, despite having an Afrikaans church in their area. The church members, who were from various cultural groups and nationalities, functioned as a family group. She and her husband did a leadership course at the church, which they found meaningful. She also did radio broadcasts, and asked God to indicate whether someone was listening. It was gratifying the next Sunday when a young boy at church approached her and said that it had felt as if she had spoken to him personally to treat his sister better.
Two couples gave an account of the challenges of an interfaith and cross-cultural marriage. Ray was a Kiwi from a staunch Catholic tradition, while his South African wife was from an Afrikaans-Protestant background. Ray said that he was not strictly speaking a practising Catholic, but had attended church at Christmas and Easter when he returned to his home town. However, he did not object to his wife regularly attending services at her church on Sundays. As a child he had attended Catholic schools. As part of religious instruction they had studied other religions, such as Anglican, Presbyterian, Protestant and Eastern religions to understand the origins of their faith and what others believed. He had also read books on religious theology and psychosynthesis during his late teens. He realised that even though both him and his fiancée were Christians, their religious affiliations were poles apart. He also remembered how the Reformation had led to conflict in some countries, such as Ireland.

When they started going out they knew about each other’s religious affiliations, but his wife thought the differences between their religions did not matter. She had a sense that by them getting together, they would alter the differences in their religions at some level.

She knew that a Catholic Nuptial Mass was extremely important to Ray, and was happy to forego a marriage in the Protestant Church. Ray, however, had predicted that it would be an interesting wedding, and was concerned about how he was going to convince a Catholic priest to allow him to marry a Protestant. He remembered that when he had been a teenager, couples had written letters to the bishop about this, but because Protestants were not allowed to marry in the Catholic Church these couples had been compelled to have a civil service. In order to marry in the Catholic Church, couples were expected to arrange a meeting with the priest to discuss relationship issues and other matters. Ray thought they had a good chance of convincing the priest, because his fiancée knew her bible well and would be able to have a conversation with him. He would be able to demonstrate that he was knowledgeable about the bible, but had to rely on insights gained at Catholic school a number of years ago.
In preparation, he had researched the different premises between their faiths on the internet. He also went to her church and observed that some books in the Protestant bible were not considered books of the bible by the Catholics. The premise of the Eucharist was also a fundamental difference between their religions. Catholics believed that the priest actually turned the bread and water into the body and blood of Jesus. Even though it did not physically happen, the symbolism was so strong that people believed that it did. In contrast, Protestants believed that the bread and water were purely symbolic. The meaning of the Eucharist was two sides of the same coin, but could not be reconciled because of this ideological difference.

They went to see the priest and Ray had to convince him that he was serious, and that marrying in the Catholic Church meant a lot to him. The priest hinted that they would still be able to get married via a civil service if a nuptial mass was not granted. However, owing to his Catholic beliefs, Ray would not marry if a nuptial mass was declined. Because the priest’s brother had married a Protestant, he had first-hand experience about wanting to marry someone you love, but also holding your faith in high regard. Hence, he wrote a letter to the bishop and permission for a nuptial mass was granted, despite this being a rare occurrence. The priest made it clear that the church had not relaxed its views on this issue, and that this was a special dispensation. Ray admitted that they had been lucky to pull off a nuptial mass because he did not know of another couple who managed to do it. His fiancée was not allowed to take part in the mass, but the priest gave her a special blessing as part of the ceremony. She thought that taking her vows in a Catholic church in front of God was acceptable as He would be present anyway. The priest made it clear that she could not receive the Eucharist when she accompanied Ray to religious services. In a big, inner city church, the priest would not know who the person was who came up to receive the Eucharist, and nobody would rush up to tell her that she was not allowed to do so. However, if she received the
Eucharist it implied that she believed in the Catholic faith. For the same reason, Ray could not have communion in her church. After a few years of being married, they hardly ever talked about the differences in their beliefs, and she had accepted the fundamental differences between their religions. Accepting that his faith was something he had grown up with, and was part of him, meant that she accepted him for who he was. Ray emphasised that if he married in the Catholic Church and divorced, he would never again be allowed to marry in the Catholic Church. An application could be made to the bishop in case of irreconcilable differences where there was a complete breakdown of the marriage. After people had gone through a process of counselling, the bishop would annul the marriage. In other words, he could have his marriage dissolved in the Catholic Church, but could not remarry in the eyes of God and the church. As Ray put it, “You only get one shot at marriage”. He said that some people saw Catholics as two-faced or hypocritical, but if you understood how and why things were done, it all made sense.

Another example of a marriage across two cultures and faiths was that of a Jewish, South African man and a Kiwi woman, who had been brought up in the Church of England. She had not known any Jewish people before she had met her husband in the United Kingdom, and she had converted to Judaism when they married. The family had been members of Jewish congregations in the United Kingdom and South Africa prior to immigrating to New Zealand. In South Africa and the United Kingdom, Jewish people had a particular “look” that distinguished them from broader society. Judaism was more visible in South Africa because religion was always stated on official forms and people were more overt about their religious affiliation. In South Africa, the Jewish community represented a wealthy sector of the community as many Jews were involved in successful businesses. The ultra orthodox Jews lived in a particular area, and there was less interaction between orthodox and reformed communities than in New Zealand. South Africa had many Jewish communities
and people went to a synagogue in the community where they lived, which meant that people interacted within certain socioeconomic groups. Even though the congregations differed from each other, the services in the various synagogues were the same. Children had more peers to choose from in their communities and had more in common with them, and thus spent a lot of time with their Jewish friends. The family found that there were more Jews in the United Kingdom than in New Zealand, and there was also less interaction between orthodox and reformed communities. However, they had to travel about 30 minutes to their nearest synagogue. The family did not have many Jewish friends in the United Kingdom because they had only lived there for about three years. When they had arrived in New Zealand, their daughter had been ready for her Bat Mitzvah. It was therefore important for them to join a synagogue, and her father was the driving force behind their membership.

In New Zealand, the Jews were less visible, because religion was less important and the numbers were smaller than in South Africa. For instance, the Prime Minister, Mr John Key’s mother was Jewish, but he did not consider himself to be Jewish. The Jewish population consisted of only 12,000 people within 350 families, and the ultra orthodox Jews “could be counted on one hand”. In New Zealand, some people atypically convert to Judaism when they were older, and this makes it more difficult to distinguish Jews in New Zealand society. In Wellington, there were only two synagogues: the one is orthodox and the other reformist. There was thus more interaction between orthodox and reformed communities in New Zealand than in South Africa or the United Kingdom. Wellington was a melting pot of socioeconomic groups, which was reflected in the one reformist synagogue they had to join as they were not orthodox. In their congregation were only three or four business people, as well as a few academics and musicians. Some of the people were a bit too left wing and strange, compared to this family’s outlook. The New Zealand Jewish community was also less ambitious to achieve commercial success. They felt like a square peg in a round hole at
their synagogue, and found that they had more in common with the orthodox community. Hence they were not close friends with families at their synagogue, and did not invite them to their home. Instead they befriended people in the orthodox community because they had a similar outlook on life. Their daughter had better friendships with Jewish people in overseas communities, and had only one Jewish friend in New Zealand.

Because New Zealand did not have a strong Jewish community, it was more difficult being a Jew in New Zealand than in South Africa, London or Australia. Maintaining the Jewish community also required more work. The father of the family volunteered his free time and joined the board of their synagogue. He became more involved in the operational aspects of the synagogue rather than the religious side. His involvement also made it easier for him to slot in at their synagogue. He put a lot of effort into the synagogue as well as the Jewish community, and found it rewarding. He stated that it was important to maintain their Jewish identity, and ensured that at home Jewish festivals were organised. However, his wife said that some parts of Jewish traditions were not that enjoyable to her. After 20 years, she still found a church more familiar than a synagogue. If she went to a church in her neighbourhood, people in the congregation would be more similar to her as there was a larger selection of churches than synagogues in Wellington. Her husband still enjoyed going to Shul as he found it relaxing and he could “switch off from everything”. His daughter also stated that she enjoyed going to Shul, and she valued and enjoyed taking part in Jewish family traditions, for instance, Yom Kippur. In South Africa, the paternal grandmother had ensured that Jewish traditions were maintained by the family getting together on Friday nights. She was the matriarch of the family and became upset and annoyed if the family did not come around for Shabbat eve. Even though they celebrated Jewish holy days in New Zealand, it was not the same without their family in South Africa.
One couple stated that as Christians they lived much closer to the Lord in New Zealand than ever before. They added that a worldly person would really struggle in New Zealand, and might not make it. The husband felt that what had helped him to survive were books and compact discs by Joyce Meyer, and he believed he would not have made it without these resources. In contrast, a woman said that she used to be quite religious and had strong faith as a young child and adolescent. As an adult she sometimes longed for that sense of solace and naivety that all will be well. She and her husband no longer had a particular religious affiliation, and both were interested in broader spiritual principles, including Buddhism. They acknowledged the spiritual path as a “gateless gate”, indicating that one cannot return to a previous state of “innocence” and faith. Some participants reflected on their ongoing journey to old age and death. One man believed that it was true what the bible said: “As you get older your spirit will become stronger, because it cannot age. The spirit does not reside in the brain and observes the frustrations of an ageing body”. He and his wife accepted that death was the ultimate immigration journey that awaited us all. They commented that at least they would not be burdened by financial worries for the journey after death “as a shroud has no pockets”.

Physical environmental factors

Participants commented on the differences in their physical environment after arrival in terms of natural and human-made structures.

Natural

Most families agreed that South Africa was a beautiful place and they had enjoyed the landscape and climate. One family who used to go hiking in the forests, along rivers and in the mountains said that they longed for the rugged rock formations and landscape of areas
like the Cederberg. One man had found it extremely difficult to leave the beautiful South African landscape behind, such as the Swartberg pass and the Karoo. A woman said she was a “Bushveld kind of person”, and her husband had learnt to appreciate it as well. A Kiwi man, who had accompanied his South African wife on a visit to South Africa, thought that the South African landscape looked similar to that in New Zealand, but his wife disagreed. Most participants said that the weather and climate were fantastic in South Africa. They enjoyed the many hours of sunshine and the warm climate, which was vastly different from what they encountered in New Zealand. A child commented on how hot it was and how little it rained during a return visit to South Africa. One family wistfully remembered Johannesburg’s good weather that permitted an outdoor social life with their friends, such as lighting the fire for a braai and the kids spending their time in the swimming pool. One man said he longed for the smell of the earth after a thunder storm on a hot summer’s day. By contrast, one person said that prior to immigration she had felt miserable and uneasy when it rained in Cape Town.

A few people commented on the trees and animals they had grown up with in South Africa, including specific sounds and smells they had been accustomed to. Louise added: “the sense of connection with the South African landscape and animals was almost on a primitive level”. One woman described herself as a “nature person” who loved animals, birds, flowers and gardens. She missed tortoises and the chameleons in her lemon tree in the back yard. Her daughter loved South African animals and birds, and had her own budgies. A family who had been on hiking trips had an interest and excellent knowledge of South African birds and trees. Two women enjoyed game parks, and in New Zealand missed not being able to go to a game reserve to see the animals. Another said she missed laughing doves and the early morning sounds of birds. Three women commented on the sound of hadedas flying over the house and the sound of turtle doves that could always be heard in the background. Someone added that sometimes when she watched Animal Planet on television she would specifically listen to the
sound of the turtle doves, and another said that even after many years in New Zealand it still brought tears to her eyes. People also missed the sound of crickets and frogs in the evenings, which was almost deafening. “Vrystaat” (pseudonym) eloquently stated: “I return to South Africa because I want to eat the glue of a thorn tree and sip the nectar of blue gum blossoms. I want to kick up some dust with my feet. I want to smell the rain upon the dry earth and I want to buy a large paw paw and eat it all by myself”.

Participants also expressed their appreciation for the beauty of the New Zealand landscape, but most found the weather and climate problematic. During sightseeing visits and holidays in New Zealand, people commented on the beauty of the Botanical gardens in Wellington, the view from Mount Victoria, the Rumataka hills, and Mount Holdsworth near Masterton. A number of people commented on the opportunities for exploration and adventure in New Zealand. One family used their four-by-four vehicle to explore off the beaten track locations such as Red Rocks in Wellington and mountainous terrain in Palmerston North. They commented on the many photos they took along their journeys. One man, who preferred the seaside, appreciated living on an island where one was never more than about 128 km away from the sea. He enjoyed living on the Kapiti coast because it provided opportunities for fishing, kayaking and long walks on the beach after work. He stated that when the sun was shining, Kapiti was as pretty as a picture and it was a paradise. Generally, the beach at their home had small waves, unlike the large waves in South Africa. When the wind was not blowing, the sea looked like a lake. One woman enjoyed going on long walks in the veldt on her own and said she was happy to be in this beautiful country where she could take a walk in nature without being afraid of snakes, despite the long grass. In contrast, another woman said she found it disconcerting to suddenly be in such a strange environment. Her impressions were that the New Zealand landscape was just too green, soft and friendly, and said it felt as if she had a phobia about green.
There is a marked difference between the South African and New Zealand climates, and participants expressed their shock at the cold, wet, windy and misty weather upon arrival. One family said that pre-migration information indicated that New Zealand was much cooler than South Africa, but now they knew what the term “cool” meant. New Zealand had less sunshine than South Africa, and some years, the weather in New Zealand was worse than others. People generally described the Wellington weather as “dreadful” and “problematic”, and one couple said that the year they had arrived the weather had been extremely foul. The husband had arrived in September and had expected it to be summer. He had not brought a warm coat and had been “frozen to the marrow”. His wife had been in New Zealand for 15 days before the sun had come out for the first time, and she said it was awful not seeing the sun for so long. In winter it was dark at five o’clock in the afternoon, and at six o’clock she would think it was bedtime already. She had given the dresses she used to wear to friends and family in South Africa because they were useless in a cold country, and she had switched slacks and multiple layers of clothing to stay warm. One person had initially lived on the West Coast of the South Island upon arrival, but found the cold and wet weather depressing. She eventually settled in Wellington, but said she would not live there if she had the choice. She added that it was more tolerable because she was with the person she loved and wanted to be with. A father, who had arrived in Wellington in June, had been met with a beautiful blue sky and an icy wind, and it had snowed on the Rumataka hills when his family have arrived in August. The family had initially settled in Masterton where the weather was extremely cold and frosty in winter, which made an adequately heated home essential. Another family said it had been freezing when they arrived in May, and the wife had felt that the cold and wet winters were too much for her. They had found Wellington and its suburbs too windy and rainy, and eventually settled on the Kapiti coast. Her husband agreed that it rained a lot in Kapiti, but he loved the area whether it rained, hailed or snowed. The rain did
not keep them from going out, and he would put on his rain coat and carry on with garden work despite the rain. Another woman said that the wind did not really bother her. One couple preferred living in Nelson as it had cold nights and frosty mornings in winter, but the days were nice and sunny. Families also found that the weather affected their lifestyle, as getting together with friends for a braai, or having a swimming pool was dependent on a warm, sunny climate. However, one family concluded that it did not help to complain about the bad weather, and that people just had to accept it.

One couple said that they had been unaware of the frequent earthquakes when they had immigrated. When the husband looked at internet sites in New Zealand, he realised that the Wellington region had about 30 earthquakes per day. He was also surprised to learn that Auckland had 40 “non-active” volcanoes. Despite living in an earthquake region, he had only felt three of four earthquakes during his three years in New Zealand. The couple recalled an incident during a Wellington earthquake when a friend from Christchurch had been visiting them. At first they thought the shaking was due to their washing machine, but only after their guest stormed out of the house, did they realise that they had just experienced an earthquake. In Taupo they had experienced an earthquake that had made the whole building “swing”. However, they were apparently “not bothered” by the persistent threat of earthquakes.

Participants varied in their responses about the different species of plant and bird life in New Zealand, such as the Tuis (native bird). One father made a video recording for his family, and bought his daughter a book about New Zealand birds to ease her transition. One woman expressed her disappointment with bird life in New Zealand and said that lots of birds had been imported from England in the 1860s. She also noticed that a number of plants in New Zealand came from South Africa. When faced with the strangeness and unfamiliarity with the birds and trees during a walk in the Botanical gardens, another woman experienced an acute sense of loss and sadness. She realised that she did not know the names of birds and
trees in New Zealand. She found it interesting when she realised how important the names of trees were to her after being raised among South African trees. Her husband, however, thought it was an exciting adventure and was eager to learn the new names of birds and trees. Two men also commented that they did not miss the barking dogs, characteristic of South African neighbourhoods.

*Human made*

Participants commented on the differences in the size of the country and urban landscapes between South Africa and New Zealand. One participant said that it used to take him about 12 hours by car on the highway from Pretoria to Cape Town or Windhoek, but then he had to “step on it”. Another said that he preferred to travel to Cape Town via plane because of the long distance. A person, who had lived in Johannesburg for a long time, remembered the scenic parts of the city, such as Joubert Park. Another commented that Johannesburg was a large city where things were spread out. Two participants mentioned that they were fond of Cape Town, which was a large, metropolitan city. One man had lived in Cape Town most of his life and missed the small things. A participant said that if she wrote a book about her immigration journey, the illustration on the front cover would be an aerial view the lights of Cape Town as she saw it from the aeroplane on the day of her departure. Her Kiwi husband said that after visiting the places where she had lived and grown up, such as George and Cape Town, he had understood her better. One couple wanted to live in Nelson because it reminded them of George. A family had been told that Masterton was in many ways similar to Cape Town, but after their arrival had found things a bit strange and vastly different from Cape Town. However, another family said that some places in New Zealand looked a bit like Cape Town. The Kiwi husband said that Stellenbosch made him feel like he
was back in New Zealand. One morning he woke up and did not know where he was as he could not tell from his surroundings whether he was in South Africa or New Zealand.

Two people had visited Auckland because of job offers, but had disliked the city and one said it looked like Germiston. One family had initially settled in a rural area between Carterton and Masterton. The father of the family still remembered his surprise when he woke up the first morning and saw sheep outside his window. Masterton was a lovely little town to start off in and they still loved visiting it, but did not want to live there permanently.

They stayed in Masterton until they found a tenant for their house, and then moved to Wellington. When the grandfather visited from South Africa he preferred the rural set up in Masterton and enjoyed taking walks around town. He said that Wellington’s hills made it confusing during walks as he would go in on one side and come out on another side of a road.

One day, on her way to work in Wellington, a woman found it quite traumatic when she realised that she was in a strange place and that all the buildings were unfamiliar to her. She thought that perhaps people in rural towns had a better settlement experience than those in cities. Another family found that even though their daughter liked Wellington, the hustle and bustle of Wellington did not suit her parents.

Participants also travelled to other parts of New Zealand for work or leisure. One man said he was fortunate to travel to Christchurch fortnightly for work, and had also been to the Western areas of the South Island. One family had been to the Northern point of the ninety-mile beach, where the two oceans meet. The first time they travelled from Wellington to Auckland, they had slept over three times. However, when they became more accustomed to the narrower roads in New Zealand they travelled back from the top to bottom of the North Island, which was as far as Durban from Cape Town, in 15 hours with only a few, short breaks. One participant said that before immigrating she had looked at a world map and saw that New Zealand was a tiny island in the Pacific.
Ocean. However, when she realised how big it was, compared to Mauritius, she had no problem coming to New Zealand.

Participants noted the difference in the style and quality of homes in New Zealand, compared to what they had had in South Africa. Most people were used to facebrick homes and one woman said that she wanted a “solid” house like in South Africa, instead of the wooden homes in New Zealand. A number of families started off in rental homes, but found that they had small rooms without built-in cupboards and lots of stairs. They were dismayed at being shown a range of musty homes by rental agents. Most had to buy a house they could afford, and not necessarily one that suited them best. One older couple had looked at 57 houses before they had bought a home. They eventually bought a double-storey house, despite having to go up and down stairs. One couple stated that foreigners, including South African immigrants, were looking for neat, new homes to rent because New Zealand houses were so damp. They had built a brand new, warm home in Masterton that was insulated and had double glazing as protection against the cold and frosty winters. When they had moved to Wellington they had rented their home to an elderly English immigrant, who said that she had got much better value for money in Masterton, compared to her one-bedroom flat in Wellington. People noted that it was really safe in New Zealand and houses did not need burglar bars. Some eventually became used to New Zealand’s “cardboard” houses and others said they were not bothered by the wooden homes.

Economic factors

The ability to obtain employment after immigration and adapting to the workplace affected people’s identity, their financial security and their social status in society. Prior to immigration, most families had already been through the process of building a life for themselves in terms of career, belongings, real estate and financial security. Twelve
participants were in full-time employment and one couple was working in their own business. Two women were home makers. One person had accepted a redundancy package, two had taken an early retirement package and one was a pensioner. Three children were still at school. Nine families owned their own homes, and one person shared a flat with a friend. One family mentioned that their mortgage was nearly paid off. Owing to a government subsidy, it was profitable for one family to buy a bigger property for investment purposes, and they had a 600 square metre home. Another family, who had sold their renovated house, said it would now be worth 1.5 to 2 million rand. One couple was preparing for retirement and were relying on their two properties, retirement annuities and pension fund for financial security. They also had timeshare for holiday purposes. Two families had decided not to sell their homes when they left South Africa, but to rent them out instead. From the interviews it appeared that most participants were reliant on their own vehicles for transport in South Africa. One family mentioned having owned a 4x4 vehicle and another had brought their bakkie and caravan to New Zealand. Three families acknowledged that snobbery was prevalent in South African society. People’s sense of importance and status was based on their career, their belongings and the neighbourhood in which they lived. People were inclined to look down on someone who was unemployed, and nobody received an unemployment benefit. One person talked about her financial worries after moving back to South Africa without having a job and a car. Another family confirmed that it would be hard finding work if they decided to return. In South Africa, only the very poor received a small state pension that most people could not survive on. One couple stated that nobody in New Zealand experienced or understood the hardship and poverty to the extent they knew it among the population of South Africa.
Employment

Participants came from various professional backgrounds, such as scientists, researchers, engineers, electrical and radio technicians, chartered accountants, business analysts, teachers, translators, beauty therapists, administration clerks and receptionists. Prior to immigration, some had worked in economic sectors, such as publication and printing, information technology, communication and the shipping industry. One person had had a management position and another had been self-employed. Two people commented that they had had good, solid jobs and were happy in the workplace. Four participants had long-standing work histories with their employers. One person, who had been working at same company for ten years, was a supervisor and was fairly well paid. Another said it was not in his nature to change jobs frequently, and after 25 years he had held a senior position at a semi-government organisation. One man, who was an operational foreman, had worked for a large government organisation for 38 years and was close to retirement. A participant talked about being taught and mentored for many years in his specialised field of engineering. He had had a good boss, who was almost like a father to him, and said this depicted a certain era in South African history. He commented that it was pleasant to know people in the workplace who were supportive and encouraging. This man had held a senior position for many years, and had been valued and well respected in his profession. He said that in South Africa engineers were very down to earth as most had spent a large part of their careers working in the field; they put their hearts into their work and were willing to put their own duties aside to help a colleague. They completed projects with care and did not rush tasks as they were working with people’s lives and millions of rand of equipment. At his workplace, engineers knew how many projects they had for the year and used their own initiative to complete them on time.
Other participants were less satisfied with their former careers and workplace circumstances. One person had not been happy in the teaching profession, and had taken a voluntary redundancy package. Because she had been unsure of her career alternatives, she had done waitressing while she decided what she wanted to do. Another person recounted how he had needed a guard to accompany him to service centres in black areas for safety reasons. He commented that in the past all the managers and supervisors in the government and private sectors had been white people. He thus found it hard to imagine a workplace where instructions and career progression depended on a black person. However, he thought that today’s young people in South Africa might not have a problem if management consisted of black people. One woman reported that family members had written on Facebook that their employers were installing security cameras on all floors under the guise of security concerns, despite having had no burglaries. She thought it must be awful for employees to work while being watched on security cameras. One person who had emigrated from South Africa via the United Kingdom said that he had felt a bit disillusioned with the corporate world. Share options in companies made people look wealthy on paper, but it had all disappeared in a puff of smoke on account of an economic downturn after the Dotcom bubble had burst. He also found that because of a daily commute of four hours he had not had a great quality of life in London.

Some participants had utilised immigration consultants or contacted recruitment agents to find suitable employment in New Zealand. One family had found that using an immigration advisor was costly, but she had made useful recommendations for job opportunities. She had done an assessment of their qualifications and working background, recommended suitable jobs and provided contact details for employers to arrange interviews. When the father travelled to New Zealand, he had found that prospective employers could not offer him a job, but they had provided useful information about other companies to expand
his search, including contact details of managers and human resources personnel. He had travelled from Auckland to Christchurch and had had numerous interviews. Several companies did have job vacancies, but would only offer them to him if he was living in New Zealand. They were also not willing to pay for his relocation. They had recommended that he reapply once his residency had been approved, which he did. He had faxed five companies that looked promising to enquire about a job vacancy for him. One company suggested a further interview and another company offered him a job. One man had been recruited by a recruitment agent who had advertised in a local newspaper while on holiday in South Africa. This man decided to get in touch with the agent to obtain more information about the job. An interview was arranged within a week and his contract was signed shortly thereafter. As the agent knew that South Africans were good workers, two people had been simultaneously employed by the same company. The New Zealand company had sorted out the family’s paperwork, which had made relocation much easier for them. They had also paid for the employee’s plane ticket and medicals, as well as his family’s passports. In addition, the company had provided accommodation for one month after arrival in New Zealand. A third participant had used an employment agency to circulate his curriculum vitae, and had flown to Auckland for a job interview. He had turned down the job because he disliked Auckland, but had been contacted by another company in Wellington two years later who had offered him a position.

However, not all participants had had such a positive experience with agents and had later questioned the accuracy of information supplied to them. One couple said that immigration consultants had led them to believe that they could simply come to New Zealand on a visitor’s visa, find employment, obtain a work visa and then apply for permanent residency. One of the immigration consultants had taken their curriculum vitae, but they had never heard from them again. Neither of these participants had formal qualifications or
experience that would fill a skill shortage in New Zealand, and upon arrival they realised that it would not be so easy finding work and organising work visas. Another man with an impressive curriculum vitae was also assured by immigration recruitment agents that he would find work if he came to New Zealand, and thus expected to find employment and start working upon arrival. However, he had to make numerous phone calls and had to show prospective employers what he could offer them. He stated that he had never worked so hard during a “holiday” in a foreign country because he had to prepare a lecture for employers. He found out that they had offered the project to other people as well, but the other contenders had not been interested. He had thus taken up the offer of a three-year contract as a consultant, which had subsequently been renewed several times because he had been able to obtain sufficient contracts.

Some participants had been able to continue with their professions in New Zealand, but some were employed at a lower level of expertise or seniority. An electrical technician, a person working in the information technology field, a researcher, a person in the printing industry, a beauty therapist, two receptionists and most of the teachers had been able to find appropriate employment. An electrical engineer and a highly qualified scientist had secured contractual positions with consultancy firms in New Zealand. One young man, who had completed a Damelin course in South Africa, was employed by a large department store in New Zealand. Another young person was employed by a video store. Two women assisted with bookkeeping and other administrative duties in their husbands’ businesses, and one retiree did part-time work. Three mothers initially stayed at home to help their families to settle, and had found part-time employment after a few months. One had applied for a teacher aid position at a primary school to “ease into” the New Zealand teaching environment, and found that she had settled better into a teacher’s job than expected. One family reported that their son had also adjusted well to his first teaching post at a high decile school in
Wellington. He had subsequently moved to two other schools and was also content there. Another teacher had started off with a short-term relief position in a small South Island town, but had found the behaviour of the students challenging. She had subsequently taken a longer-term relief job at a better school, which she found more satisfactory. Once she had obtained a permanent position at a higher decile school she had got to know people better, and could build connections with colleagues. She emphasised the importance of employment because it allowed people to “make roots” and meet people. She also stated that she was better off financially than if she had stayed in South Africa. Another woman had started looking for a job after three months because she was not used to sitting at home. She enjoyed her work and was still with the same employer after nine years.

At the time of being interviewed, three people were retired, and one had resigned his job with the prospect of returning to South Africa. One couple had difficulty finding work in the smaller town where they lived, but managed to secure full-time jobs in Wellington. However, it meant a long daily commute between home and work. The wife had held quite a few jobs after that, and stated that she had been extremely lucky with work in New Zealand. Three other participants mentioned a long daily commute or complex arrangements for getting to work. One businessman had to drive between the Wellington region to the head office of his company in Palmerston North on a daily basis. One couple had tried various options for commuting to work, such as the bus and train. Most of the time the husband had dropped his wife off at work, parked the car at a nearby train station and then caught the train into Wellington. Another man regularly travelled by train from the Hutt Valley into Wellington central, and had to change his travel arrangements when the company moved to the Northern suburbs of Wellington. He also had to travel overseas for his work, but his wife was able to accompany him.
Despite having good qualifications and finding employment, some participants reported that companies did not recognise their current level of development and underutilised their skills, which prevented professional growth. One person felt pushed into doing inferior work that was below his level of expertise. Because he had spent many years studying for his qualifications until late in his life, he felt that it was not time yet for a career change. Some participants had found that positions for their previous occupations were not available or not financially viable in New Zealand. A family talked about a man who had held a high ranking position with a large motor company in South Africa, but was pumping petrol in New Zealand to make a living. Andries explained this as follows: “it is typical for South African immigrants to find out that the employment glove does not fit exactly, except perhaps for those in Information Technology”. He added that “you have to work at it to make the employment glove fit”. One person, who was a chartered accountant and had previously worked as an Information Technology manager, had made enquiries about suitable jobs in New Zealand a few years before but had found that none were available at the time. Eventually he was invited to join and help to develop a family business in the hospitality industry in New Zealand. He felt ready to take on the risks, challenges and rewards of being the managing director and shareholder in a family-owned business. He commented that corporate transfers and other organised relocations where costs were covered, jobs were secured, and the people and company culture were known made moving to another country a lot easier.

One person in the printing industry found that her former occupation was not well paid in New Zealand. In addition, job opportunities were scarce as most of the work was outsourced to Singapore to cut costs. She realised that she would have to consider another career, and was working as an executive assistant. Another person also realised that he had to make adaptations and started to focus on his other abilities, such as skills in carpentry and the
martial arts. A person, who had been self-employed in the radio communication industry, had been used to doing everything on his own in South Africa. However, in New Zealand all communication systems were managed by Telecom and Vodafone, and he could not compete with these large service providers. He realised that his line of business did not offer opportunities in New Zealand, and it posed a challenge to provide an income for his family. When an employer became desperate after losing four employees within two months, this participant had worked for him for a few months. He felt that he meant a lot to the employer as he could work independently, and being employed assisted his permanent residency application.

The South Africans who were currently immigrating appeared to have less qualifications and skills than those in the past, and thus found it harder to enter and settle in New Zealand. It was stressful for South Africans who arrived on tourist visas and then tried to find jobs. To these people it felt like they had to start from the beginning again in New Zealand. However, most realised that they had to find a job and get on with life, because they had to make it work in a new country. People believed that immigrants became a burden on the state if they were unemployed. One man asserted that he did hard and menial work to supplement his income as he wanted to do something instead of just sitting at home. A participant observed that a number of immigrants with overseas qualifications were driving taxis in New Zealand to ensure that their children had the opportunity to be educated. The children of these immigrants would become part of the fabric of New Zealand society in the next generation. He believed that countries such as New Zealand should still welcome immigrants, because they added diversity. Jo concluded that, “migrants with a good work ethic, and who have to work to make ends meet are the ones who add the most value to society”.
Nonetheless, eight people were unemployed despite their best efforts to find work. Five of these had permanent residency, one had a work visa and two were in New Zealand on visitor’s visas. One person on a visitor’s visa was offered the first job she had applied for. However, owing to the worldwide recession, all job applications had to go through WINZ and as a Kiwi could be trained to do the work, the company was not allowed to employ her. She had applied for a job at a different company and was prepared to do anything they asked, but was still unsuccessful. Three families mentioned that South Africans were generally better qualified and more experienced than the average New Zealander, and thus posed a threat for Kiwis as they were afraid that South Africans would take their jobs. For instance, beauty therapists studied for three years in South Africa compared to a one-year training course in New Zealand. One person explained that he had been a foreman with many years’ experience in South Africa, and had been used to managing a heavy workload. He had applied for a number of jobs, and had had four interviews without any success. Only afterwards had he realised that by telling his prospective employers that he could do much more than they expected of him, he was perceived as a threat and they were not keen to employ him. This sentiment was echoed by another prospective employee who was turned down after using terminology, indicative of her extensive work experience, which the interviewer was not familiar with.

One person mentioned that the lack of work experience in New Zealand was an obstacle, and that obtaining the necessary experience was difficult as nobody wanted to employ her. A participant, who was highly experienced in the teaching profession, found that his age counted against him and that employers would not even give him a daily relief post. Another person with a master’s degree also found that her age was a barrier to employment, but it allowed her to accompany her husband on frequent business trips overseas. A person, who was unhappy at work, had approached other companies in the Wellington region for
alternative positions, but without much success. He commented that businesses moved slowly in New Zealand and most prospective employers told him that “perhaps later” something would become available. This left him feeling extremely frustrated as he wanted to “live his life”. Because he felt that he could no longer continue at his workplace, he resigned and became a “beach bum” for three months before taking up employment in South Africa.

Of the eight people who faced unemployment, one became a homemaker and an author, one did sporadic office jobs, one did volunteer work, two did additional training to expand their skills, and one bought and renovated houses for a profit. Four eventually established their own businesses. One man started conducting Tai Chi classes at colleges as part of their Community Adult Education programmes. This led to him establishing his own Tai Chi school in the Wellington Region. One couple on visitor’s visas were encouraged to start a business in New Zealand, but felt that they lacked experience. However, they eventually decided to buy a franchise, which enabled them to obtain a business visa just before their visitor’s visas expired. The husband became the managing director of the business, and his wife handled the administrative duties. Their business visa required them to employ one Kiwi or permanent resident by the second year of business, which they exceeded. They also employed another South African immigrant, and found that she fitted in well with their company. They thought that by Kiwi standards they were doing quite well financially in their business. They were respected by clients and were receiving other referrals from them. They were known to be a trustworthy franchise and the head office directed prospective franchisees to them for guidance. Overall, they thought that buying a business franchise had worked out well in the end, despite their misgivings about not being “business people”. They said that if they were told at the immigration seminars they attended in South Africa about the option of a business visa, they could have landed in New Zealand with this visa and saved themselves a lot of worry and hardship.
One man had moved to a town with a warmer climate without having employment. The couple had lived in a caravan and heard about a business for sale after the owner had developed serious health problems. The participant bought the business, despite having no experience in the particular line of work. He sought advice from the owners of similar businesses and attended training courses in Auckland and Melbourne to obtain the necessary skills. The previous owner of the business was competent and well respected by his clients, and as the new owner he decided that he would do his best to help his customers. His efforts paid off and he ran a successful business for 11 years. Despite his difficulties finding employment, he said they had never really struggled financially as he had utilised various alternative strategies to earn a living. A decline in his eyesight during his sixties made the intricate work he was doing problematic. Since he was eligible for New Zealand superannuation, he had sold the business and retired. One person in his seventies stated that he was not ready to retire yet and was still working every day. He observed that employment for older people was not problematic as long as they did not occupy an official post wanted by others. Employers were willing to take on elderly employees on a temporary basis and pay them by the hour. Temporary work provided a salary for older employees, and it filled important service gaps in the community.

Workplace conditions

Having a fulfilling, lucrative career and feeling valued as an employee who “fitted in” at work played a significant role in successful settlement. One woman said that she worked with wonderful Kiwi ladies, who were caring and loving people, which made her job much easier. She described her workplace as *Ikhaya*, meaning a home away from home. She noticed that Kiwis frequently changed jobs, but she was happy to stay in her “comfort zone”. Through the years she had watched people leaving her workplace, only to return later on as
they were not happy elsewhere. One employer, who had a positive view of South African employees, recruited two people simultaneously in South Africa. Having another South African colleague starting at the same time made it easier to settle in at work. One family had found the working environment in New Zealand less stressful and observed that managers were more laid back. If employees were a few minutes late for work it was not a big problem, and therefore people did not have to rush to get to work on time. This was in contrast with South Africa where money would be deducted from an employee’s pay on the second day of tardiness. In New Zealand, if employees were having a conversation and the boss walked in, they would continue talking and the boss would join the conversation. Managers did not treat employees differently on account of their workplace roles, for instance, they would greet them at weekend sport games. One person found that employers in New Zealand were more accommodating if employees wanted to undertake further academic studies, and were willing to reduce their working hours. His view was that opportunities were easier to come by in New Zealand, and that doing something similar in South Africa would have been more difficult. One person in the information technology field said that despite her work being stressful, she had experienced no serious workplace problems and enjoyed her work.

However, differences in professional role expectations, workplace culture, and managerial structure and communication styles between South Africa and New Zealand could hamper successful settlement. A number of people stated that adaptation to the working environment in New Zealand was more difficult for older people. Sometimes schools were reluctant to employ older South African teachers, who were accustomed to different rules and measures of maintaining discipline in the classroom. Hence, one participant with years of teaching experience viewed New Zealand employers as “rascals” and did not have much respect for them. South African teachers found that Kiwi children were precocious, confident, cheeky, outgoing and often lacked good manners. A participant reported her shock at
children’s language and behaviour at a school in a lower socioeconomic area. “Horror stories”, such as bullying behaviour, aggressive outbursts and damaging school property were not uncommon. Owing to the anti-smacking laws of New Zealand, teachers could lose their jobs if they dared lift a hand against a child who had misbehaved. One couple cited an incident where a South African teacher at a low decile school was faced with two teenage boys who were fighting, and one tried to stab the other with a pair of scissors. Because the boy was unresponsive to verbal redirection, the teacher had pushed him against the wall and threatened him with dire consequences. Afterwards, the teacher had feared losing his job and being deported.

Two people, who were employed as consultants on a contractual basis, reported that settling was difficult because of not having a permanent position and not having worked as consultants previously. Consultants could not rely on a regular salaried income, and had no sick leave or paid annual leave. In addition, most employers did not offer a pension, a medical aid or a 13th cheque as was customary in South Africa. One consultant worked for seven different stakeholders, and had 18 different offices in seven years. Consultants generally felt that they worked long hours and produced work of a high standard that went beyond the call of duty, but that companies just demanded more and more. Both stated that they were considerably underpaid and that their contributions were not acknowledged or valued. One of them concluded that if you had to take care of someone else financially, you just had to hang in there and make it work. His wife decided to stop anguishing about how much money these companies owed him and just to be content with what they had. However, her husband worked long hours and needed a high level of concentration for his work, which left little time to spend with her. The other consultant said his company always had an excuse not to give him a salary increase or a bonus, and after three years it had started to affect him. He felt that it did not matter how hard he worked, because it would never be good enough. He
asserted that the expectations of employers in terms of paying out bonuses were unreasonable. One consultant said that he did not receive one word of thank you for all his hard work. However, both were diligent in their work and honoured the terms of their contracts. One person explained that he took the contract between him and “Her Majesty the Queen” seriously. The general consensus was that the aim of consultancy firms was to make a profit and improve company shares, with a smaller focus on quality control, safety standards and the potential cost of equipment failure. Hence, projects were rushed through and consultants felt pressurised to complete tasks on demand, without being allowed to express their point of view. Attempting to manage complex tasks under pressure inevitably led to errors, with the consultant being blamed for these mistakes. In addition, when tasks were completed, consultants were expected to phone around to secure additional projects. This caused significant discomfort to professionals who were not used to take on sales and marketing roles.

One person commented that he was treated well in the workplace as long as he performed and produced work according to expectations. Participants concluded that credit and praise were not easily bestowed on outsiders, and that immigrants in particular had to earn respect and admiration the hard way. Senior employees found it stressful not being valued in New Zealand and having to struggle all over again to prove their worth. Unlike the mentorship-based workplace milieu they had been accustomed to in South Africa, senior employees found that they could not transmit their wisdom and experience to the younger generation because it was perceived as unwanted interference. A sense of invalidation, combined with a high workload and inadequate remuneration, eventually lessened workplace commitment and led to employee retention problems. Participants, who had been accustomed to remain loyal to their South African employers for years, said that in New Zealand they had developed a broader perspective on job security and changing jobs. Observing the “job-
hopping” tendency of Kiwis also made it easier for them to resign when work conditions became unsatisfactory.

Socioeconomic status

Relocating and building a new life in a different country was a costly exercise, and financial security was important for successful settlement. Most participants had utilised their savings and proceeds from selling their homes, or from early retirement packages in South Africa to fund their immigration. One participant stated that when choosing between Australia and New Zealand, in the short term, New Zealand was usually the cheaper option owing to the exchange rate. A family, who had immigrated a number of years before, had difficulty transferring their money owing to the restrictions of the South African Reserve Bank. They were unable to buy a house in New Zealand as they could not get their money out of South Africa, and had to make use of credit cards to ensure that they had sufficient funds in New Zealand. One family said they were lucky because they had come over with some funds and did not have to start again from nothing. A few people mentioned having access to their retirement annuities in New Zealand, and one person was receiving a South African pension. However, the amount of money received was dependent on the prevailing exchange rate. Unemployment led to considerable hardship and placed a strain on marriages and family relationships. One person in a trade’s position became unemployed after a factory closure for financial reasons, despite concerted efforts on his part to find new clients. Both he and his wife were unemployed because of uncontrollable factors, and it was a difficult time for the couple. They had to sell their house and move to a smaller home. The wife described how difficult it was for her to have a shortage of money again as in her youth. She felt ashamed that she had to rely on her daughter to buy her a coffee and pay their electricity account. Another woman described how they had lived in uncertainty during a year of unemployment,
after buying a house and a car, and shipping all their belongings to New Zealand. They were “in limbo” for three years while awaiting permanent residency as they could not obtain financing or take out any policies in New Zealand. Because they were unable to sell their properties in South Africa, they could not utilise their money to build a new life in New Zealand.

Three families had initially rented, and later on bought their own homes. One family concluded that they were throwing their money away as their mortgage payments on a home would cost the same as renting. Six families had started off in their own homes, and one family owned two homes and a section of land. One person was living in a rental home. One man said they had renovated an old, neglected house in Wellington and were living comfortably in their home. A family said since they had bought their own house in New Zealand and could rely on two incomes, they felt they were getting somewhere financially. Another family said that although their house in New Zealand was much smaller than their South African home, they did not mind. In addition, their New Zealand home was worth more in monetary terms. When they returned to South Africa, they decided to rent out their New Zealand home because it was worth six times as much in rands. Renting out their house meant that other people were paying off their mortgage, and it provided additional funds for their retirement. Despite New Zealand having an adequate public transport system, all participants owned their own vehicles. One man bought a Nissan Pulsar the second day after arrival, and waited a year before buying the 4x4 vehicle he wanted. This vehicle allowed them to have the same outdoor lifestyle as they had in South Africa, and to explore the places they wanted to see. One family’s children were able to attend private schools, and the oldest child was at university. Seven families had travelled overseas since coming to New Zealand, and two couples had travelled extensively in New Zealand.
Families commented on the lack of snobbery in New Zealand, compared to South Africa. Most people in New Zealand were middle class or lower middle class. There were no firm social status boundaries, and most people were down to earth. One man described his surprise when the car groomer, who delivered the first car they bought, was neatly dressed and wore a tie. He concluded that being a car groomer was “not a big deal” in New Zealand. Participants observed that people had certain status boundaries in South Africa, and wanted to maintain them in New Zealand. However, the sense of importance and status based on one’s belongings fell away in New Zealand, and it was difficult to maintain one’s social status. One man said that whereas he had a built in braai in South Africa, he used an old dilapidated braai “without worries” in New Zealand. Nevertheless, his smaller home meant that he could not entertain as many guests on his deck (veranda). One woman, who had most of her prized belongings in storage, wondered whether it really mattered so much having to live without them. She decided that it was not a big deal if guests had to use glasses that did not match. The conclusion was that if guests were so bothered by the paucity of their belongings that they did not wish to remain friends, it was probably for the better. Despite New Zealand being an egalitarian society, some participants observed that snobbery was starting to develop. A couple, who ran a business in the cleaning industry, initially found that Kiwis looked down upon them, and treated them as cleaners who were unable to achieve more in life. After running a successful enterprise for three years, their clients realised that they provided a good service and started to converse with them as business people. The couple felt that they could hand out their business card with confidence as they had become “somebody” in New Zealand.
Political and government factors

Of the 23 participants in this study, 18 had been born in South Africa and had never lived in another country or held another citizenship before immigrating to New Zealand. Two people in one family had been born in South Africa and had lived in the United Kingdom prior to immigrating to New Zealand. One person had been born in the United Kingdom, immigrated with her family to South Africa and returned to the United Kingdom before immigrating to New Zealand. Two of the participants had been born in New Zealand and were married to South Africans. One had worked in various countries before returning to New Zealand. The other person had lived with her family in South Africa and the United Kingdom prior to returning to New Zealand.

Immigration laws

English-speaking South Africans usually still had relatives in the United Kingdom, and were often able to return to the United Kingdom on ancestral visas. One family’s daughter used this opportunity to go to the United Kingdom when her parents immigrated to New Zealand. Some participants considered immigrating to Australia, but despite their qualifications and training, three people were already too old to meet the immigration requirements. One person had unsuccessfully applied for a job in Australia many years ago, and hence felt “not wanted” in Australia. Another family stated that because they were older, they would not consider moving to Australia from New Zealand. Most Afrikaans-speaking South Africans did not have the option of an ancestral visa, and those who were beyond Australia’s cut-off age found that New Zealand was their only viable option.

In New Zealand, age was also a limiting factor for obtaining permanent residency because of the points system. One person who had extensive qualifications and work experience struggled to obtain sufficient points for residency because he was no longer
eligible for age-related points. Owing to the time limit on residency visas to enter New Zealand to confirm residency, two families had been split up during the immigration process. One father was anxious that he would not find work or obtain a plane ticket in time. He would be unable to apply for residency again as he would not have sufficient points owing to the age limitation. For people who had applied for work visas on the basis that their professions were on the Skilled Shortage list, there was an age limit of 55. One couple had entered New Zealand with work visas, and both parents and children had obtained permanent residency afterwards. In one family, the father was the “main applicant” for a work visa and his wife and daughter were allowed to accompany him. Upon arrival they realised that they could apply for permanent residency, which they received within four months. They followed the rules of having to be in New Zealand for 187 days per year over a two-year period to obtain an Indefinite Returning Residents Visa. Even though their daughter had returned to South Africa to marry and the parents had returned owing to job opportunities, the family felt secure that they could return to New Zealand at any time. Three children had immigrated with their parents as part of a family application. Seven participants had initially entered New Zealand with permanent residency. For the purpose of a family reunion, one elderly couple had been sponsored by their children who had previously moved to New Zealand “under their own steam”. It was easier for them to get into New Zealand because of their family sponsorship as the points system, age and medical issues were not limiting factors. They were relieved when their application for immigration was accepted three weeks after submission.

Three participants commented on how stressful it was for people who arrived on visitor’s visas to find jobs before their visas expired. One woman talked about her cousin’s problems to obtain residency and recalled numerous questionnaires and having to prove themselves. She “stood aghast” at the struggle with their residency application. It was not easy for families who came to New Zealand with hope, only to be sent back after a few
months owing to failed residency applications. One couple who could not find work was told to pack up and return to South Africa. They were advised to later on apply for family sponsorship via their daughter, who was able to secure employment. One couple felt strongly that immigration consultants should not have given the impression that people whose professions were not on the Skilled Shortage List could come to New Zealand on a visitor’s visa, obtain work easily and then proceed towards permanent residency. With the worldwide economic downturn, work was scarce for people who did not have qualifications that New Zealand urgently needed. Hence, prospective immigrants should have been informed about other options, such as a business visa. One couple only found out about this alternative at a women’s expo after arriving in New Zealand, and was encouraged by a member of their church to buy a franchise. They managed to obtain a long term business visa only one week before their visitor’s visas expired. They explained that from a business visa they had to apply for an entrepreneur visa, which would then enable them to obtain permanent residency. They had been living “in two worlds” for three years as nothing could be finalised until they were granted permanent residency. They had ensured that they met all the conditions of their business visa, and had obtained their permanent residency after about four years.

They commented that their daughter, who was in her mid-twenties, had done all the paperwork to obtain permanent residency by herself and that they were extremely proud of her. It was important for participants to be reunited with other family members, such as parents and siblings, in New Zealand. However, one family commented that immigration required that more than 50% of a family had to be in New Zealand to allow entry to other members. One person had applied for residency under the now defunct “Humanitarian Category”, which had enabled the last member of a family to immigrate to be reunited with the rest of the family. However, at the time this participant still had a brother living in South Africa. She had to undergo a psychological assessment regarding the impact of being
separated from her parents and having to return to South Africa. She found this process
difficult as she was still in two minds about joining her parents in New Zealand and giving up
her whole life in South Africa. However, she realised that she had to go along with the way
the immigration system worked.

Two families commented that an “organised relocation”, where the employer handled
immigration documentation and paid for most of the associated costs, made things a lot easier
for them. For one person it took three months to organise their immigration process
independently, and although it was hard work he felt that it could be done without using an
agent. However, he was unaware that he could have entered New Zealand with permanent
residency, instead of just a work visa. Most families had submitted their immigration
documents while living in South Africa. One father had lodged their application for
permanent residency with an agent in Auckland while visiting New Zealand to explore job
opportunities. Another family, who had immigrated in the early 1990s, had their immigration
forms processed in London as there was no New Zealand embassy or consulate in South
Africa. Five people commented that the approval process dragged on. One couple was told
that their application for permanent residency would take three months to process, but it took
about seven months. In the 1990s, another couple had awaited a law change to increase the
age limit for immigration, and had decided to start the ball rolling in the meantime. They had
packed up and came to New Zealand on visitor’s visas. A young woman, who had applied for
residency while visiting her parents in New Zealand, had become frustrated after 11 months
and returned to South Africa. Two weeks after departure, her residency was approved.
Despite the inconvenience, she felt encouraged by having residency because it enabled her to
find employment. One husband on a visitor’s visa said he had phoned the Immigration
Department so frequently that they recognised his voice and pretended that the contact person
was unavailable. He was undeterred by their avoidance tactics and had persisted with his
enquiries. Then, one day he was informed that their application had been successful and was asked to take their passports to the offices of the immigration department to have their permanent residency visas inserted. The formalities were completed within five minutes and it felt like an anticlimax after waiting for months. Another couple recounted their experience when they had applied for a returning residency visa for travel purposes. While waiting their turn at the Immigration Department, they observed the bureaucracy and started wondering why people were crying. As a result, they became concerned about their own immigration status. With a sense of relief they received their returning residency stamp without any difficulty. Despite immigration approval being a complex and lengthy process, two families said they had been fortunate because their process had been relatively easy. Most participants had found staff at the New Zealand Immigration Department helpful and friendly.

Of the long-term residents, three people had South African as well as New Zealand citizenship. One man said he had found it difficult to consider giving up his South African citizenship, and had thus applied for dual citizenship. He stated in his declaration that South Africa was beautiful and good, and that he loved the country. It was his fatherland and his ancestors had given up their lives for South Africa. Based on his declaration he was allowed to retain his South African citizenship. One young woman, who had been born in the United Kingdom and was thus a citizen, had also opted for dual citizenship when she applied for New Zealand citizenship. Ten residents had elected to obtain New Zealand citizenship, and had relinquished their South African citizenship. Two participants had been born in New Zealand and had only New Zealand citizenship. At the time of the interviews, seven people had South African citizenship only. After the obligatory period of five years as a permanent resident in New Zealand, five people had intended to apply for dual citizenship. One family said that they would definitely not let go of their South African citizenship and that all family members were planning to apply for dual citizenship. They were prepared to pay the small,
annual fee to retain their South African citizenship. One woman stated that she did not want dual citizenship because she was happy to be out of South Africa, and hence did not need anything more from the country. She said they would apply for New Zealand citizenship as soon as they were permitted. Her husband did not indicate whether he would apply for dual citizenship.

**Political background**

One participant said her political views had contributed to the “whole picture” of her immigration journey. A good friend of hers had been involved in politics in South Africa, and described himself as a social democrat. She endorsed his political convictions, which were more leftwing than that of her parents. She believed that she was part of a new generation who saw things differently. Two Coloured families commented on their experience of apartheid in South Africa. One man alluded to “edges” regarding this era, indicating that there were certain things that he could not really bring to the fore during the interview, because they were very delicate issues. He asserted that he had no political grievances at the time of their immigration. However, he believed that lots of people, particularly Coloureds, had not learnt to forgive things that had happened in the past. For instance, many Coloured people were great rugby players, but had never been given the opportunity to play for the Springboks. Hence, Coloured people did not want to back the Springboks and supported the All Blacks instead. Some Coloured people still bore a grudge, and perhaps only the next generation would be prepared to back the Springboks. Another man who had been of school-going age during apartheid had experienced some rough times. He stated it had been terrible growing up under apartheid. He remembered going to the Post Office where one queue was reserved for whites only. Going into town with his father on the train they had to sit in the back, which was third class. At work they had “Whites only” tearooms, and later they took
away the “Whites only” signs and called it “Grade 1”, but the euphemisms remained. When most of the white men went off to the war, the Coloureds who were doing apprenticeships were allowed to use the Grade 1 tearooms, while the rest of the employees continued using the Grade 2 and 3 tearooms. Despite the limitations imposed by the apartheid system, he had always tried to better himself. He believed that if people used apartheid as a reason not to succeed, they would always remain one step behind. His philosophy was that living under apartheid should be used to motivate oneself to become a better person. It could also make you quite modest and help you to understand others better. His motto was that irrespective of where you came from, if you were given the opportunity you could better yourself.

One man said that during the “Free Mandela” period when he had been living in London, he had faced some guilt issues about being a white South African. Two families mentioned that people had thought South Africa was heading for a civil war at the time. They observed that some independent Eastern European countries that had previously been under Russian rule were at war with one another because of historical grudges. In South Africa, some people had threatened to disrupt an upcoming referendum and one man said that his nerves were shattered during the preceding weekend because he had feared that something terrible was going to happen. His wife said that many times she had experienced a cloud of uncertainty and an uneasiness that something was going to happen, possibly because of the traumatic events of the past. Both families had been relieved that nothing untoward had happened in South Africa in terms of a civil war. After the 1994 elections and the political changes that occurred in South Africa, Coloured families could live where they wanted instead of being limited to their specific communities, and the so-called “grey areas” developed. Their son was able to attend a previously “white” school, and had done exceptionally well there. He made wonderful friends who visited him at home, and vice versa. With a racially integrated Springbok team, some Coloureds started backing the team.
and the majority of blacks supported the “Ama Boko Boko”. One person said that New Zealanders assumed that because they were Cape Coloureds they supported the All Blacks, but they loved the Springboks.

The South African government became aware that a large number of whites were leaving the country after the elections. Alwyn Schlebusch, the Foreign Minister at the time, accused emigrants of leaving “the fatherland”, namely the country of their birth and where they had grown up. His comments signified that people were in the process of packing up and getting out. Many people had left South Africa over the years for Australia and the USA. After Mandela took over, emigration from European countries to South Africa ceased, while the number of immigrants from Eastern European counties, Communist China and Nigeria increased. One person commented that during the apartheid era, most citizens who lived offshore where whites and the government encouraged them to vote. In contrast, the new South African government did not allow South Africa citizens living offshore to vote in elections, possibly because most of them were whites. A Kiwi woman, who was a permanent resident in South Africa, had been allowed to vote in the 1994 election when Mandela came to power. Despite living in South Africa for six years and paying income tax, she was not allowed to vote in subsequent elections under the new government. She believed that this law had come into effect because most permanent residents in South Africa were whites.

Some political groups in South Africa were optimistic about the future of the country, and two emigrants said they felt they were missing out on what was happening in the new South Africa. On the positive side, there was greater democracy, but corruption seemed to be rife. “Reverse racism” and discrimination still existed, and the gap between the rich and poor was widening. The ongoing level of violent crime was of great concern. One person acknowledged that it was not the entire society that committed violent crimes, but some elements were out of control and impacted on the rest of society. She had no real fears about
South Africa going the same way as Zimbabwe, but still did not want to live in such a violent society. A participant observed that the negative views of South Africa had lessened over the years. Post-apartheid South Africa was not on people’s minds anymore as they had “other countries and issues to deal with”. The world had “ticked the South African apartheid box” and had moved on from the difficulties and political conditions in South Africa. Hence, most people were unaware of what was happening politically in post-apartheid South Africa. One person found New Zealanders extremely presumptuous; they did not understand the political history, and were not knowledgeable about the current conditions in South Africa. Kiwis had some superficial knowledge about South Africa, for instance, about Mandela, and some thought that he was still the President. When people started talking to Kiwis, they realised how little they knew about what was happening in South Africa. When Kiwis asked questions, they were surprised to find out things they never knew. Others found that Kiwis did not care what was right or wrong in South Africa or who was governing the country as they were too busy with their own lives. Some participants found that whether they commented for or against particular South African issues, it was “okay” for the Kiwis. It was thought that the opening of the South African embassy in Wellington had changed the dynamics between the two countries and had given South Africa a bit more of a political voice in New Zealand.

One family observed that the commonalities between South Africa and New Zealand, owing to their historical connections with the British Empire, had made it easier to adapt to New Zealand. However, Kiwis appeared to have fears about South Africans that stemmed from the apartheid era, and were still bitter about it. Some felt that South Africans had made a mess of their country and now that things were in disarray they had resorted to a “white flight”. Kiwis sometimes interpreted casual comments by South Africans during conversation as racist, and South African immigrants were “sensitive” about being regarded as racist. A
man stated that he was not a racist and got on well with blacks. One couple found that in the beginning people asked questions and wanted explanations about South African issues. They generally found that New Zealanders were critical, displayed a lack of knowledge about South Africa and did not understand apartheid. Hence, they believed that the negative attitude towards South Africans was mostly due to ignorance, rather than animosity. Because things were done differently in New Zealand, people found South African customs strange. They did not understand job roles, for instance, why petrol attendants were predominantly black men. They believed that people expected to be waited on by a petrol attendant, without understanding that self-service was not permitted at petrol stations. They also found the hypervigilance of South Africans strange, such as checking for intruders when they came home, as they could not imagine what it was like living in South Africa. They were ignorant about the level of crime, and that this was considered as normal behaviour in a South African context.

South Africans had learnt that it was best not to discuss the political circumstances of South Africa in New Zealand. It was a meaningless and useless conversation because of a lack of mutual understanding and misinterpretations by both parties. Andries and Aletta explained that “New Zealanders view Mandela as the hero who freed South Africa from the terrible apartheid regime, but they are not interested at all in the post-apartheid conditions in South Africa”. Andries added that “Apartheid was the dragon that has been slain and that is the end of the story”. New Zealanders thought that Mandela was wonderful, but what he represented was of more importance to them than Mandela, the person. Andries said that “Mandela represented the ideals of the world at the time”. Another person asserted that Australia, New Zealand and Canada belonged to the “ANC (African National Congress) club”. Mandela had been elevated from a position of insignificance to a world dignitary who was cited by everybody. A number of minority groups in New Zealand used Mandela as an
example of what they had strived for. Aletta was told that “the Māoris believe that Mandela achieved something wonderful in South Africa, and they take it as an example for themselves”. New Zealanders were raised with certain concepts, just like South Africans. As a result they were surprised when they met white South Africans who were different from what they had learnt at school. Andries believed that “it is a shock for New Zealanders when they find out that you don’t fit their caricature of a South African. They rationalise that you are a fake or an exception to the rule”. Some South Africans reinforced this negative view by referring to black people in a derogatory way or being arrogant. One person said that he was often ashamed of the way some South Africans behaved.

A few people believed that anti-South African sentiments were further fuelled by events that had occurred during the Springbok rugby tour to New Zealand in 1981. The tour had caused a significant division within New Zealand society and it was a difficult time in their history. Ray, who had been born in New Zealand, provided an insider’s perspective of how the tour split families, causing people to be at logger heads with each other. There was a division straight throughout New Zealand society owing to polarised views about the rugby tour in terms of keeping politics out of rugby, versus using a high profile event to make their voices heard. Some thought if they did not stand up for what they believed in, South Africa would have thought that it was acceptable to continue the same way as before. The Green Party took credit for leading the boycott of the 1981 tour. One of New Zealand’s current political leaders recently said in a news broadcast that he was proud of being one of the instigators during public demonstrations. People could see the validity of each side of the argument, and it was a personal decision which side to support. Depending on how strongly people felt about their viewpoint they decided to either attend the game or take part in a protest march. Some New Zealanders attended the matches while their neighbours and colleagues were protesting outside, and becoming extremely upset that their close
acquaintances had decided to support the tour. However, some of those who did not want to protest publicly still thought that the protesters were doing a good thing. Ray believed that a person did not have to be a protester to believe that all South Africans, irrespective of race, should be treated as human beings. He added that in New Zealand, Māoris and Europeans had far closer links than what was portrayed in the media. For instance, in the Taranaki district where he had grown up there was a good, close bond between Māoris and Europeans. Many Māoris and Europeans had intermarried, and very few Māoris nowadays did not have European blood, and vice versa.

The South African participants believed that the 1981 rugby tour had caused underlying issues in New Zealand society to become evident. Andries explained that “the 1981 Springbok Rugby Tour caused a disruption in New Zealand society; it was like a civil war. The unity of the country was fractured as it brought hidden issues, which have always been present, to the surface and into focus”. Problematic racial issues were concealed in New Zealand society because they were not openly discussed or overtly expressed in behaviour. Underlying racial tensions became evident when annoyance and resentment about the preferential treatment of certain minority groups was expressed between friends. On the other hand, white people in New Zealand were openly told by the Māoris that they were not “people of the land” and were therefore were regarded as “mere visitors”. Some South Africans believed that in 20 years’ time New Zealand would have same problems as South Africa. One couple said they had not heard one word of Māori when they had arrived in 1995, but currently everything was first expressed in Māori and then in English. A Māori man told them that they had learnt two words from Mandela: “We demand”.

Two participants commented on the differences between politics in South Africa and New Zealand, and said that the two systems were incomparable. South African politics were regarding “life and death” issues, while in New Zealand politics involved “bread and butter”
issues, which was the way it should be. One person observed that the South African political system was corrupt and that nothing was being done to help the people. Instead, the politicians only “did for themselves” and were enriching themselves at the cost of others. Despite finding charlatans all over the world, most believed that there was little corruption in New Zealand. Politicians who stepped out of line were quickly brought to book. The New Zealand government cared about its people and was concerned about the number of skilled workers going overseas. One person stated that New Zealand was an example where socialism was a good thing in terms of the services supplied to its residents and citizens. He emphasised that socialism and communism were not the same thing. However, the USA endorsed “super capitalism”, where the Republicans did not want to assist the poor. One participant said her politically minded friend had visited New Zealand prior to her emigration to find out more about the “welfare state” and he told her about the Labour Party. After immigration, she had attended Labour Party meetings, despite being the only young person there. She represented her district at one of their conferences, and had met Helen Clark, who was the Prime Minister at the time. This participant believed that with the current National Party government, people paid a high price in terms of workers’ rights. However, two people volunteered their political allegiance and said that they had voted for John Key of the National Party during the last election. One participant asserted that it was not a good idea to allow new immigrants to vote after only six months in New Zealand as they knew too little about the country. Even settled immigrants had to do research on referendum issues, such as changes in historical voting systems.

**Government services**

Participants commented on the level of crime, and some of the laws and public services in New Zealand. A Kiwi participant, who had lived in South Africa, said that despite
an increase in crime in New Zealand, there was no comparison with South Africa. One family cited an incident where their daughter’s laptop had been stolen from her flat. The robbers had emptied her bag on the floor and only took her computer without hurting anybody. In contrast, a person would be killed in South Africa for a cell phone. Participants generally thought that the New Zealand police provided a good service. One person cited an example of youngsters racing up and down their neighbourhood street in a noisy car, but ten minutes later the culprits left in a hurry when the police turned up in a patrol car. However, one family had items stolen from a fridge on their property and despite finding fingerprints the police could not do much as the boy was under 17. They told the police that their main concern was not their loss, but that youngsters who committed petty crimes later on became big criminals as they had experienced this trend in South Africa. One person was unhappy that responsible dog owners were fined if their dog misbehaved, but as the most dangerous dogs were not registered, their owners could not be traced. However, a participant reminded others that to some extent red tape and a certain level of inefficiency would always be present in government organisations.

A Kiwi participant said that although New Zealand struggled a bit because of its small population, it provided First World services to its people and was miles ahead of South Africa. South African participants generally endorsed this viewpoint, and said that most government departments were well run, and they provided good service and had friendly staff. One couple found that the process of buying a house in New Zealand was much faster than in South Africa. They had been impressed that it had only taken a week to register a house in a person’s name and then the new owners could move in. Car licences could be paid online, which made the process much simpler than in South Africa. However, some preferred the Warrant of Fitness (WOF) car inspections to be reduced to once a year, instead of every six months. One couple who had started their own business said that the Internal Revenue
Department (IRD) had been extremely helpful to them. They had provided personal tutoring as they believed that it was better to get her “up and running” than to battle down the line when she had made a big mess of her taxes.

Most participants were complimentary about public transport in terms of safety and efficiency. One family said that in South Africa they would never have allowed their children to travel on a bus or train, but in New Zealand their children could travel to school by bus independently without their parents worrying. One 12-year old boy travelled alone between Masterton and Wellington each day on an early train to attend school. He did not experience any problems, except for one day when he had been charged an adult fare and his father had phoned up to complain. Another family said they could get into a taxi, bus, or train any time of the day or night without fear. In the beginning, they had been inclined to board the wrong bus or wait on the wrong side of the road. It was not too problematic as buses returned to their original departure point, and they could catch the correct bus from there to reach their destination. Despite these positive aspects, public transport was considered too expensive and was not a cheaper form of transport as in South Africa.

Participants appreciated the care they received from the New Zealand government, which was sadly lacking in South Africa. They commented on New Zealand’s excellent public health system and government-funded subsidised medication. For children under 18, visits to their general practitioner were subsidised and one young woman had found a doctor who was willing to see her free of charge up to the age of 21. Medical services provided a rapid and effective response after emergency 111 calls. Most participants said that New Zealand government hospitals were considerably better than the public hospitals in South Africa where patients had to wait for hours to see a doctor. Some felt it also compared well with the private medical system in South Africa. One couple found it similar to the government-funded National Health System in the United Kingdom. However, a person
commented that recent media reports of adverse events due to negligence had made some New Zealand hospitals look a bit “Third World”. The general consensus was that the healthcare in South Africa was good if you could afford private medical aid. For instance, one person said he used to pay R800 a month for medical aid.

The New Zealand population could get good medical services for free, the hospitals were clean and the level of medical care was high. Generally, staff in the public medical system were found to be polite. One elderly couple said they were thankful for the healthcare system in New Zealand that provided free operations. If they had had to pay for their medication and medical services in South Africa they would have been “bankrupt and living in a squatter camp”. One person had a family member with cancer, who paid for the initial scan as she felt she could not wait for six weeks until her appointment was due. After the result, she was immediately put on the theatre list and went for an operation. This woman felt that the medical system had been good to her sister. A man who had experienced a sudden deterioration in his eyesight was diagnosed with occlusion of the retina, which required an injection into the retina. He had been quite scared of the procedure, but had been impressed with the way the Chinese doctor had spoken to him and encouraged him. He had eventually consented, and a few days after the procedure his eye problem had cleared up. Another person, who was a permanent resident, had been treated free of charge in hospital for recurrent epilepsy. She had to be taken to hospital by ambulance four times. Her husband was worried that the ambulance fees would be expensive, but the service was free of charge. A participant said that the specialists who had operated on his eye and skin growths, and had done his hip replacement, were excellent and he spoke highly of them. Another man had had two hip replacements in a private hospital and had been happy with the service he had received from the specialists. Four families expressed their gratitude towards the New Zealand healthcare system that subsidised prescription medication so that the cost to the
patient was only a few dollars. Participants on medication for hypercholesterolaemia and epilepsy said that in South Africa their medication would be exorbitant. A family commented that in South Africa disabled people were hidden from public view, possible because of the lack of alternative facilities, such as ramps for wheelchairs. In New Zealand, provisions were made for disabled people to ensure adequate public access that allowed them to have a place in society.

One couple recounted that on arrival they had also thought that the medical services were marvellous and emergency treatment excellent. They found that hospitals and doctors were good, but they were not at the same level as in South Africa. One man said his wife had had unhappy experiences with doctors because she had been treated for ailments that were not easily treated in the New Zealand system, or not at all. She had developed a frozen shoulder that doctors in South Africa would have operated on. They had become disillusioned with specialists in New Zealand who saw a patient once, ran a battery of tests and then prescribed painkillers. New Zealand doctors only operated after a lengthy period of physiotherapy. In contrast, South African doctors determined the cause of the problem, decided on the best way to resolve it and “went for it”. One family recalled that when they had taken their son to the accident and emergency department of a community hospital for tonsillitis, it was recommended that they consult with their general practitioner first. The parents said that you had to make your illness sound extremely serious before accident and emergency services would see you. Because they had had 100% medical cover in South Africa via their employer, they would take their children to a general practitioner for a cough. However, in New Zealand they did not visit their general practitioner as readily, but instead just bought something over the counter at the pharmacy. Even if they went to their doctor with a sore throat or a fever, they were sent away with a prescription for Paracetamol tablets, and thus considered the consultation fee a waste of money. Hence, they only went to the
doctor for serious illnesses. They also found it problematic that when they requested a repeat prescription, they had to wait until the following day and were charged a fee without having seen the doctor.

Some concluded that the general practitioners in New Zealand were mediocre, and that they did not have the experience of South African doctors with handling trauma. They also lacked adequate knowledge about familial hypercholesterolaemia in Afrikaner families. One man’s symptoms of a heart attack were attributed indigestion, despite his parents explaining about the early deaths in their family. This had led to a delayed diagnosis of an acute, life-threatening situation and early intervention for the condition. Owing to the fact that he was on a visitor’s visa in New Zealand and did not have travel insurance, he was not eligible for government-funded medical care, unless it was an accident. He had undergone a cardiac bypass operation in a private hospital that was funded by contributions from the family’s church congregation. Even though it was a “big drama” for the family, they had been happy with the treatment he eventually received at a private hospital. One couple said that locating a South African general practitioner in New Zealand improved things as they could build a closer relationship with him. Their Kiwi friends stated that “if people wanted to have a good doctor, they should go to a South African”.

Participants felt that in New Zealand, free dental care for children up to the age of 18 was excellent. The overall consensus, however, was that dentistry was extremely expensive in New Zealand, and that people walked around with bad teeth as a result of the exorbitant cost. One father remarked that he did not really visit the dentist in New Zealand, but sent his children instead. One person who had been in the country for three years did not think people needed private health insurance in New Zealand, because if they became ill, the hospital system was good enough. However, a number of families highly recommended that people obtain private health insurance, even if it was just for elective surgery. Most people took out a
medical insurance package that covered hospital and specialist treatment only, in contrast to the comprehensive cover provided by South African medical aids. One woman reported that she had only used her medical insurance about three times during the last seven years. The main reason for private medical insurance was that people feared the long waiting lists at government hospitals, which resulted in people often being too unwell to undergo surgery on the scheduled date. After a year, the waiting list started again from the beginning, which meant that a person might never have the required operation. Some believed that people were kept on waiting lists in the hope that they would die before they had to be treated. Thus, in one sense the hospital system did not abandon patients, but in reality, just got rid of them.

One person provided an example of a person aged 65 who had been placed on an 18-month waiting list as her cataracts were “not serious enough yet”, which resulted in a fracture after falling owing to her poor eyesight.

Some doctors advised patients that the only way to have their cataracts treated in time was to rely on their medical insurance. Another man was placed on an 18-month waiting list for a knee replacement, but was warned that if the operation was delayed his other leg would become so weak that surgery could no longer be an option. He thus used his medical insurance cover to have the operation done in time. Premiums for older people were much higher, and one couple in their early seventies paid $420 per month for a basic medical insurance plan. Even though medical insurance was a considerable expense, their health was a priority. They decided they would rather cut other expenditure than relinquish their medical insurance. If something unforeseen happened in future, they would regret not having medical insurance. They believed it would be more problematic to borrow money for an unforeseen medical event than to budget for the monthly premium. They stated that older people could not afford to let their medical insurance lapse, because they would not be able to obtain private medical cover again. Most said that they would continue with their health insurance.
as long as their finances allowed it. However, some older people who had been working part
time or who were retired had been unable to keep up the premiums because they had become
too expensive. They had to let their policies lapse even though they had paid their premiums
and claimed very little over the years.

In South Africa, people did not receive an unemployment benefit, but owing to the
benefit system, beggars and vagrants were rare in New Zealand. One person said she did not
have a problem contributing financially to provide for others, and added that if everybody did
so there would be no hunger and poverty in the world. Not everybody had the motivation and
opportunities to work, and one had to accept that some people would never be able to
generate their own income. However, a person who was ambitious would find an opportunity
to succeed. Others believed that the Accident Compensation Fund (ACC) was too lenient and
that there were many people claiming assistance because they were too lazy to work. One
woman contemplated the idea that ACC should pay wages to someone to “spy on the
cheaters”. Three older couples commented on superannuation provided to the elderly, and
one person said that it was one good aspect of socialism. They were thankful to receive
superannuation in New Zealand, even though they did not contribute to it financially. One
person stated that superannuation in New Zealand was his saving grace as he would not have
received the same pension in South Africa, even if he had continued saving for his retirement.
He had sold his business in New Zealand at the age of 64 and retired as he was eligible for
superannuation. He emphasised that the monthly payout was sufficient for them to live on,
unlike the situation in other countries. One couple believed that they “chose” the right time to
be elderly people in New Zealand, because the New Zealand government was still taking
good care of the elderly. They predicted that in 20 years’ time the services for the elderly
would probably be less.
Education facilities

Participants reported on the differences between schools in South Africa and New Zealand. One teacher said that the principal at his school in South Africa had been very strict and children were used to being beaten by teachers. However, some teachers went to great lengths to beat children, and the South African Education Department had decided to abolish corporal punishment. Instead, teachers were expected to speak kindly and nicely to the children. One young woman confirmed that corporal punishment had been abolished when they were at school in 2000. She remembered having to stand on her chair in class for “talking too much”. A teacher thought that owing to the changes in South Africa he would be able to adapt to schools in New Zealand, where all forms of corporal punishment were prohibited by law. Another teacher said that bad behaviour by school children was uncommon in South Africa, but upon her return she had noticed that their behaviour had changed for the worse. One couple commented on the public unrest by Coloured school children and schools being burned in South Africa in the early 1990s. A teacher reflected that misbehaviour by children was a worldwide phenomenon, but that it was quite bad in New Zealand.

Immigrant parents were sometimes advised to send their children to smaller schools because their child “would get lost in the system” of a large school. One family’s daughter had been in her first year at a Catholic high school in South Africa, and although they had thought the transition would be hard for her, she had adjusted well at a New Zealand college and fitted in with her peer group. Her brother had just started school in South Africa, and had quickly made new friends and enjoyed playing soccer at his new school in New Zealand. Both of them attended Catholic schools in New Zealand owing to the family’s religious beliefs. One young woman who had attended a private school in South Africa said the academic standards were good and she was in the A maths group. Her family had moved
from South Africa to the United Kingdom before immigrating to New Zealand. They reported that British schooling was good and their daughter’s academic level had been tested when she had arrived in the United Kingdom. She had been a bit behind in mathematics and had been downgraded from the A group to the B stream. The children had attended private schools during most of their stay in the United Kingdom. Students were expected to stand up and greet people who entered a room, and bullying was not a problem at their schools. At their son’s private school, meals were provided and he fondly remembered the hot cross buns and “yummy” tarts. Their daughter had moved to a state school for a year after her father had changed jobs. The school had been next to council housing and although some of the children were good, others came from dysfunctional families. The mother stated that there were bullies at the school and some of the girls’ behaviour was “shocking and horrendous”.

Similarly, New Zealand state schools did not have the same discipline as private schools, but schools in decile 10 areas were generally stricter than those in lower decile or lower socioeconomic areas. South African teachers thought that children in New Zealand state schools were extremely undisciplined. One person found it difficult to “cow down to the whims of a child”. Because corporal punishment was against the law in New Zealand, teachers did not dare lifting a hand against a child as it would lead to dismissal. They could not take a naughty child to the principal for punishment either. As a result, school principals lost power and control in their schools. One teacher expressed her shock at the language and behaviour of school children. They exhibited a total lack of respect and the absence of a moral compass. Adolescents appeared to be confused and without direction in life. Some participants thought their behaviour was perhaps a cry for help. Families expressed their concern about the bullying behaviour in New Zealand schools. One person commented that bullying also occurred in South Africa and other countries, but that it was extremely bad in New Zealand. Bullying was more prevalent in certain neighbourhoods as it was influenced by
community values. Bullying was mostly psychological in nature, but sometimes resulted in physical assaults. It was particularly prevalent among adolescents, and was fuelled by a kind of bravado to win the approval of peers.

Grandparents noted that there was no bullying at the small Catholic school their grandchildren attended as the older children at the school monitored bullying themselves. There was a wonderful spirit at the school because the older children were responsible for taking care of younger ones. Each newcomer was assigned to an older child, who acted as a supervisor and protector. Older children alerted teachers if a child was experiencing problems. Young children felt secure and they reciprocated when they were older. There was a wonderful spirit at school because all the children knew each other. The teachers were secular, but the school adhered to a strict moral and disciplinary code. The school had guidelines and children knew the boundaries. Discipline was not enforced in the traditional way, but instead children were praised for positive behaviour. A participant observed that at another primary school they did not just teach the ABC. Because they also educated the children about themselves, including emotional issues, they helped to develop well-rounded people.

Two children said that they had not experienced bullying at the private schools they had attended in New Zealand. Students called teachers “sir” and they had to stand up when someone entered a room. Their father confirmed that the discipline at private schools was still quite strict, which was encouraged by parents as they paid high fees. Teachers and parents had high expectations for achievement and if disruption occurred in the classroom, parents aired their views and expected to be heard. Enrolment at private schools was not usually limited by zoning issues, in other words, where the family lived. One family had enrolled their young son at a private, Jewish school and their teenage daughter at the private college of her choice. Another family had sent their two children to Catholic schools. However, at most
state schools, students had to live within the same geographical area as the school. A family was advised to send two of their children to a local college that had a Christian principal. Their younger child was enrolled at a local primary school. One couple said that upon arrival they had been advised not to send their children to a large school in a low decile area as their children would get “lost” in the system. It was recommended that they send them to a smaller school in a high decile area of the town they were living in. The father had enrolled the children soon after arrival, and after going for their interviews they had been able to start within the week.

Some Afrikaans children apparently found it extremely difficult to adapt to English schools as they did not understand what the teacher was saying. However, with repetition they eventually figured it out. All participant families reported that their English-speaking children had done well at school academically, as well as socially. One family’s daughter had hit the ground running and had slotted in easily at college as she had already done the mathematics and science curriculum the previous year in standard six. However, their son’s standard eight subjects had not synchronised well with the available New Zealand subjects. He had decided to take an extra two subjects to widen his options. He had found it harder to adjust as the academic demands were higher at a standard nine level, and he had an added workload. At the end of the year he had not completely settled in, but he was well accepted by his peers and was selected as a prefect. His father was “chuffed” and “blown away” by the news, and was extremely proud of his son. Another couple’s daughter, who had started her first year in college after arrival, had adjusted well. Their seven-year old son had made new friends within the first couple of days, played soccer and enjoyed his new school. His parents reported that he had no problems at school and that “everybody loved him”. When the parents moved from a small town to Wellington, both children had fitted in well at their new schools and had done well academically.
Two children had moved to New Zealand in the middle of a school year and had to decide whether to repeat the year, particularly because they were younger than the rest of their classmates, or to move up a year and learn new things. One girl, who had relocated from South Africa to the United Kingdom before coming to New Zealand, had been in four schools by the time she was 12 years old. Hence, she felt that she had missed out on some facets of mathematics during her school career. Her parents made a commitment to her that they would not move again until she had finished school six years later. She went overseas during her gap year at the age of 16. At the time of family interviews, one child was in year 10, one had completed NCEA (National Certificate of Educational Achievement) Level 1, four were working and one was at university. One father took on tertiary studies while being employed, because he wanted to do something new and challenging. He said that New Zealanders were very good when it came to studying further and changing careers. Some participants, however, felt that although money was readily available for study, too many people were leaving the country without paying back their student loans. New Zealand qualifications were accepted worldwide, but there were concerns that this might no longer be the case with South African universities.

The acculturation process

The thematic network of the acculturation process was depicted in figure 5 in this chapter. Themes extracted from participant narratives (Attride-Stirling, 2001) in relation to the global theme: “Acculturation influences the immigration process”, clustered around the following five organising themes: (1) changes, (2) stressors, (3) impact, (4) coping, and (5) resilience. Each of these organising themes was further subdivided into basic themes, which will be described below.
Figure 5. Thematic network of the acculturation process.


Acculturation changes

Differences

Some participants said that their experiences in New Zealand had been markedly different from being in South Africa. One person recalled how he had been greeted with the *Haka* upon arrival, which was not culturally meaningful to him at the time. Others did not have any specific expectations of New Zealand and therefore were not disappointed. A few recalled some “funny experiences” while adapting to a new culture. They found it strange that people parked their cars in the road with keys in the ignition, and leaving a handbag on the seat next to an open window. The absence of burglar bars was noticeable, and they found the low-key security measures suggested by the New Zealand police amusing from a South African perspective. For instance, putting locks on windows that could be opened would not prevent a determined burglar to simply throw a brick through the window. One man was surprised when someone lent him a trailer without asking questions, and trusted him to bring it back. A family knew of a woman who accidentally left her handbag next to her car in a supermarket parking lot when she drove off. She was extremely worried when she realised it, but when she returned her handbag was still sitting undisturbed exactly where she had left it. During a visit to the Nelson area, one family was astonished to see a discarded bicycle left next to a fence years ago without anybody taking it. A few people waited on the wrong side of road to catch the bus and could not understand why it did not stop to pick them up. Some were confused by road markings, for instance, the striped area in the middle of the road where cars could wait to turn without holding up the traffic. Others found the old “yield to the right” traffic rule, which gave right of way to traffic that had to cross lanes when turning, quite confusing.
One couple said when they had arrived in 1994, they were not used to the self-service system at cafés and restaurants, and had waited at their table to be served as was the custom in South Africa. Some were surprised to see so many disabled people in public areas, as they were mostly “hidden away” in South African communities. A few families were surprised to see a white person sweeping a street or digging ditches next to the road, as in South Africa these tasks were usually assigned to nonwhites. Others expressed disbelief at seeing women doing manual labour in the building industry, for instance, working with a pneumatic drill or being in overalls with a tool belt on top of a building. They had also found the career diversification of people in New Zealand interesting. For example, a highly qualified geologist practised his profession for six months and for the rest of the year he did casual jobs, for instance, picking fruit in Nelson. They also knew of a grey-haired member of parliament who had no qualms selling his handmade jewellery at a mobile stand on a busy street corner in the city, or taking part in a coast to coast cycle event.

Quite a few participants had difficulty with understanding New Zealand colloquisms and the customs around social invitations. A man initially did not understand that a “shout” at the end of a work week meant that someone was offering to buy drinks for colleagues at a local pub. A few participants said that they did not realise being invited over for “tea” in the evening meant dinner, and one couple ended up eating twice in one evening as they did not want to offend their host. A shared joke among South African immigrants was of visitors not realising that “bring a plate” was similar to “bring and braai”. One family arrived at their host with a set of plates and cutlery for the whole family, but without any food to share with others. A number of South African immigrant families had been “spoilt” as they were used to leaving chores to a domestic worker. One family had had a live-in domestic worker when their children were babies, and later on had someone who had come in two to three mornings a week. One family had had a Xhosa domestic assistant who had lived with the family for a
number of years. They jokingly said they wished she was also in the shipping container when they had to unpack. One couple noticed that after social functions, South Africans tended to get up and leave without helping the organisers to clean up as they had come to expect someone else to do it. In contrast, New Zealanders would all pitch in to tidy up afterwards before going home. When visiting a young couple at home, one family found it amusing that the man cleared the dishes after dinner and brought dessert to the table. It made them realise how easy men had it in South Africa. In New Zealand it was also acceptable for fathers to stay at home and take care of the children, particularly if the wife was highly qualified and earned a good salary.

**Likes**

Families acknowledged that there were many positives about being in New Zealand, and some used words, such as “beautiful” and “wonderful” to describe the country. One family talked about how they had been greeted with open arms and hugs by an “amazing” and “fantastic” New Zealand woman, who had invited them to stay with her. She had helped them to settle by making them feel at home, providing information and inviting them into her social circle. Another family thought that the minister and people at their church were fantastic, because they had promptly started a fund-raising effort among a number of congregations to collect the 30,000 New Zealand dollars needed for a bypass operation at a private hospital for their son who had had a heart attack while visiting them from South Africa. A number of families reiterated that New Zealanders were generally friendly, helpful, accommodating and welcoming people. One family found that Kiwis were very shy, but they were forgiving and laughed with you when things went wrong. They cited the example of locking themselves out of their home accidentally on a few occasions, and the willingness of
their Kiwi neighbour to lend them a ladder to climb on to their top-storey balcony to get in through an unlocked door.

A few people said that they enjoyed the humour of Kiwis, and they found the lack of prestige and pretentiousness refreshing. Most felt that because titles were important and everyone was aware of the social class system, snobbishness was a common feature of life in South Africa. They quickly learnt that owing to the absence of firm social status boundaries in New Zealand, people were “down to earth”. Thus, Kiwis were generally not concerned about what kind of car people drove, where they lived and what their careers were. Even though there was still a class system in New Zealand, barriers were easily overcome. Some felt it was a good thing that there was not such a polarisation between rich and poor in New Zealand. One woman said that she slept better in New Zealand as she knew there were no hungry people sleeping on the street. Another person commented that in New Zealand people stood together, but in South Africa it was every person for himself. They admired the way Kiwis helped each other in time of crisis, for instance, after the Christchurch earthquakes. They were impressed with the efforts of people to donate money and offer practical assistance to people they did not even know. One family also thought that life was easier in New Zealanders as Kiwis were less critical than South Africans. People lived their own lives and nobody pointed a finger or made comments about someone’s appearance. Participants noticed that disabled people had easier access to public areas because of wheelchair ramps and audible signals at traffic lights. Disabled people were given a place in society, for instance, McDonald’s employed people with Down syndrome. Andries added that New Zealand was a wonderful country that accommodated elderly volunteers. He commented that some retirement villages had beautiful walking trails and offered walking groups to its members. A participant summarised the positives of New Zealand by stating that “small is beautiful”.

524
New Zealand was considered to be a civilised country with a low crime rate. All the families commented on feeling more relaxed, secure and peaceful in New Zealand because of the lower levels of crime and fewer security concerns, compared to South Africa. They were impressed by how peaceful, quiet and pleasant New Zealand was, in contrast to the terrible burglaries and murders in South Africa. Freed from hypervigilance because of constant danger, one person said that she did not have the same sense of uneasiness and feelings of depression in New Zealand. Participants appreciated the relative level of safety in New Zealand and the greater freedom of movement, without being constantly worried about personal safety. For instance, women and children felt comfortable staying home alone. One family left the door to their sleepout unlocked as they felt that in New Zealand they did not have to lock everything. The crime rate was low in smaller, rural towns, and one family left their doors open “without worries”. A woman, who went for a long walk in nature with a group of friends, had felt tired along the way and had felt safe enough to walk back by herself and wait for the rest to return. A visitor was surprised to see young people walking around Courtney Place in central Wellington at midnight. One young woman said that New Zealand was a great place for children to grow up and become independent, as they had a lot more freedom to go out with friends and travel alone on public transport. One person summed it up by saying that compared to the lawlessness of people in South Africa, living in New Zealand was a bit like being in the army. He explained that in New Zealand there was discipline as rules had to be followed and people respected each other. The streets were kept clean, and even the veldt next to main roads. Pet owners generally took good care of their animals and fines were issued for dogs running around in the street. Participants commented on how pleasant it was not having the constant barking of dogs in their neighbourhood. One person commented that they had one barking dog in their street and humorously added that they must be South Africans.
The one aspect of New Zealand that impressed most immigrants was its natural beauty. Owing to a high rain fall, the landscape was a lush green carpet, surrounded by secluded beaches, turquoise oceans, fern-clad forests and snow-peaked mountains. One couple enjoyed listening to the song of the Tuis in the large trees outside their balcony. A participant said that living on the Kapiti coast was like being on holiday every day, and on a sunny day it was as pretty as a picture and felt like paradise. He described himself as a “sea person” and because New Zealand consisted of two islands, it suited him well never to be more than 128 kilometres from the sea. He also enjoyed exploring off-the-beaten-track areas in New Zealand in his 4x4 vehicle and took many photos to show his family in South Africa. One family enjoyed the views from Mount Victoria and the snow on the Rumataka hills upon arrival in New Zealand. A participant said that she enjoyed walking through long grass without being afraid of snakes. She and her husband enjoyed doing house sitting for a colleague in a beautiful, old, double-storey home in a Wellington suburb, and appreciated a walk through the botanical gardens each morning on the way to work. A family, who had initially settled in a rural town, enjoyed seeing sheep in the paddocks, having everything within walking distance and exploring the surrounding mountainous areas. A few participants found that once they had gained financial stability, they had more money available for travel, which they would not have had in South Africa. In the long run, they had more disposable income than the average South African because their money was worth more internationally. Some workplaces offered opportunities for travel to Australia and Pacific Islands, and one woman frequently accompanied her husband on business trips to Australia, Taiwan, Canada, and the USA.

Participants commented on making good friends and enjoying their lifestyle in New Zealand. One person enjoyed the food and wine culture and was always trying out new recipes. Most agreed that New Zealand had numerous, and some of the best coffee shops in
the world. Fruit and vegetables were generally of a better quality than in South Africa, and New Zealand made top-quality cheeses. One family felt that South Africa was inclined to export its best produce to the United Kingdom and Europe, and South Africans had to be content with third grade goods. Most of the early South African settlers said that New Zealand had definitely developed during the last 17 years, and that a wider range of items were now available in supermarkets. One person believed that trades people in New Zealand were quite good, as well as the quality of their workmanship. A few women commented on the excellent library services in their area. A person added that one of her “small pleasures” in New Zealand was that she could borrow as many books as she wanted at a time, compared to South African libraries that limited the number of books on loan. She said her local library knew her by name, and she was their best customer as she was a very fast reader.

Dislikes

Participants agreed that New Zealand was a good country to live in, but it was not perfect. One family warned their children to “watch out, because there were still some sick people out there”. Two participants who had been offered employment in Auckland turned it down, because they disliked the city. One family moved to the Kapiti region, because they found Wellington too busy and crowded, and the rental properties were too expensive. Some people still had the mistaken belief that, because New Zealand was an island in the Pacific region, it was a tropical paradise. A man jokingly told his mother in South Africa that they only ate coconuts in New Zealand. Six families expressed their shock at Wellington’s blustery cold and wet winters upon arrival, and still found the weather problematic. One woman said she wondered whether she would ever get warm, and another still wore six layers of clothing in winter after 16 years in New Zealand. A participant reported that she had been in New Zealand for 15 days before she saw the sun for the first time. One person admitted
that after three years in Wellington, the winters were getting too much for her. A family who lived in Masterton for a while said that the winters were bitterly cold and frosty. Another family who lived in Nelson said that even though winter nights were cold and frosty, the days were nice and sunny. In the beginning, one person found the New Zealand landscape “too green and soft”, and another found the bird life disappointing. Before their arrival, some people had not been aware that New Zealand had earthquakes and volcanoes. They were somewhat perturbed to find out that the Wellington region had about 30 earthquakes a day and that Auckland had about 40 volcanoes that were currently “not active”. One family considered not living in Wellington because of the persistent earthquake danger.

South Africans were used to sunny face-brick homes with large built-in cupboards, and were concerned about New Zealand’s homes built from wood. Some said they wanted a solid house again, instead of the “cardboard” houses in New Zealand. Rental homes were scarce and expensive. In general, they were musty, grubby and had small rooms with only a hole in the wall for storage space. One person recalled how she had to clean every inch of the home with her own hands to get rid of the dirt and spider webs. A large number of these homes also had steep staircases and lots of steps from street level, which posed difficulties for older people. One couple had great difficulty finding a home that could accommodate their furniture. Most felt that in New Zealand you pay more for owning a smaller and lesser quality house. A family had bought a house after being in New Zealand for only ten days owing to school zoning rules. They could not enrol their children in the local school if they were not living in the area, and hence felt that they had to buy a house in a rush without having enough time to look around. Families also found that childcare was extremely expensive in New Zealand, particularly those who had previously relied on family members in South Africa. Others commented that the quality of furniture in New Zealand was not very good, and that fruit and vegetables were expensive.
A number of participants voiced their concern about the lack of discipline, alcohol abuse and disruptive behaviour of New Zealand youth. Youngsters driving up and down suburban roads with blaring stereos at all hours of the night and “boy racers” were commonplace. A man, who was waiting at a local train station, thought the smoking and swearing of young, adolescent girls in their school uniforms were appalling. It was also not unusual to see intoxicated teenagers staggering around and vomiting on Wellington streets late at night. Participants were wondering why parents were permitting this kind of behaviour. The rising level of crime and murders in New Zealand during the previous 17 years was also worrying for South African immigrants. Some thought it was due to the larger population, whilst others speculated that certain immigrant groups could be responsible for an increase in criminal offences. One person said they had never been robbed in South Africa, but in New Zealand their daughter’s laptop had been stolen from her flat and some items had been stolen from their sleepout. The latter thief was a sixteen-year old “scallywag” in their neighbourhood who had not attended school for three years. Concerns were raised that it was usually naughty kids who committed petty crimes, but as they suffered no negative consequences it could lead to more serious offences. One person concluded that “it was not a better life here in New Zealand”, but another said that there was nothing in New Zealand that was so bad that it would drive her back to South Africa.

Acculturation strategies

Being faced with numerous sociocultural, environmental, economic and political changes after immigration, participants had attempted to adapt to New Zealand society while keeping their sense of identity intact. Some immigrants had initially preferred to befriend other South Africans because it had provided a sense of normality and belonging. Adapting to a new culture was slower for some because of nostalgia for South Africa and family members
who had been left behind. One woman thought it was unimaginable for people to pack up and cut off from South Africa two days after arrival in New Zealand. She thought that she would not have survived if she had severed her ties with South Africa so abruptly. She emphasised that integration was a slow process, and found that her “up and down” journey had taken much longer. One family said that after a couple of years they had felt that they needed to “assimilate” more of the New Zealand culture. Eighteen of the 21 South African participants indicated that they had utilised integration as an acculturation strategy. Half of these participants had Afrikaans as a first language and the other half were English speaking. Both groups had adopted a mixture of South African and New Zealand cultural factors, and their circle of friends had consisted of South Africans as well as Kiwis. Families had gained information about other New Zealand cultures, such as Māori and Pacific Islanders, from Kiwis. Participants felt it was also good to befriend immigrants from other countries, such as Poland, as they had a better understanding of the experiences and needs of an immigrant. Some chose to marry a Kiwi, or an immigrant or refugee from another country, such as Hungary, and hence had to negotiate two sets of cultural barriers. There were noticeable differences between participants regarding their cultural identification and expression of integrative strategies in their daily lives. Some identified both as South Africans and New Zealanders, and opted for dual or New Zealand citizenship only. Most of them still supported the Springboks. A family who had been in New Zealand for three years still identified as being Afrikaners and regarded themselves as South Africans; they ate South African food, adhered to South African values, had South African friends and spoke Afrikaans at home. Another family, who had been in New Zealand for about seven years, said that they had not discarded any South African cultural factors. They felt that their South African identity was extremely important to them and that they could not get away from the fact that they would
always be South African. One woman stated that they had good Kiwi friends in their private and business lives, but after 17 years she was still cautious with some of them.

Despite their strong commitment to being South Africans, most participants integrated well at school or work, and in their communities. One couple who, after 16 years in New Zealand, regarded themselves as Europeans realised that they had become Kiwis when they could participate and contribute during conversations. They had been in the country long enough to build a bond with Kiwis and felt that they were New Zealanders. Andries explained that “you feel at home with New Zealanders; you feel at one with them and they feel at one with you”. Slowly, but surely, New Zealand had become their country as they became more familiar with things in New Zealand than in South Africa. However, upon reflection they stated that in their hearts they were perhaps still South Africans and Afrikaners. They quoted Elisabeth Eybers’ (1973) sentiment that step by step you shuffle into a new country. Settled immigrants eventually found that they had tears in their eyes when they heard the national anthem of both countries, and felt emotional and proud when the Māori haka was being performed. Neil summed it up by saying, “we all had to learn and accept that things were done differently in New Zealand, and that there was life outside of South Africa”.

Participants reported that some South African immigrants came to New Zealand to “get away from the South Africans”. Instead of getting involved with the South African immigrant group, they had preferred to mix exclusively with New Zealanders to adopt Kiwi culture and blend in with New Zealand society. One Afrikaans-speaking participant chose to make a radical break with South Africa after immigration. According to her family, she thought that everything was wonderful in New Zealand, and that everything was terrible in South Africa. She had always been a staunch All Black supporter and proudly displayed a New Zealand flag during a visit to South Africa. She expressed her annoyance when
immigrants criticised New Zealand or fretted about not being able to buy basic South African goods in New Zealand. She had felt at home more quickly than the rest of her family and said that she knew why she had immigrated and “that’s that”. Even though she had beautiful memories of South Africa, she felt that things were different now in New Zealand. She identified as a New Zealander and only had New Zealand citizenship. It would thus appear that she preferred an assimilation acculturation strategy. An English participant, who identified as a South African and New Zealand European, had followed a mixed assimilation-integration approach. She asserted that everything was good in New Zealand and that the country was different and much better than South Africa. She was adamant that she would never return to South Africa and had no desire to visit either. However, she had made a concerted effort to mix with other South Africans after arrival because it had helped her to settle, and she was also willing to assist newcomers. She still baked rusks, and arranged braais and other outings for the South African immigrant community. A common factor for both these women was that they were extremely concerned about the escalating level of crime, felt under threat when they had left South Africa, and were highly committed to immigration.

Participants stated that Afrikaners who only wanted to interact with other Afrikaners and would have nothing to do with Kiwis were just as bad as they excluded themselves from mainstream society. One elderly, English-speaking participant who felt rejected by employers and criticised by New Zealand society for being unemployed appeared to have followed a separation approach to acculturation. Owing to South Africa’s racial segregation policies of the past, he had also felt excluded from opportunities offered to only certain members of South African society and he had had to “live in his own community”. One couple, who had decided to return to South Africa after three years, had come to the conclusion that they were “immigrants” in New Zealand as well as South Africa as their home country was now under
new rule. This sense of being “unwanted” or marginalised members of society was echoed by a number of South African immigrants as Māori frequently reminded overseas settlers that they were merely “visitors” to New Zealand, instead of being “people of the land”. One couple, who had family members living in the USA, commented that the country consisted of an amalgamation of different cultures, but they all considered themselves “American”. New Zealanders were not regarded as that patriotic, even though it was acknowledged that patriotism could also create problems. However, it was felt that people should take pride in being New Zealanders, instead of just being proud of rugby and the All Blacks.

Acculturation stressors

Immigrants faced a number of stressors, such as pre-migration trauma, separation from family and friends, prejudice and discrimination, employment and financial problems, as well as lifestyle changes.

Pre-migration trauma

Some families had had direct exposure to crime and violence, such as armed robbery or being hijacked. They had been living with complex security systems and in gated communities in an attempt to reduce the risk. Some participants had had to process the assault, rape or murder of family or friends, and all had experienced vicarious trauma on account of media reports of extreme violence. Those who had survived violent assaults were left with a sense of violation and enduring anxiety, as well as panic in response to any perceived indication of threat. People believed that in South Africa “trouble will find you no matter where you are”. For children and teenagers, the level of crime had meant a restricted lifestyle and dependency on adult family members to provide security and transport. The safety of young adults, who were living independently, was a constant source of worry for
their parents as they often lived or travelled alone. The pace of life in South Africa was fast and stressful, and most South Africans were hypervigilant because of a continuous sense of threat and fears of imminent danger to their lives. Thus, participants had mostly left South Africa because of push factors, and had felt forced to leave their homeland, family and friends behind as they feared for their safety. They had experienced varying levels of trauma for which they had received little or no counselling to process these events.

Separation and contact

Some families had been separated during the immigration process as the breadwinner had had to go ahead to confirm residency, while the rest had stayed behind to finalise financial matters and pack up their household goods. Saying goodbye to family and long-term friends had been a heart-wrenching experience for most, particularly those who had been blamed for deserting their country and loved ones. Some did not know whether they would ever be able to return, and thought that perhaps it was last time they would see their country and families. As family was regarded as crucially important and missed a great deal, immigrants had experienced considerable heartache because of disrupted family connections. The ensuing loss of being separated from family members was intensified for those who had lost parents or step-parents during childhood and young adulthood, or within two years before or after immigration.

Adult immigrants had been concerned about leaving elderly parents behind, and had been worried about their deteriorating health and ensuring their welfare from abroad. Parents had also experienced loss when their children had emigrated, and had gone through their own phases of adaptation. If older parents had immigrated first, their adult children had felt obligated or coerced into following their parents and some had eventually chosen to return to South Africa. This had left parents torn between being with their children when they started a
family in South Africa, and investing in a future in New Zealand. Some adult children had eventually emigrated from New Zealand to other destinations, such as Australia, Dubai, China and the USA. Grandparents and grandchildren had found it extremely difficult being separated and losing out by not being a part of each other’s daily lives. Young adults, who had siblings in South Africa with children, had also found immigration harder as they were not around when their nephews and nieces were growing up.

A number of immigrants had to adapt to New Zealand culture without the closeness and support of family and friends. In addition, they could not rely on family members to help out during times of need, such as illness or financial hardship. Some concluded that in South Africa they had taken their family for granted, but realised in New Zealand what they were missing, particularly at birthdays and during the festive season. Those who had married in New Zealand were unable to have overseas family and close friends as wedding guests owing to the prohibiting travelling costs. They had to be satisfied with phone calls and congratulatory cards and letters. Hence, it was common for immigrants to feel that they were living in isolation. Anna said the following: “I miss Saturday and Sunday afternoons just going down to my brother or sister, or everybody meeting up and bringing something for mommy’s birthday celebration”. Marital strain had occurred where one person had the support of siblings living in New Zealand, while their spouse had pined for brothers and sisters in South Africa, and constantly worried about their health and safety. Some had encouraged their family members to immigrate to New Zealand as well, but stumbling blocks had often prevented this from being finalised. In the end, some siblings had chosen to immigrate to the United Kingdom with ancestral visas and the USA after obtaining a green card via a lottery. A few people had members of their extended family, such as uncles and cousins, living in other countries, such as Australia. Hence, many felt that South Africans,
and particularly the Afrikaner, had become diasporic because they had fled from the violence and crime in their homeland.

Loss of supportive friendship networks was another by-product of relocation. A number of immigrants had left good friends behind and missed the friendship networks they had built up over the years. They had a shared history with these friends, who knew them as school children, university students, colleagues and young parents. Even though they had developed friendships in New Zealand, they were neither of the same depth nor had the same level of comfort as those in South Africa. In addition, these friends only knew them the way they were now as older adults. Adolescents, people in their twenties and unmarried adults valued their friendships highly. They were extremely sad to leave friends behind whom they had known for a long time and regarded as “family”. In New Zealand they missed not having close friends in their lives who knew them in depth and appreciated them as good friends. They had nobody to phone on the spur of the moment for coffee, a chat or a movie and had nobody to share their heartache with. Even though they had met other South Africans in New Zealand, they could not establish relationships of the same quality. Jo explained that “one of the challenges of leaving a country is that your roots and people you grew up with, and have things in common with, get left behind”.

The importance of the relationship between South Africans and their domestic workers was often misunderstood and underestimated. One person spoke of a Xhosa woman who had joined their family in her early twenties and had stayed with them for nearly 20 years. When she had remarried, her future husband had jokingly said that he had to accept that the domestic worker was part of the “package deal”. The Xhosa woman, who had never married and did not have children, had been a part of their family and called the new husband “uncle”. She had gone during weekends to visit her extended family. The husband had built a bedsitter with an on-suite bathroom and kitchenette for their domestic worker on their
property. She had her own television set, cooked for the family and ate the same food. She had also received a bonus and gifts at Christmas time. She took good care of her money, and they had opened a bank account and taken out an insurance policy for her to provide financial security. They had held her in high regard and described her as a dear soul, who was honest and trustworthy. They were heartbroken to leave her behind when they emigrated, and it was a huge adjustment for her to get used to being with another family. Another woman spoke of their Xhosa domestic worker who had only worked for them twice a week, but had been part of their lives for nine years. It was not just her hard work that they had appreciated, but she had also enjoyed their frequent chats over a cup of coffee. Sometimes they had just sat together in silence with one another. This had added another layer of loss that was somewhat unique to South African immigrants. Many gave accounts of tearful goodbyes and feelings of guilt about the future well-being of domestic workers who often had helped to raise their children.

After immigration, it was important to remain in contact with family, friends, bosses and colleagues in South Africa. As New Zealand was “miles away from everything”, visiting friends and family in South Africa and other countries was difficult and expensive. Those who had immigrated in the early 1990s said that e-mail and other electronic forms of communication were not widely used at the time. They had relied on faxes for business purposes, and had used letters or telephone calls to communicate with family and friends. Most agreed that having ready access to e-mail, texting (cellular phone short message service), international telephone packages, Skype and internet networking sites made things a lot easier nowadays to help people stay connected. Skype had the added benefit that people could also see each other. However, some had family members who were not au fait with modern, electronic forms of communication and hence contact was maintained via their spouses. One thing that South Africans, especially older people, struggled with was
calculating the time difference between South Africa and New Zealand. Because it could vary between nine and ten hours, depending on the cycle of daylight saving, deciding when was the best time to call became even more confusing. Most families had been woken by phone calls from South Africa in the middle of the night, and had found that their sleepy voices had left the callers perplexed.

Participants were inclined to stay connected with people in South Africa who were encouraging and supportive, and reciprocated their efforts to keep in touch. Some used internet networking sites, such as Facebook, to follow the lives of school friends and to organise school reunions. One participant was still close to her friends in South Africa and Canada, and was in regular contact with some of them via telephone and Skype. She felt that it would be easy to reconnect if they met again in person. One of her friends had visited her in New Zealand, and she and her Kiwi husband had met up with her friends during a visit to South Africa. One couple had organised a reunion via Facebook with a number of their Durban friends at a wedding in Sydney, and said it had been exciting to meet up with old friends again. There were quite a few South African immigrants at the wedding and a number of them had a Durban accent. In the church the couple had experienced a “weird feeling” that they were back in Durban again. Two men had remained in contact with their previous bosses and colleagues in South Africa, as they were always glad to hear from them and encouraged them to “move ahead” with their lives in New Zealand.

Most families had made an effort to remain in contact with their children, parents and siblings, and some also corresponded with cousins, uncles and aunts in South Africa. After arrival, some participants had phoned their families in South Africa every week, but later on they had started “forgetting” to phone home because they were busy with work and other responsibilities. Sometimes months would go by without getting in touch with family, and they would suddenly realise that they had not heard from their family either. Some people in
South Africa became worried if they had not heard from their family members in New Zealand for a while. A few participants concluded that they had to make a conscious effort to keep in regular contact with family at home. Andrew and Anna emphasised the importance of staying in contact with family: “We want to travel and become global citizens, and eventually our children may want to travel as well. When our children are abroad, we also want them to contact us regularly. Therefore, we as parents have to show our children that we keep in touch with our parents, and our brothers and sisters”. However, some participants stated that because they were not great letter writers or communicators, they seldom contacted family in South Africa. They mostly used birthdays to catch up with family affairs. Sometimes one person, who was the source of family information, was contacted more regularly for updates. Some participants wrote frequently to friends and family, but found that only a few faithful friends wrote back occasionally. Most of those who replied were not the ones they expected to hear from. Some participants had also found that their siblings who were against their immigration did not make much contact, despite them making an effort by sending a text or e-mail on their birthdays.

One matter that immigrants found difficult to talk about was the lack of understanding, sense of estrangement and even rejection by family and friends in South Africa. Close friends sometimes remained loyal, but others wrote immigrants off as traitors and even refused to speak to them. One participant was shocked to learn that the sparse communication from a family member was because of being “put in a box” and pushed aside as she had become inconsequential to his life. Family and friends back home seemed blissfully unaware of the heartache and sorrow immigrants were experiencing, and how hard they were working at surviving financially. Some were under the mistaken belief that they were on an extended “holiday” in New Zealand, while others accused them of taking the easy way out and running away from South Africa. Despite numerous efforts to remain in contact
with those back home, some found that family members and faithful friends wrote infrequently. Aletta said the following: “I wrote up to 102 letters every three weeks to those back home. I ran to check the post box two to three times a day for a reply, but it remained empty”. She elaborated that “everybody is busy with their own lives, and they don’t understand this intense longing in your heart to make contact with someone back home; the comfort of something that is familiar”. Andries felt that it was futile to continue writing because, “when you decide to leave, you are removed from their thoughts and their frame of reference. It is as if you had died and they buried you”.

Feeling misunderstood or abandoned was sometimes exacerbated if immigrants contacted people at home when things were going well, but avoided letting them know when they were struggling. Some suspected that people at home wanted things to go badly for them in New Zealand, and they did not want to reinforce the belief that they had made a mistake to emigrate. Others did not want to acknowledge their acute vulnerability or burden loved ones with their problems. Some felt bad that they did not keep in touch as much as they could have done, and used the excuse that they were “too busy” to write. However, some realised after a couple of months that they felt too depressed to compile letters for those back home. One woman said that when she felt better she wrote to about 100 people and asked them if they were still interested in corresponding with her. Those who did not reply were wiped from her list, and she remained in touch with about 50 people. Afterwards her friends realised that she had not written because she felt too depressed at the time. As time progressed, some immigrants had experienced an insidious sense of drifting apart from those in South Africa, owing to the gradual changes in the lives of people who lived in two different countries. One person had looked forward to the visit of a friend and chatting about the good old days when they were single. However, a marital partner of a different culture and speaking a different language resulted in her being stuck in the middle as “two is company, but three is a crowd”.

540
This made personality differences more apparent, and resulted in renewed feelings of loss as she realised that an important friendship could never again be the same way it had been in South Africa.

**Prejudice and discrimination**

A sensitive topic in New Zealand was unfairness, prejudice, discrimination, xenophobia and even racism towards certain minority groups, particularly migrants. During the immigration process, some participants had experienced age discrimination by the Australian and New Zealand immigration authorities, as well as employers in both countries. This had led them to believe that they were not accepted or wanted, which resulted in feelings of rejection and exclusion. Participants warned that some Kiwis did not like South Africans. Some reported incidents that had been caused by a lack of knowledge or misunderstandings, but others appeared to have a more deliberate and malicious intent. New Zealanders had a tendency to take South African expressions literally, which led to misunderstandings. One woman recalled an incident where an information technology technician had messed up her computer. When she arrived at work the following morning and found that nothing on her computer was working, she exclaimed: “Where is he? I’ll kill him!” Her colleagues became extremely concerned that she would carry out her perceived threat. They pleaded with her to reconsider and tried to usher her to a chair. They did not understand that in a South African context it merely meant that she planned to haul him over the coals for causing inconvenience. Afrikaners noticed that they talked louder and were more exuberant in the company of other Afrikaners. One family recalled an incident when they went to dinner with a group of friends at a restaurant and shared one bottle of wine. The restaurant owner misinterpreted their laughing and noisiness for being drunk, and enquired whether he should order them a taxi.
A number of participants commented on the communication difficulties Afrikaans-speaking and English-speaking South Africans encountered as a result of “articulation problems”, such as pronunciation and “directness”. Some people with a pronounced Afrikaans accent said they were viewed in a more negative light by New Zealanders, as Afrikaners were perceived to have been the main perpetrators of apartheid. One Afrikaans woman, who had attended an English school during childhood, had a Natal English accent and people thus thought she was British. People were thus less inclined to “tell her off” as it was not so obvious that she was an Afrikaner. Kiwis also became impatient with South Africans who had trouble understanding their New Zealand accent. South Africans’ direct way of interacting was often misinterpreted as arrogance, rudeness or aggression, particularly when Afrikaans was used. Some participants were regarded as too frank or outspoken, and had the impression that they said the wrong thing at the wrong time. After feeling compelled to apologise on numerous occasions, some eventually preferred to refrain from voicing their opinions. Those for whom interpersonal communication was a vital part of their job description felt stuck between a rock and a hard place.

Most South African immigrants had been sensitised to discrimination and racism by growing up with apartheid. Even though those adversely affected by apartheid stated that they held no grudges against a particular political institution, the issues in South Africa’s political history still affected them in terms of a sense of unfairness and exclusion from opportunities. South African immigrants were therefore vigilant about being the target of racism, or being regarded as racist. An Afrikaans-speaking woman, who had married a Kiwi, wondered whether her husband had thought of her as a racist when they had met, even though she had different political views. A Coloured woman said she did not experience discrimination or negative comments about being a South African immigrant, and indicated that they had moved on from the difficulties of the political conditions in South Africa’s past. Her husband
said that they tried to treat people as individuals, irrespective of their origins, colour or race. However, it was sometimes hard not to look at someone and wonder about their race or where they came from. Some families said that in the beginning, people in New Zealand had asked questions and wanted an explanation about issues in South Africa. They had offered their view of things and how they had experienced South Africa. However, Kiwis were still inclined to interpret the mannerisms and casual comments by South Africans as racist.

A New Zealand participant explained that people often formed their opinions about a country and its people from the media. He had a staunch colleague at work who was the most racist South African he had ever met, but thought it was because he came from an area with a lot of violence. He believed that white South Africans found it hard to live in a country with blacks. The government thought that they had done the right thing by segregating whites and blacks so that they would not interact and “contaminate” each other. Segregation would allow blacks and whites to stick to their own kind and live their own lives without “offending” each other. The idea that the government could dictate that whites and blacks had to use separate buses and other public amenities was abhorrent to him. He believed that segregation “offended” blacks as well as whites, and had driven a division straight through the entire country, which was apparently quite obvious to New Zealanders. The conclusion was that there was sadness and hurt on both sides of a divided nation. He concluded that racism in South Africa had been driven by white supremacists and people in top government positions.

When asked about racism in New Zealand, the Kiwi participant defined racism as a racial slur against a person, based on a situation or action, and labelling the person according to a stereotypical extreme. He added that extremes occurred in every culture, and if you used it to stereotype and make comments about people, you were being racist. He remembered how his grandfather had made racist comments, such as assuming that a neglected property belonged to a Māori. However, he had observed that not all Māoris had broken-down houses,
and some homes owned by Europeans were in a shocking condition. However, racist comments were also being made about Europeans, such as, “what you would expect from a half-cut Irishman?” He reflected that in the district where he had been born there was a close bond between Māoris and Europeans, and that one of his family members had married a Māori. He reasoned that making a derogatory comment about “your own culture” was not being racist. To an outsider, his grandfather’s comments seemed racist, but it was not racist if people understood “the real meaning” behind it. Thus, making stereotypical comments, say, calling someone a “black bastard”, became problematic if a person did not know the meaning behind it and just uttered “a bunch of words”. The conclusion was that in New Zealand society, derogatory comments were only considered to be racist if they were made by “outsiders” who did not understand the underlying meanings in the cultural context.

However, this justification was not extended to comments or jokes made by South Africans, who were similarly in a particular cultural context unfamiliar to Kiwis.

South African participants commented on their knowledge and experience of prejudice, discrimination and racism in New Zealand. There was a consensus that owing to the prevailing cloak of political correctness, discrimination and racism were disguised in New Zealand society. One participant explained that “racism is in the whispers”. A family recalled that they had been advised to look for a house on the western side of their rural town as the eastern side was regarded as “the rough side”. They had also been told not to send their children to a school on the eastern side by arguing that it was a large school and that their children would “get lost in the system”. Sending their children to a smaller school on the western side was offered as a better option. In New Zealand society this was often referred to as the “white flight” from schools in lower socioeconomic areas.

Some South African immigrants faced prejudice, discrimination, exploitation, bullying and verbal abuse in work and training contexts. One person in his sixties, who was
well-qualified and experienced, could not even find temporary employment in his field owing to age discrimination. Another person, with an impressive range of academic qualifications and extensive experience in a specialised field, was being grossly underpaid by his demanding employers. After years of devoting long hours to a large project that had yielded a valuable and useful product of national significance, he did not receive one word of thank you for his diligence and professionalism. Another man talked about how prospective employers used the lure of future salary increases and performance bonuses, but then kept moving the goal posts so that these incentives always remained just out of reach. From these accounts it would appear that some companies exploited the vulnerability of older, professional immigrants from South Africa by pressurising them to work long hours and deliver a high standard of work for inequitable remuneration.

Participants reported that office politics and bullying were an unfortunate reality in the New Zealand workplace, and that women were particularly vulnerable. Kiwis appeared to have a preconceived idea about the values and behaviour of South Africans with a particular skin colour. Hence, when they met a South African person for the first time, they judged the person based solely on his or her appearance. Some white South African immigrant women were given a hard time at work, for instance, being “told off” for being South African or harassed to “offer explanations” for South Africa’s political past. Some women were told outright that they were racists, based on the fact that they were white South Africans. On the other hand, nonwhites had found that their qualifications and competence in the workplace were being scrutinised. Coloured participants believed that discrimination along the lines of racism also occurred in New Zealand, as Kiwis discriminated against their own people with a darker skin colour. At work, participants may not have been the direct target of discrimination, but derogatory comments about “brown-skinned people”, such as Māori or Pacific Islanders, made them wonder what Kiwis said about them behind their backs.
Immigrant men, who owned their own businesses or were employed in factories or offices, were less exposed to office politics. One participant, who had his own martial arts school, said that his students were perhaps different from mainstream society and he experienced no problems with them. He also explained that Kiwi women were more “difficult” than men. Where the workforce mostly consisted of men, conflict was usually short-lived and quickly resolved because men managed disputes in a more direct and assertive manner. A Coloured man recalled an incident when a young Kiwi colleague at work had made an unprovoked comment towards him of, “Hey man, Nigger”. The derogatory comment was uncalled for and completely out of context. Afterwards he had wondered why he had not responded to the comment, and thought that perhaps he had been hardened or desensitised by living in South Africa. Because the comment had continued to bother him, he had reported it to his manager a week later and the youngster had apologised to him. A professional man said that his colleagues seemed hesitant to talk about South Africa’s political history, and were inclined to avoid discussions about the topic. Thus, nobody ever confronted him about South Africa’s political past. He relied on a South African colleague to “act as his eyes and ears”, and talk to the Kiwis about South Africa. He worked with a Romanian woman, who had apparently grown up in difficult circumstances. His colleagues empathised with the Romanian colleague, but disregarded the plight of South Africans. He thought that perhaps Kiwis had the perception that South Africans had lived a life of luxury.

Most participants agreed that refugees were managed much better in New Zealand than South African immigrants. South Africans were viewed as immigrants, who had left their country of their own free will. Even though a number of participants felt that they had been forced to leave South Africa owing to adverse and dangerous circumstances, they did not receive the same compassion, assistance or support as refugees.
Attending workshops, as part of ongoing workplace education, sometimes provided additional forums for unprovoked confrontations. Despite their political correctness regarding indigenous Māori and Pacific cultures, some Kiwis were not shy to publicly express their opinions about South Africans. One man became aware of the negative attitude towards Afrikaans-speaking South Africans after an altercation with a New Zealand woman at a training course. During tea time, in the presence of other attendees, the Kiwi woman enquired whether he was an English- or an Afrikaans-speaking South African. Upon establishing that he was Afrikaans, she asserted that Afrikaners were the most arrogant people she had ever met in her life. She based her knowledge on a two-week visit to South Africa. She had been hitch hiking through the Karoo and she had harped on about the “rich, arrogant man in his Mercedes” who had offered her a ride. Interview participants expressed their sense of amazement at such a negative, ungrateful response to an act of kindness from a stranger. It would seem that she had inferred his standard of living and personal values purely from the car he drove. The research participant decided to follow the Ghandi approach and told her that he was sorry to hear that she hated Afrikaners so much. Her reply of, “Oh no...no, I don’t hate them!” was unconvincing and had been met with the disapproval of the onlookers.

Another person had also been confronted with a dismal view of Afrikaners during a training course, which had revealed a remarkable level of ignorance about cultural groups and historical events in South Africa. It would seem that being an Afrikaner and having an Afrikaans accent served as a reminder of the “Germanic” heritage of Afrikaners. Hence, they were perceived as “thick-necked Boors” who have a genetic and habitual propensity for racism and genocide towards other races. A person of British descent was quite vocal about how every time Afrikaners opened their mouths, their distinct accent reminded her of the horrors of Nazi concentration camps. A quiet comment from a Coloured person that Afrikaans was also her home language did little to stifle the person’s condemnation of people
with an Afrikaans accent. Another colleague asserted that people with an Afrikaans accent sounded and acted “like monkeys” by imitating the accent and adding ape-like mannerisms. When he was calmly told that his comment was offensive and against company policy, he had responded by trying to rationalise his views and actions. Despite New Zealand being touted as a politically correct society, these employees had little understanding of culturally correct behaviour in the workplace. When the hapless immigrants became distraught, it only fuelled the tormentors’ efforts to intensify the level of public humiliation. Under the pretence that perpetrators were “just joking”, the sense of invalidation and shame was greatly enhanced. When the person who had launched the attack had felt obliged to apologise weeks later via e-mail, with reassurances that, “I love all people”, it had been regarded as insulting and redundant.

Schools, churches and public areas were also not exempt from South Africans experiencing racial slurs, derogatory comments or rejection. An elderly, retired man had experienced considerable distress as Kiwis in his church congregation openly criticised him for “sitting at home and doing nothing”, while “allowing” his younger wife to work. He had found their comments intrusive and uncalled for as they were not cognisant of the couple’s preferences, personal circumstances, financial resources and sacrifices as a result of immigration. He had felt offended at the insinuation that he was an older man who had married a younger wife so that she could take care of him financially. A Coloured man commented that he was not looking for racism around every corner, but the fact remained that it did happen in New Zealand. During an outing he had encountered a group of youngsters drinking at a local beach, and they had shouted “hey, taxi” in his direction. He was not sure whether the remark had been directed at him because of his darker features, and had decided not to respond as they appeared to be inebriated. This father also recalled how his young son had been called a “Nigger” by an opponent on the sports field. They had lodged a complaint.
and had taken their grievance to the Human Rights Commissioner, but the incident was never acknowledged by the Commissioner and no apology had been received from the player.

Some comments directed at South Africans were accepted with a sense of humour, but others indicated a significant level of ignorance and presumption that was quite disturbing. One handyman recalled shopping for a particular pipe at a hardware store, and explained that this item was readily available in South African stores. The shop owner quipped that he should perhaps go back to South Africa if he wanted the required item. One couple said that a few times people had treated them with rudeness because they were South Africans. For example, when they were looking for a house to rent, the agent had made a derogatory comment about the “servants” in South Africa and hinted that they were “treated as slaves”. She was briskly informed that they did not have slaves in South Africa. Aletta remembered being told curtly that, “we don’t have a South African ambassador in New Zealand; because of their racist policy we chased them out”. Aletta added that “they really believe that we are terrible people. A man told me a story he had seen where someone on a farm begged not to be beaten. He said that he does not want to have anything to do with South Africans, because they are cruel”. A couple talked about an incident where they had been sitting in a restaurant and heard Kiwis at the table behind them speculating about the differences between Afrikaans- and English-speaking South Africans. They had remained quiet and listened to the Kiwis trying to discern the differences. The Kiwis concluded that Afrikaans speakers were very “boorish”, indicating that they were barbaric, vulgar and uncouth. The couple, who both had professional qualifications, had concluded that they viewed Afrikaans-speaking immigrants as uncivilised, low-class South Africans. Even though it was interesting and anxiety provoking to eavesdrop, they were shocked to hear what Kiwis really thought about Afrikaans speakers. The woman became annoyed and wanted to turn around and ask them what they meant by Afrikaans speakers being “boorish”. Her
husband attempted to stop her by firmly taking her hand and leaving the restaurant without having their meal. He laconically remarked that perhaps Kiwis viewed Afrikaans speakers as the Hillbilly’s of South Africa. Some South Africans decided to confront Kiwis when perceived incidents of discrimination or racism occurred. A Kiwi participant recalled how a “racist” South African man had become annoyed when he thought a barman had treated him differently when he realised that he was a South African. He felt that the barman had acknowledged another person before him, and had spoken to him differently than the other customers. The South African had thought the barman was “having a go” at him for being South African, and insisted on seeing his manager. The Kiwi participant thought that perhaps the South African had projected his own racist attitudes on to the barman.

After a while, most participants decided that they did not want to be drawn into conversations where they were “put on the spot” and had to offer explanations about South Africa. Hence, they started avoiding becoming involved in these discussions. One person observed that negative comments about South Africans were supposedly intended as jokes, but they had a sting in their tail. She responded by laughing at the comments without showing that she felt a bit hurt by it. A couple who had been in New Zealand for 16 years, concluded that it was best not to discuss the political circumstances of South Africa. They had learnt to keep quiet and not to share their views. Instead, they simply tolerated what was said about South Africans, even when it was not true. Their explanation was that these discussions were meaningless and useless as South Africans and Kiwis talked at cross purposes on account of misinterpretations and a lack of understanding about each other’s political past. Aletta said: “we emphasise that we are grateful to be in this beautiful country where we are treated well, and we don’t discuss the reasons for immigrating”. Another long-term immigrant said that she avoided conflict wherever possible. Instead of rushing headlong into situations, she would change course to avoid contentious issues. However, conflict avoidance resulted in a
sense of dishonesty between South Africans and Kiwis because the unspoken issues were covered up and remained unaddressed. One person realised that in New Zealand he would remain “an immigrant” who was regarded as an outsider and “not one of them”.

Various factors contributed to prejudice, discrimination, xenophobia and racism in New Zealand. Some groups in New Zealand wanted the rate of immigration to be curtailed, because certain migrant groups had become a burden on the state while others had become too influential as their numbers grew. In the workplace, Kiwis were scared that hard-working South African immigrants would do better than them and make them look bad. They could deprive them of jobs as South Africans were generally better qualified and more experienced than Kiwis. South African employees who were perceived as a threat had difficulty finding suitable employment, or were underemployed. Promotions, salary increases and bonuses were withheld, and they were vulnerable to criticism, confrontations and workplace bullying. One participant had a family member who had wanted to immigrate, but had always encountered stumbling blocks because he was “too highly qualified”. Some felt that Kiwis were “bitter” about South Africa’s political past, and the serious division that occurred in New Zealand society as a result of the 1981 Springbok tour. According to Jeanne, Kiwis took the stance that “you South Africans made a mess of your country and now that everything is turned upside down, you are the white flight”. Aletta discovered that “New Zealanders learnt at school that the whites in South Africa are the bad people and that the blacks are the good people”. Kiwis were therefore surprised when they met white South Africans who were different from this ingrained stereotype. Most participants felt that people who had been living in New Zealand their entire lives had “blinkers” on. They lacked knowledge and had little understanding of apartheid and the circumstances in South Africa. Thus, the negative attitude towards South Africans might be largely based on ignorance rather than animosity. One man had been amused when a colleague’s father commented that he had not met or seen
a South African before. Some questions also reflected the naïveté of New Zealanders, for instance, whether South Africans celebrated Christmas. When participants told Kiwis about their experiences of violent crime in South Africa, they thought that it was almost unbelievable. Some people were horrified by the details, such as highjack attempts, and hence some South Africans preferred not to discuss these events with New Zealanders.

Some participants felt that Kiwis who were critical towards South African immigrants were in the minority. Overall, New Zealanders appeared to like South Africans, based on their good work ethic, a number of similarities and that they settled well in mainstream society. Negative views of South Africans had lessened in the post-apartheid era as the focus of New Zealanders had shifted to the problems of other countries. Those with South African friends appeared to understand the “set up” in South Africa better. A Kiwi man said that after he had watched a documentary on the Boer War, he knew more about South Africans than people realised. Kiwis were inclined to become more accepting with prolonged exposure and getting to know South Africans better. With time Kiwis realised that South Africans were not as dangerous as they had feared during the earlier days of immigration to New Zealand. Kiwis who had travelled extensively were more accepting of other cultures, and were inclined to be more welcoming towards immigrants. Andrew added that “the more people get to know you, the better they understand you and realise that you are just another person in New Zealand; just another simple human being”. A Kiwi participant, married to a South African, believed that one encounters extremes in any culture, based on individual backgrounds. Therefore, people should base their opinion of someone on their own perceptions and meaningful interaction with another person, and not just the “category” they fitted into. He added: “when you meet a person, you have to base your decision on what kind of person they are, according to your perception of how they react to you, and how they relate and treat other people”.

552
Employment and financial

South Africans faced significant financial stress owing to immigration and settling costs, the unfavourable rand-dollar exchange rate, the cost of living in New Zealand, and unemployment or underemployment. Because New Zealand was often the only option for those older than 45, a number of participants were middle aged and close to retirement. They had nearly paid off their mortgages and refurbished their homes to fit their needs and lifestyle. In addition, some had timeshare and could occasionally indulge in luxuries, such as visiting a health hydro. They had often worked their whole lives for a particular organisation, and relied on their properties, pension schemes and retirement annuities for financial security during old age. Some had taken early retirement and had cashed in their pension and annuity funds to finance their immigration, which usually involved penalties and a smaller payout. Some could not sell their homes for the required price, or were limited by restrictions set by the Reserve Bank, with the result that the bulk of their money was tied up in South African investments. Some rented out their homes to friends, or relied on estate agents to manage their properties in their absence. These so-called “friends” sometimes fell behind with rental payments, and neglected or damaged their properties. Estate agents charged a fee to collect the rent, but owners found that after a while no payments were made into their bank accounts. After a new agent had been appointed and the tenants had been issued with an eviction notice for unpaid rent, the tenants had produced receipts for paying rent to the agent amounting to thousands of rand. The house owners then discovered that the agent had pocketed the rental fees and deposit paid by the tenants and skipped the country. Hence, most participants had found it difficult to manage their rental properties successfully from New Zealand.

Immigrants who had come from smaller towns in the early 1990s found that the local branches of their banks knew little about international banking, and could not advise them about their financial immigration. Those who had relied on recruitment and immigration
agents had been led to believe that it was easy to find work in New Zealand, that salaries were more favourable and that they would be able to do much more with their money than in South Africa. Some New Zealand employers were not prepared to assist with immigration costs, and immigrants had found that paying for passports, medical examinations, immigration visas, plane tickets and shipping containers for household goods had been a costly exercise. After immigration, some participants had returned to South Africa before finally setting in New Zealand, which had added considerably to their total immigration costs. South African immigrants entered New Zealand with less money than other immigrants as their funds were devalued about sixfold, depending on the prevailing exchange rate. That meant that if they had sold their homes for one million rand in South Africa, they were left with less than two hundred thousand dollars, which was insufficient to buy even a small apartment in a poor neighbourhood. One couple said that their parents could not immigrate as they would have to sell their three homes in South Africa to enable them to buy one home in New Zealand, which left little money over to be invested for their retirement. Most participants did not have enough money available for a deposit on a new home, and had to move into expensive rental homes that were cramped, cold and musty. The cost of living was high in New Zealand, compared to South Africa, and participants had to be frugal and live within their limited financial means. This excluded the little luxuries that added quality to life, such as going out to a restaurant or going on holiday. Some participants were earning double the salary they had in South Africa, but to their shock found out that they could do less with their salary in New Zealand. Owing to a housing shortage, homes were in short supply and property prices were some of the highest in the world. Nevertheless, the quality of homes was generally poor in terms of heating and dampness. After the Christchurch earthquake, house insurance prices had increased considerably and people had been afraid to buy homes in the Wellington region owing to the constant threat of a major earthquake.
A couple who had married shortly after arrival could only afford a small wedding and had spend their honeymoon in a battered campervan. Some families, who had comfortably lived off the husband’s salary in South Africa, had found that in New Zealand they needed a second income to make ends meet. In South Africa, they could rely on grandparents to take care of their children after school. However, childcare was expensive in New Zealand and families struggled to do all their domestic chores without assistance because they could not afford to pay the fees for cleaning, ironing or gardening services. Instead of having evenings and weekends available for relaxation and family outings, they had to “knuckle down” at home, which included house renovations to make their homes more comfortable. When the cost of public transport, or petrol and parking fees were added, most couples concluded that it was not financially worthwhile for both of them to be employed outside the home. For couples, who both had careers in South Africa, it had been difficult when one partner had to become a stay-at-home parent in New Zealand. Some had experienced a family crisis in South Africa shortly after arrival, and had been unable to return. Others had family who expected them to visit every one or two years, without realising the strain it placed on their limited budgets. Those who had entered New Zealand on a visitor’s visa and were unable to secure employment, found that their life savings were being rapidly depleted and they were unable to obtain financing or take out policies in New Zealand. Extended waiting periods for visa and residency approval had added to feelings of vulnerability and uncertainty. Some participants, who had initially found work, were later on made redundant when companies were not able to secure enough contracts owing to the worldwide financial crisis.

Some had attempted to start their own businesses without having any prior experience, and some adult children had moved in with their parents to help out financially. Others, who had been in stable employment with large government departments in South Africa and had been reliant on their monthly salary, medical aid, an annual bonus and a 13th
cheque, had to get used to working on a contractual basis, which meant an irregular income, no bonuses, no fringe benefits and no sick or annual leave. Financial hardship often meant that participants had to sell their homes, were unable to pay their bills and had to give up their few sources of comfort, such as coffee. Some participants had put money aside for a return ticket if things did not work out in New Zealand, but most did not have enough money for a return migration. Most felt that they would be unable to find employment again and start over financially in South Africa. Thus, for most immigrants it was a case of sink or swim as they often had family members who were financially dependent on them.

South African immigrants were often accused by Kiwis of being “tight with their money”, without understanding that they had little money left over after paying for the essentials of daily living. A major difference between South African immigrants and those from other countries was that South Africans suffered greater financial loss and hardship. They had to start over again in New Zealand and had to rebuild their financial resources from scratch. It usually took at least five to ten years to re-establish themselves and to recoup financial losses. Middle-aged participants, whose homes had been nearly paid off in South Africa, had to take out a new mortgage in New Zealand. Aletta explained that “if you want to immigrate, you must be old and rich or young and poor, but we were neither”. Hence a person’s financial situation determined whether he or she could afford to retire. The result was that some people in their sixties were still looking for work. This prevented older couples from spending more time with each other and enjoying shared activities as they would have done after retirement in South Africa. Some elderly participants had been unable to find employment after immigration, and had only been eligible to receive superannuation from the government after ten years’ residency in New Zealand. Hence, they had to rely on occasional work and their South African pension that had been transferred to New Zealand. If one partner in a marriage was still working, this led to the misconception that the other person did
not want to work and expected their partner to keep them afloat financially. Participants were worried about their elderly parents in South Africa and wanted them to come to New Zealand. However, their parents were financially independent in South Africa and they would not be able to start over in New Zealand and live on their pensions.

Lifestyle

Some immigrants, particularly women, concluded that they felt safer in New Zealand, but that they did not necessarily have a better quality of life after immigration. Owing to the rosy picture sketched by recruitment and immigration agents, some had the expectation that they would have a similar or better lifestyle than in South Africa, and that New Zealand offered many lucrative opportunities. In contrast to other immigrants, South Africans often found that they had to be content with less than they had had in South Africa in terms of infrastructure, quality of housing and household goods, workplace opportunities and benefits, climate and wide open spaces. Most had lived in large, metropolitan cities in South Africa and found it difficult to adapt to small, rural towns or to Wellington that was more like a village. The Wellington weather in winter could be really miserable, with gale force Arctic winds and pelting rain that seemed impervious to any form of protective clothing. The insulation in New Zealand’s wooden homes was poor, often resulting in the temperature inside damp homes falling to ten degrees Celsius or below. Despite some homes having heat pumps, the prohibitive cost of electricity limited the use of heating devices to keep homes at a comfortable and healthy level as stipulated by the World Health Organisation. Some homes made use of wood or coal fires, which led to considerable air pollution in some areas. South African immigrants had to get used to small homes without adequate built-in cupboards, ill-equipped kitchens and limited options for household appliances. Those who had placed most of their household goods in storage had to get by with the bare essentials. Many expressed a
sense of embarrassment about their lower socioeconomic status in New Zealand, and were concerned that visitors would look down on their bare homes and eclectic collection of furnishings, crockery and cutlery. Their new lifestyle was in stark contrast to the customary knock on the door of visitors dropping in for a visit, or having a braai with family and friends around the swimming pool during sunny weekends. Instead, they were wandering around shopping malls or spending their weekends sitting around at home, huddled in front of a heater. Some had experienced a sense of sadness as their children were missing out on spending time with their family members, or engaging in community sport activities and events they used to enjoy in South Africa. Andrew concluded that “you have to make a better lifestyle for you and your family; you won’t find it immediately. It is hard work. It is not easy. If it was easy, everyone would be living here”.

Impact on well-being

There was a consensus among participants that moving to another country was “not for cissies” because it was a huge undertaking. Jill added that “immigration is not easy; it is a very stressful and emotional move”. One participant said that she agreed to share her personal experiences, good and bad, to contribute to the understanding about the stress and trauma of leaving everything behind and tackling the unknown.

Psychological and behavioural

Some had found their immigration experience so traumatic that they would not consider immigrating to another country from New Zealand. Most stated that they had had no choice to leave South Africa because of the escalating crime and violence. Hence, they felt more like refugees having to live in exile in a foreign country, rather that voluntary immigrants seeking a new adventure. However, most host countries viewed immigrants as
opportunists who sought to enhance their career prospects and lifestyle. Family members who had remained in South Africa felt abandoned by emigrants, and leaving them behind was seen as a betrayal. Some South Africans had decided to sever ties with those who emigrated altogether, as they were viewed as cowards and traitors who had deserted the country of their birth. Some had experienced emotional blackmail by their family in New Zealand to emigrate as well. When they could not decide whether they were ready to pack up and relocate, they had been accused of lying and upsetting their family. Conflict about immigration and the inevitable separation had therefore led to a sense of disconnection in families.

Leaving the county of one’s birth signified an endpoint in one’s life journey, and venturing into the unknown to start a new chapter. Those who did not view themselves as the adventurous type, and preferred stability and familiarity, had found that they were hesitant and scared of the unknown. Even those who had managed the preparation phase of immigration with calm resolve found that they became quite emotional when it was time to leave. Families who had close relationships were being torn apart, and emigrants were unsure whether they would see their family and fatherland again. Participants reported their sadness about leaving family and friends behind, and how they had sobbed and wept at the airport. They had a long plane journey ahead, which provided some time to process this big step in their lives and the accompanying emotions before arriving in New Zealand. A family who had assisted a newcomer said the man had been so stressed that he had cried when they had met him at the airport, and had continued crying when they arrived home. It was the first time in his life he had been separated from his wife and children. A woman, who had married shortly after arrival, said that she had cried so much at her wedding that her new friend who was playing the organ had become concerned. Migration involved a process of dislocation, which had led to confusion and disorientation in newcomers as they experienced a sense of rootlessness in a new environment. Initially, they went through a process of denial owing to
excitement and the novelty of a new country, as well as diligent efforts to re-establish a basic infrastructure to support their daily needs. Some had entered a prolonged period of hovering between the two countries as they attempted to find employment or start a business, and awaited permanent residency approval to anchor their lives in New Zealand. This waiting period had been accompanied by feelings of uncertainty and vulnerability.

Immigration had significant emotional implications, and immigrants went through a grief process. Those who had lost parents during childhood, or as young adults, or immigrants who had lost a close family member just before or after immigration had found that their sense of loss and grief was compounded. They also found it harder to leave their existing family members behind as they feared they might lose them as well. Soon after arrival, the geographical distance between New Zealand and South Africa had dawned on immigrants. Some had experienced an acute sense of loss, accompanied by grief, anguish, sadness and guilt about leaving their family behind. One woman talked about how much she missed her sister, and on the first Saturday after arrival, she had cried like her heart was breaking. A man said he longed for his sisters, and a number of participants said they missed their parents back home. They were also acutely aware how much their parents were missing, and longing for them. Some missed the support of their long-term friends in South Africa.

The process of mourning was accompanied by feelings of numbness, as well as pining, yearning and longing for the familiarity of South Africa. Some said they missed the simple things of the large cities they had grown up in, and one family said they missed the build-up to Christmas in Cape Town. Being orphaned and living as a stranger in a new society, they felt bereft and wounded. Hettie talked about the amicable and endearing way young, Afrikaans, female shop assistants addressed customers in South Africa. She found that, “some of the heartache is often because you miss these things and you don’t even know what it is that you are longing for”. She concluded that you miss them because they are “your
people”. Many participants dwelled on fond memories of the pleasant times they had spent with friends and family during childhood and their youth. Some recalled recurring dreams of events and experiences South Africa, and others had graphic nightmares about family conflict and coercion about the immigration process. Most immigrants were sentimental and nostalgic about what they had given up, and reported that this made them feel extremely homesick. Women who were not employed outside the home and those who did not have the finances to return to South Africa reported the most intense homesickness. Some reported that their homesickness had continued for years, and was particularly noticeable during the festive season.

Separation from the frequent interaction with close friends and family members, and the lack of a sufficient social support structure in New Zealand led to feelings of “not belonging” and intense loneliness. Unemployed women, in particular, felt extremely lonely as they had nobody to talk to and their partners were focused on their work. Their loneliness was intensified when friends and family members back home snubbed their efforts to remain in contact and preserve long-distance relationships. Those in South Africa seemed unaware of the heartache and sorrow of immigrants, and how hard they had to work to make ends meet in New Zealand. Feeling neglected and discarded by those in South Africa, immigrant families had experienced a sense of estrangement and that they were living in isolation. Anna said, “whether you are an ordinary person or have a top job, you can’t live in isolation; you miss your family back home”. Return visits to South Africa had been a highly emotional experience accompanied by lots of nostalgia. Seeing old friends and family again sometimes led to renewed feelings of loss when they realised that the nature of these relationships had changed during their absence. Immigrants recognised that they had to let go of important aspects of their lives that had irrevocably been lost. The country they had grown up in had become almost unrecognisable under new political governance, while in New Zealand they
were still regarded as foreigners and outsiders. Thus, some felt adrift like castaways without anything to anchor their lives in the new country. Some experienced an acute sense of displacement and the sobering realisation that they were in effect “homeless” and “stateless”. Some responded by retreating from others and becoming reclusive.

For some, the difference between their expectations and the reality of settling in New Zealand dawned on them at an early stage. Finding that jobs were not easily available or that employers were reluctant to employ them, led to feelings of rejection. Some felt that they were unwelcome in New Zealand as their skills were not valued or wanted, and others were told outright that they had no place in New Zealand. Some found that New Zealanders viewed immigrants as intruders who invaded their country and took their jobs. A few, who had been in full-time employment in South Africa, had decided not to seek employment in New Zealand so that they could support their partners and children. Older participants especially had realised too late that it was perhaps a mistake for them not to seek employment as it increased their isolation and loneliness. Social interaction was awkward, and some found that in Kiwi company they “just stood there” as they were excluded from the conversation. Aletta reported that it had hit her like a punch in the face one day when she realised that she felt like a stranger because she had nothing in common with these people. She said, “I felt like a stranger in a strange land, and it took me five years to realise why I felt like a stranger in New Zealand; it was because I had not built up any shared memories with them”.

Immigrants realised that they were “not one of them”, which gave rise to feelings of insecurity and alienation.

Everyone had a story to tell about their experiences in South Africa. Those who had been traumatised by crime and violence sometimes continued to display hypervigilance in New Zealand as they believed one can encounter trouble in any country. Some children were too young to remember the details of traumatic events in South Africa, but others were
nervous about going to bed at night because of the absence of burglar bars. Experiencing
crime in New Zealand led to increased fearfulness and a sense of foreboding that New
Zealand will become like South Africa. One person said that if she could no longer live in
peace in New Zealand, she would be “finished” and did not know what she would do. Feeling
alienated from mainstream society and “under attack” from criminals led to immigrants
feeling targeted and victimised once more. This gave rise to mistrust of others and
suspiciousness about people’s intentions.

Some participants had to “hit the deck running” regarding employment after their
arrival in New Zealand. Adjustment to the workplace was often problematic because they
were unfamiliar with the terminology, systems and office politics in a new country. Some
teachers felt that they had to abide by the whims of a child, and others were shocked and
worried about the rude and disruptive behaviour of pupils. Professionals found that their job
descriptions mandated them to fulfil additional roles that they were unfamiliar with, or they
were uncomfortable with the professional conduct and ethics of colleagues. Those who had
been well respected and held senior positions in South Africa felt that they were under
scrutiny in New Zealand. In South Africa, they did not have to prove themselves and felt like
valued employees because they received regular salary increases and bonuses. They found it
stressful that their skills and experience were not valued in New Zealand, and felt
disrespected when their input was disregarded. Companies offering feeble excuses to
withhold salary increases and bonuses, despite the person working at full capacity, had led to
an acute sense of invalidation and unworthiness. They found it ironic that despite the fact that
they neglected their families to devote themselves to company projects, they were not
rewarded. They became disillusioned and cynical towards their work as they felt that it did
not matter how hard they worked because it would never be good enough. They believed that
their employers would just demand more and more of them to fill their own coffers, and their work thus became unrewarding and unfulfilling.

Most participants reported that they had experienced a lot of emotional turmoil after immigration. Those who had been unable to find work were perceived as not wanting to work and were criticised by people in their communities as being a burden on their partners or the government. These people had felt insulted, judged and misunderstood because people were not aware of their individual circumstances and the sacrifices they had made to immigrate. Constant confrontations and intrusive comments about their personal lives left them feeling hurt and useless. They had been tempted to tell people off for prying into their private business and being insensitive to their feelings. Some who had been made redundant found their financial predicament difficult to acknowledge. They had to sell their family home, and in some instances, were unable to pay their utility bills. Older immigrants, who had been financially secure in South Africa, felt embarrassed and ashamed to financially rely on their children.

Every person handled tension and stress differently. Some responded by making derogatory comments about the appearance and behaviour of Kiwis, which was uncharacteristic behaviour for them. Aletta reported experiencing sudden bouts of anger that came out of the blue. She said that “a sudden burst of anger arose in my soul; I thought that I am in New Zealand now, because conditions are so terrible in my own country that I was forced to leave”. Another participant said she was angry because they had been preparing for retirement and enjoying their lives in South Africa, and had been forced to relocate and work for at least another ten years. One person noticed that she and her daughter started swearing like troopers in New Zealand. She started using words she had never uttered before, and told herself off for using profanities. She concluded that swearing reflected psychological difficulties and was a protest against what was happening to a person. Marital conflict often
ensued as couples started taking out their frustration on each other, because they had nobody else to talk to. They eventually realised that the underlying source of the problem was their sadness and longing for those who had stayed behind.

Pent-up resentment and bitterness eventually spilt over to passive-aggressive behaviour, overt expressions of anger and even physical aggression. During an argument between two school pupils that, despite warnings, escalated to an attempted stabbing, a South African teacher pushed one of the offenders against a wall and threatened him. This had led to fears of him losing his job and being deported. Others became annoyed and argumentative at work about ethical and safety issues, which had resulted in disciplinary measures being taken against them. Some concluded that they were too frank and outspoken, or that they chose the wrong time to speak their mind. People felt perplexed by the ambiguity of the New Zealand workplace where they were expected to communicate with colleagues, but their input was either ignored or met with disapproval. They found themselves in a paradoxical situation where imparting their knowledge and apologising when it was deemed inappropriate, or keeping quiet were equally unacceptable. In highly demanding workplaces, working under pressure to complete important projects within a limited time frame led to employees making mistakes and getting into further trouble. Some responded by becoming passive-aggressive by concurring when more work was assigned to them, but then proceeding to do “their own thing” to survive. This meant that they refused to work any more overtime as they decided to put their families first.

Even those who had started their own businesses were not exempt from questioning the value of their contribution and feeling that their skills were in disrepute. One person said that she worked more slowly than everybody else because she could not keep up with the physical demands of the work. She felt pushed aside when new people were employed and wondered whether she was so useless that she could not even perform basic chores. A writer
compared her work with that of other published authors and felt less capable than them. Some started doubting their professional competence and felt like fakes and frauds in the workplace as their abilities and work output were regarded as inferior to that of their peers. Their lives had deteriorated to a state of dis-organisation, and indecisiveness and procrastination hampered their ability to escape this untenable situation. Some decided that the best course of action was to keep quiet and do their jobs to the best of their ability until their contracts expired, or until they obtained permanent residency. Some became frustrated that they could not find alternative employment, and eventually admitted defeat by resigning and becoming unemployed.

Feeling renounced by their family and friends back home and having their professional reputation discredited, they had felt like failures and outcasts who were no longer wanted anywhere. They were overwhelmed by a sense of dis-ability and humiliation. Some believed that their family and friends in South Africa wanted them to fail in New Zealand, and feeling embarrassed, they had started avoiding contact with those back home. Their sense of isolation and disconnection were exacerbated by the fact that some South Africans maintained their status boundaries in New Zealand or preferred to only mix socially with Kiwis to blend in with New Zealand society. They were thus hesitant to approach other South Africans to establish new social connections that could provide support and help them to make sense of their experiences. In addition, those who had immigrated a long time before, and were probably the best role models for successful settlement, could no longer be bothered to help newcomers. One family, who had initially taken in newcomers as tenants in their family home, eventually decided to stop doing it after their last family had left. It was felt that some new immigrants had become overly dependent on the settled community or did not reciprocate their kindness. One participant expressed her annoyance at a newcomer, whom
she introduced to her friendship circle, but later on bluntly refused to invite some of them to social functions at her home.

Immigrants gradually realised that a personal identity was temporary and changeable. They were strictly speaking no longer part of South Africa, because as time progressed, they had been left behind. Hence their identity was based on an outdated version of South Africa. With the gradual dismantling and dissolution of their sociocultural, environmental, socioeconomic, professional and political identities, they were left in a state of non-identity and non-existence. They had been negated by New Zealand society, and had become dead and obsolete in the eyes of most of their loved ones in South Africa. Feeling as if they were nobody, they had become invisible members of society. As skilled South African immigrants, they posed a threat to New Zealanders in terms of their political past and competition for scarce jobs. Having annulled their sense of self and the legitimacy of South Africans and Afrikaners as unique cultural groups, Kiwis believed that the threat in their midst had been eliminated. Living between two shores, with most of their belongings still in storage and not being regarded as a member of either society, they were left adrift as castaways. Some reported experiencing a sense of emptiness or feeling “hollow” inside. They had feelings of helplessness and despair about their lives. Some reported a sense of desperation that they had made a mess of their lives by immigrating, and feared that they would be forced to start over once more in a crime-ridden South Africa. Some had become so upset that their partners had been concerned about what they might do in their state of mind.

A number of immigrants had experienced a “dark night” of depression and even suicidal thoughts. They reported overwhelming sadness and sudden crying spells that came out of the blue that left them inconsolable. Aletta said that “even on days when you are feeling happy, you may see someone on the street who reminds you of someone you know back home. You may not even consciously feel like crying, but you suddenly find the tears
streaming down your face”. She found that even when the South African community reached out to her to ease her loneliness, the more people phoned, the more she cried. Mostly women reported having a few of these “emotional breakdowns”. Some warned that after a period of apparent adjustment, they had experienced a recurrence of sadness. During the interview, one participant became emotional when discussing her heartache, and said that the memories still upset her after nine years. Another woman found that her sadness had increased with time. Participants reported a high incidence of depression, particularly among South African women. Even though men were inclined to hide their feelings better, some also reported experiencing a low mood after immigration. To some extent, teenagers experienced more sorrow than their parents. More girls than boys developed psychological problems, but Afrikaans girls were able to talk to their mothers about their feelings. Some believed that having a “depressive personality” or being serious-minded or melancholic made people more prone to develop depression after immigration. Others felt that the cold, rainy weather and blustery wind in New Zealand were contributing to their depression. One person admitted that the winters in Wellington got too much for her.

Four women were willing to discuss their depression, and provided information about their perception of depression and other psychological problems in the South African immigrant community. Some of these women were part of larger South African friendship groups and acted as a shoulder for others to cry on. A number of children, especially teenagers, had required treatment for immigration-related psychological problems. Children who felt depressed became very quiet, cried easily and found adjustment to New Zealand extremely difficult. South African children with depression were not inclined to become aggressive or suicidal. One settled immigrant said that she knew a number of women who had experienced depression that had often lasted for years. A woman talked about her friend, whose depression had been worse than her own. This friend used to put her child in the car
and spent the whole day driving around. Eventually she became so depressed that her husband had to put her in the bath and help her to wash her hair. Another participant said that at times she felt so depressed that she lay in a dark room for hours. One person’s sister warned her that once the excitement of coming to New Zealand had dissipated, depression would set in when she realised what she had left behind and that she would never be able to recoup what she had had in South Africa. Early on she could not understand why anybody would become depressed in New Zealand because it appeared to be such an improvement on South Africa. During the second year, however, she realised that immigration was not as easy as she thought it would be and she reached an emotional low point. She stopped writing letters to friends in South Africa for about eight months, with the excuse that she was too busy. Later on she realised that she could not think about what she wanted to write to those back home as she felt too depressed. She usually had a theme for each of her letters and wrote with a sense of humour. When she was depressed there was no spark, and she was unable to write letters without it. Only when she started “writing letters in her head again”, she knew that she was feeling better.

Two women reported experiencing suicidal thoughts and one woman said she felt hesitant to leave her husband alone at home because she was concerned about “what he might do in his mental state”. The incidence of suicidal thoughts was increased if people arrived in winter and settled in small, rural towns without any sources of social support. If they were thrown into the deep end at an exhausting and challenging workplace where they found it difficult to connect with colleagues, the risk was increased owing to the bleak landscape, the geographic isolation and social disconnectedness. The threat of having to return to South Africa or feeling excluded or bullied at work were additional risk factors. One person stated that she would rather commit suicide before returning to South Africa, and admitted that her depression took her down to dark places. Feeling useless and pushed aside at work made one
person think that she would rather be dead as she started wondering “what she was doing here”.

A matter that was rarely discussed in the South African community was immigrants who resorted to substance abuse, domestic violence and criminal behaviour. None of the participants reported incidents of domestic violence or child abuse in the South African community. However, media reports of criminal offences by South African immigrants triggered old fears among New Zealanders about the inclinations of South Africans and were met with anger and calls for justice. A high-profile case was that of Theo Kriel, who was accused of murdering the 15-year-old Liberty Templeman when he was only 14 years old. The media reported on how Theo and his parents sat with expressionless faces in the courtroom, and interpreted their stoic stance as a lack of remorse. The New Zealand film “Bloodlines” depicted how the well-known South African psychiatrist, Dr Colin Bouwer, murdered his wife with insulin injections. It created the impression that Afrikaner men were patriarchal and domineering, and were thus inclined to be abusive towards their families. Reinforcement of these negative stereotypes maintained the sense of shame of being unwanted outcasts, and the tendency of some South Africans to feel compelled to deny their ancestry and maintain a state of non-identity.

**Physical**

Some participants reported new and unexpected health concerns, an exacerbation of existing medical conditions or a physical health crisis. An older person had noticed a shadow over his visual field while watching television, which had been diagnosed as an occlusion of the retinal veins and required medical intervention. Another man had to retire at 64 owing to a decline in his eyesight that made the intricate work in his business difficult. Some reported that their rheumatism and other joint problems worsened in New Zealand, but were unsure
whether it was because of the cold climate or old age. Some required joint replacements, and one woman said she had nobody to assist her with her husband’s aftercare. Others found that their allergies, such as asthma and hayfever, were more easily triggered by the damp conditions and mouldy homes in New Zealand. A man reported ongoing problems with migraines. One person had familial hypercholesterolaemia, for which she took prescription medication. The family recalled how her brother’s acute myocardial infarction had been misdiagnosed by a local general practitioner as indigestion. After a delayed second opinion he was hospitalised and required a double cardiac bypass operation. One participant reported that her epilepsy suddenly reoccurred after being in New Zealand for about four months. She had had one seizure years before and had been free of seizures after starting on medication. As she had almost forgotten that she had epilepsy, having seizures again was a scary experience for both her and her husband. Her doctors believed that her medication had reached a “saturation point”, but despite trialling her on a range of medications, her epilepsy remained poorly controlled. Repeated MRI scans, a few hospitalisations and neuropsychological testing revealed no organic cause for her epilepsy. She thought that work-related stress was the most likely explanation. She believed that the continued stress had finally took its toll on her body, and that perhaps immigration was the trigger that had pushed her stress levels over the edge.

Spiritual

None of the participants knew of any South African immigrants who had experienced a spiritual crisis, despite one person commenting on how many Christians had died in South Africa, despite their faith in God. The implication was that religious faith did not guarantee safety in the face of imminent danger. One woman found that with age she had lost her innocent faith in God, and sometimes longed for that sense of solace and naivety that all
would be well. Some participants found queries from other South African immigrants regarding their religious affiliation uncomfortable and intrusive. A participant voiced her shock and disappointment at the insensitivity of a church member in South Africa who had made derogatory comments about their emigration. Another person reported on the falseness of congregants at his church who prayed together, but treated him with disrespect. South Africans, however, were stoic about their faith in God, and religion was a source of strength and support during the immigration process. Those who faced difficulties generally experienced a strengthening of their faith in God. One person stated that in a secular New Zealand her beliefs had only changed in the sense that she had to “justify” for herself why she was a Christian, but it was a worthwhile process for her. Those who had married someone with a different religious affiliation had to accept the fundamental differences between their religions, and had to make allowances for practising their faith.

*Coping strategies*

Participants used a variety of coping strategies and support systems to manage the challenges and impact of immigration on their physical, psychological and spiritual well-being.

*Defensiveness and avoidance*

Initially, some immigrants had been defensive and critical about the shortcomings of New Zealand. One person made uncharacteristically negative comments about seeing so many “ugly and disabled” people in public. Another person confronted church congregants regarding their hurtful comments and prying into his personal and working life, and threatened to leave the church if they did not change their attitude towards him. Others used avoidance tactics to escape from reality, such as lying in a dark room for hours or sleeping to
allow their brains to switch off and not having to think. One person said she was not always aware of the things she was longing for as she was “not a thinker”. Some turned to quick-fix strategies to avoid problematic emotions and provide a sense of comfort. Apparently there were two groups of South Africans in New Zealand with regard to alcohol use: the “drinkers” and the “non-drinkers”. One man said that he did not go “overboard” with alcohol and would only have one or two beers or a glass of wine as he preferred sweet things over alcohol. Hence he was usually the designated driver for other party goers. Overeating and frequent snacking provided temporary comfort, but resulted in weight gain that had detrimental physical and psychological consequences. One person said she felt unhappy and angry with herself about having acquired a “round” shape, but did not have the motivation to do anything about it.

Some went through a phase where they chose to cut themselves off from other South Africans. Instead of making friends in New Zealand, one person had joined an online dating agency and corresponded with a person in another country as an escape from her circumstances. Difficulties in making decisions that could have significant repercussions, and second-guessing themselves led to procrastination in finalising immigration and settlement. A number of people said that they avoided conflict wherever possible because they felt that attempts to address the issue would be unsuccessful or might make the situation worse. When they disagreed with negative and hurtful comments being made by Kiwis about South Africans, most either kept quiet or pretended to share their humour. At work, those who were pressurised into doing more work than they could manage, or to engage in work practices they found unsafe or unethical, decided to quietly agree with instructions and then proceeded doing things their way as a survival strategy. However, avoiding the reality of their lives and not addressing problematic issues resulted in a sense of dishonesty and having to keep up a
façade of successful settlement. It also resulted in social estrangement and a sense of disconnection from the larger society in New Zealand.

*Emotional expression*

With cumulative stress and having to cope with ongoing grief and loneliness, some experienced unpredictable mood swings and emotional outbursts that often appeared irrational. One person recalled how angry she had been with her daughter when she had to wait alone in the dark to be picked up after attending a course, even though her daughter had not been at fault. She and her daughter were also surprised at their disturbing new habit of swearing at the slightest provocation, which appeared to be a form of protest about what was happening to them. Women were more inclined to cry, while most men kept their emotions to themselves. One woman said that shortly after arrival she had cried like her heart was breaking. Another woman recalled how she had started crying inconsolably during a family outing, and her concerned family had taken her home. She said that she gone to bed crying on a number of occasions. Even listening to South African music, or hearing the sound of turtle doves on television had caused the tears to flow. One person who was doing an art course became extremely emotional when she started discussing the meaning behind her art work.

People who had immigrated alone or who had divorced before or after immigration felt particularly lonely in New Zealand. Having the support of a partner, family members or friends in New Zealand had made the emotional turmoil of immigration more bearable. Some found that talking to others about their emotions and having someone who listened to them was useful. Afrikaans girls were inclined to talk to their mothers about their feelings. When people talked about their problems, they experienced considerable mood fluctuations and a large box of tissues was essential. Maintaining confidentiality about these discussions was considered vital. One person had a friend who phoned him every day as an emotional release.
Being able to talk to someone in his own language and getting things off his chest was a useful way of letting off steam. Experiencing strong emotions often required sensory modulation techniques to provide a sense of comfort. One woman said that she often used a warm bath to calm down after an emotional upset. Going for a scenic drive or taking a walk on the beach was relaxing after a stressful day at work.

**Social support**

Most participants highly valued the support of family and friends during the most trying times of their adaptation process. For two teenagers, the assistance of Kiwi peers to show them the ropes at school had helped to ease the transition to New Zealand cultural norms. Maintaining frequent contact and being encouraged by family and friends in South Africa had provided some sense of continuity and stability. Circumstances in their broader environment were more tolerable for people if they were with the person they loved, and wanted to be with. One couple said they were each other’s best friend, and could confide in each other about everything. However, one person expressed concerns about over-reliance on her husband for support. For women especially, having other family members in New Zealand who had “been through the same thing”, and were caring and understanding was much appreciated. Providing practical assistance via a shopping trip to buy warmer clothing was helpful for newcomers to get over the initial shock of a cold climate.

Some people had to start working immediately, which had prevented them from going out and meeting people and had worsened their feelings of isolation. For newcomers, mixing with other South Africans in the beginning had provided a sounding board to normalise the immigration experience and regain a sense of belonging. Assistance from members of the South African community had also prevented mounting levels of stress while struggling on their own to negotiate the new surroundings. It also provided psychological support and
opportunities to widen their social circle. When women learnt of a newcomer who was sitting at home crying, they quickly got together to bake bread and cake in preparation for a visit. Certain groups met on a regular basis, for instance, one women’s group met at a restaurant on Wednesdays to share their burdens, cry, laugh and encourage newcomers. In these groups some women developed meaningful, individual friendships. Some families found that moving from a rural town to Wellington had allowed them to meet more South Africans and to broaden their circle of friends. Some entertained guests at home or arranged regular get-togethers with other South African immigrant families, such as a “Saamtrek” or an “Afrikaanse aand”. A participant said at a braai she had met a South African couple who had been in New Zealand for only three months. She had grabbed and hugged the woman as she knew what was coming, and what she still had to go through. The festive season was a particularly trying time for families, and they would get together as a group for lunch or a braai to ensure that nobody sat alone at home during Christmas and New Year. People also found that members of their church congregation were helpful in terms of practical support, or inviting them over for a meal and making them feel welcome. In some cases, colleagues were an additional source of support for immigrants, and helped to widen their social circle.

Distraction and deflection

Some participants found that distraction techniques and keeping busy provided relief from heartache and worries. Weekend outings with other family members to explore their surroundings were a welcome reprieve. For one man, it felt like a holiday returning to his home in a picturesque coastal town after a stressful day at work. Saving up to buy a 4x4 vehicle allowed him to get out in nature over weekends, which improved his quality of life. For one woman, going with her husband on overseas business trips gave her something to look forward to, and it provided a sense of relief, comfort and enjoyment. Owing to his
demanding job, she needed something meaningful to occupy the rest of her time. She co-hosted Radio Afrikaans, which was a source of solace as she could do something for the Afrikaans community in New Zealand. A stay-at-home mother found that her homesickness was reduced by doing things that kept her busy, as well as getting a part-time job when her children had settled at school. It was important for people to continue with their interests and hobbies in New Zealand, and to explore new opportunities. One man used kayaking or walking on the beach to get rid of his frustration and recharge his batteries. When he started getting a migraine, he relieved his headache by relaxing with his guitar. His wife enjoyed “playing” with her computers. For a number of women, it was a priority to join their local library soon after arrival as reading relieved their stress and provided an escape. One woman who felt that she and her husband were getting on each other’s nerves had joined a quilting club to get out and meet friends.

Assisting other new immigrants helped some people to get through their own difficulties as they did not focus so much on their own hardship. One woman said she was like Caleb, who saw the best in every situation, while the people she was talking to were like Jacob, who was in the depths of despair. Interacting with other South Africans made them feel at home, while helping others to feel at home. One woman welcomed and took care of newcomers, and helping them to cope was excellent therapy for her. She met new arrivals at the airport, showed them around and provided them with accommodation. Continuously having people boarding with them was stressful in a sense, but it also prevented heated arguments between her and her husband. She humorously said that being a newly married woman, taking care of three men and having a washing line full of men’s underpants kept her busy enough. Participants thought it was essential to be able to laugh in the midst of experiencing difficulties, and some found that their sense of humour returned during the adaptation and growth phases. One family were able to laugh about the burglars who had
robbed her sister’s home in South Africa, but who had been polite enough to apologise every time they stepped over one of their victims who was lying face down on the floor in the corridor. One woman recalled how one of her South African friends in New Zealand started laughing whenever she cried, and she had ended up laughing as well. Another woman said if she ever decided to write a book about immigration, she would take a humorous approach as a means of surviving the experience. She emphasised that despite her sense of humour about the experience, “immigration was definitely not for cissies”.

**Problem solving**

Using distraction techniques and deflection strategies were helpful in the short term, but sometimes left problematic issues unresolved. Immigrants were encouraged to also utilise problem-solving techniques to work through difficulties step by step when they felt ready to handle them. It took time for people to reach a point where they felt that they had processed being an immigrant. Irrespective of how rough things became, it was important to determine how to get through them and continue. The inherent tendency of South Africans to assume responsibility assisted immigration because it allowed them to manage “the whole situation”. For new arrivals, buying warmer clothing, heaters and winter-weight duvets was an initial survival strategy. One man said he had relied on his “can do” Frisian ancestry because he had to devise a plan to achieve his goal of getting his money out of South Africa. This meant that he did not always follow the rules, but found that his plans always achieved the desired result. For a number of families, buying a house that was large enough and close to schools had helped to facilitate their settlement. Employment of the main breadwinner enhanced financial security, and if the other parent stayed at home for the first six months, it had helped the rest of the family to settle in. Part-time work helped people to ease into a new job environment. Full-time employment and moving to a larger city, or finding more suitable accommodation
helped to relieve homesickness. Some found that they had to make an effort to “make the employment glove fit”, but if they had to take care of someone else financially they just had to hang in there and make it work. For those who found their workplaces unsuitable, seeking or obtaining alternative employment had helped them to feel that they could improve their lives. One man who had been previously unemployed found that after he had obtained a business visa, he did not have the time to be stressed about their decision to immigrate because he had to work extremely hard to make a success of the business. Being a business owner helped him to pull through emotionally and process his experiences, which allowed him to make the necessary adaptations to be successful in his business. Another man, who had joined a family business, said the transition had been easier for him as he had found the experience exciting and interesting, despite the stress and challenges. One woman, who had been struggling with allergies and overeating, returned from a Christmas holiday with new vigour. She believed that regular walks and cutting out gluten and sugar would help her to lose weight, be healthy and feel better.

*Perspective and attitude*

People’s perspective and attitude towards their immigration experience, as well as their perseverance in the face of hardship, were often the deciding factor between those who stayed, and those who returned to South Africa. A participant asserted that depending on how you responded to situations, you could turn things around in the blink of an eye if you put your mind to it. One person said the idea that she was destined to immigrate owing to having a birth mark in the shape of the United Kingdom allowed her to keep going. She realised that neither good things nor bad things lasted forever. Participants emphasised that it was important for people to look at the reasons why they had come to New Zealand. They should come with an open mind and accept that things would be different. Some felt it was important
not to keep looking back at the past, otherwise they would never settle in. Instead, they should focus on their future in New Zealand and keep moving forward like chapters in a book. Some participants had been encouraged by family in South Africa to make the best of their situation in New Zealand and to be happy here. Instead of focusing and complaining about the negatives of New Zealand, they had been advised to look for the good things, embrace what was on offer and enjoy the benefits. If they did not accept what could not be changed, and did not make the best of their circumstances and opportunities, they would never be happy.

Other participants decided to forget the ugly things about South Africa, and instead to remember the good things. Those who felt nostalgic and missed their families reminded themselves that circumstances had not changed in South Africa and that New Zealand was their new home. A family who had migrated several times said they had realised that wherever they were they would miss somebody. One woman told herself that South Africa and New Zealand were both part of the same world, and the same sun shone on both. For some of those who had stayed on in New Zealand, it was the decision to “stick it out” that had allowed their homesickness to start easing up after about six years. For others, accruing financial resources that had given them the option of returning to South Africa if needed had given them some peace of mind. A person, who had been unhappy at work and could not find alternative employment in the short term, had decided to focus on the well-being of his family instead of working overtime. Some people suffered financial losses and had to accept that it could not be recovered. Those who were grossly underpaid in New Zealand or had their South African rental money stolen by estate agents, decided that the best course of action would be to stop thinking about it and to be content with what they had. One person’s philosophy was “the least said about it, the soonest mended”.

580
Participants reported that South African immigrants were not as reluctant as Kiwis to consult with a doctor about their psychological difficulties. Women especially, were inclined to seek help from their general practitioner. One participant estimated that about 80% of South African women used an anti-depressant at some stage after immigration. Many South African immigrant women used anti-depressants in the beginning, and some continued taking them for a number of years. One person said that seven years after immigration she had taken anti-depressants for a year. She found them useful and was able to stop the medication without any detrimental effects. South African women were reluctant to talk about being on anti-depressants. However, if someone disclosed that they were taking medication, others were more inclined to talk about their own use of anti-depressants.

South African immigrants were less likely to seek help from a psychologist or a counsellor because in South Africa there was still a stigma attached to seeking psychotherapy. Two participants reported that they gone for counselling prior to immigration. Haldegaad said: “I went for counselling to get my mindset right, and to get closure for personal things in my life so that I would not bring that baggage with me to New Zealand. I’m glad that I went, and it was the best thing I could have done for myself”. A young woman, who had survived a highjack attempt during childhood in South Africa, had gone for trauma counselling at the time of the event. Some participants did not seek formal help for their psychological problems after immigration, but instead preferred to keep busy and to welcome and take care of newcomers. One person said that helping others to cope was good therapy for her. Another person stated that people did not always want to go to a counsellor, but instead just needed a friend to talk to. One woman recalled the discomfort of having to undergo a psychological assessment about the impact of separation from her family for
residency purposes. She was still in two minds about immigration and was required to “work
with the system” despite her uneasiness about the process.

Those who were willing to seek psychotherapy in New Zealand had a preference for
South African psychologists. Consulting a South African psychologist removed the usual
fearfulness of psychotherapy because of the shared experience of being immigrants in New
Zealand. One woman had lost her sense of purpose in life and went for counselling to address
her long-standing problem with “out of control eating”. For another woman, having
individual therapy was required because of her enrolment in a counselling course. On one
occasion, she had been planning to discuss her study assignment with her therapist, but
instead had cried about her inability to have children. A participant had gone for counselling
after she had been made redundant, and her employer had paid for redundancy counselling.
She had discussed her feelings about immigration with the counsellor, who had asked her
whether it was not perhaps time that she brought the woman she left behind in South Africa
to New Zealand. She thought it was helpful to acknowledge that she had left a part of herself
in South Africa, which she was not comfortable about bringing to New Zealand.

Religion and faith

Most of the participants said that religion was an important factor in their lives, and
that their church was one of the places that had helped them to settle in New Zealand. They
believed that a “worldly person” would struggle hard to make it in New Zealand. Religion
was a source of strength and support during the immigration process. After immigration some
people had nobody else they could depend on and only had “their heavenly Father” to turn to.
They believed that the Lord would never have put them in a position that they could not
manage. Hence they trusted in God and accepted that everything worked together for the
better for those who loved God. Most participants had relied on God for guidance in their
decision to immigrate or re-migrate, as well as protection during settlement. They believed that if the Lord closed one door, he would open another. Jill therefore decided that “if God opens a door, we are walking through”. Sometimes God sent them to places where they did not want to be, but they were willing to abide by His will. Some expressed the belief that their paths had been worked out for them, and that Somebody was looking after them. Those who had encountered serious difficulties in New Zealand to find employment believed that because God had allowed them to come to New Zealand, he would not disappoint them afterwards. Jill said: “God you let Moses go through the Red Sea, and you are going to help us through immigration because we are not going back”. Their faith has not been in vain as their business visa came through one week before their visitor’s visas expired, and they would have been forced to return to South Africa.

Being religious and attending church or synagogue was a vital facet of the lives of South African immigrants. A Jewish participant said that he found it enjoyable and relaxing to go to Shul as it allowed him to switch off from everything. He put a lot of effort into the synagogue and Jewish community, and found it most rewarding. Participants also emphasised that it was vital to have a close, personal relationship with God. Their connection with the Church and their own in-depth bible study, as well as acknowledging their dependence on God, had helped them to cope with the situation. Aletta said that “during our quiet time we did bible study, prayed and cried before the Lord, because we knew that only He could help us”. One person said what had helped him to survive were the books and compact discs by Joyce Meyer, and he believed that he would not have made it without these resources.

Immigrants who had experienced difficulties in New Zealand had generally found that their relationship with the Lord had become much stronger than it had been when things were going well and they had people to support them. They lived much closer to God in New Zealand than ever before, and found that their religious faith had strengthened and deepened.
Most felt that God had through it all taken care of them and they “could testify to the truth that He had never left them or forsaken them”.

**Resilience**

*Fortitude*

Participants agreed that the quality of life was better in New Zealand, but that immigration and adapting to a foreign country required considerable fortitude and resilience. However, exposure to crime and violence made South Africans quite hardy and they did not scare easily. Most South Africans were not overly concerned about the earthquakes in New Zealand or other potential threats to their safety. One woman surprised her manager when a well-known vagrant in Wellington, called the “blanket man”, turned up at her workplace and requested an interview. She politely offered him a seat in the reception area and continued with her work, much to the consternation of her colleagues who were concerned about her safety. She felt that he was a “walk over”, compared to her experiences in South Africa, and unless someone was holding an AK-47 rifle, she was not worried. A Kiwi husband complimented his South African wife by saying that she could handle situations, no matter how difficult they were. One person said that he had not experienced any physical symptoms, despite considerable work stress, and added that he was a diehard with a lot of endurance and patience. He had also managed to stop smoking two years before, which he considered an achievement.

*Acceptance*

Adaptation also required an acceptance of inevitable changes and a sense of finality that some valuable aspects of their lives had been irretrievably lost. It involved the letting go
and relinquishing of many things. A woman, who had married in her early forties, had been unable to conceive despite in-vitro fertilisation. She talked about her sadness at the thought that she might never be able to have children, and the slow process of acceptance. To her it sometimes felt like taking one step forward and two steps backwards. Immigrants had to transcend their individual crises to consolidate and reconstruct the shards of their lives to attain a sense of continuity. Attempting a repair of their deconstructed pre-migration sense of self would be a fait accompli. A radical transmutation that would allow a rebirth or “re-selving” of the immigrant in a new ecological system was required. This would initiate a process of renewal and regeneration where the person could “re-invent” themselves. Participants thus entered a period of exploration, which was accompanied by a sense of enrichment and optimism.

Confidence and wisdom

Aletta confirmed that “immigration is not easy, but overcoming these problems makes you a much stronger and mature person. You view the world in a different way, and you have much more insight and understanding about other people”. Another person added that moving to New Zealand “puts hair on your chest”. As immigrants settled in New Zealand, male-female roles in the home became more flexible and families were more independent in terms of managing domestic chores and doing home renovations. Some children who had immigrated with their parents had married and migrated to other countries. After a while it did not matter so much to participants that they were viewed as immigrants. They had established new friendships and could make their own way in New Zealand, and hence they did not care so much what others thought of them. People’s sense of importance and status based on their belongings had fallen away, which meant that they had become more down to earth and worried less about what friends would think. With an entrepreneurial spirit, some
had established their own businesses and managed to build up a loyal client base, who appreciated their work ethic and expertise. One man had started his own martial arts school, and had become well respected by South Africans and Kiwis alike in the Wellington region. Others had decided on a career change, and had engaged in part-time tertiary studies. A few immigrants had embarked on new ventures and had done things they had never dreamt of doing in South Africa, for instance, presenting a radio programme. One person had become an author, and used her husband to critique her work and to let her know when it needed more “punch” to put her message across. Despite her initial adjustment difficulties, one person had become politically involved and had represented her party at a conference. A few South Africans had an active role in establishing informal South African support groups and helping new immigrants with orientation and settlement.

With maturity and know-how, participants viewed their immigration as an interesting life experience, and felt that they had learnt many life lessons in New Zealand. Some travelled to other countries on holiday that exposed them to many different cultures, and they felt comfortable with defining themselves as South African expatriates living in New Zealand. They had learnt the pitfalls of buying a car and property in New Zealand, and that by renting their homes in South Africa to “friends” they had really got to know them. One family said that they no longer considered immigration as such a massive undertaking as they were wiser and better prepared than during their first relocation. They had considered moving to another country before they got too old. Instead of being embedded in a particular society, some families had started viewing themselves as nomads who were able to live in any country of the global village.
Restoring Mana

In Māori symbolism, the joining of two cultures is represented by the Pikorua, which is often depicted in greenstone carvings as two fern shoots growing intertwined. It represents the joining of two different people or cultures. The immigration journey can be viewed in terms of a new tribe seeking entrance to the social spaces of the local guardians of the land. Traditionally, when a new group requests entry to the Marae or meeting house of the local Iwi or tribe they introduce themselves via a mihimihi, which involves their whakapapa or ancestry, and they offer a gift. A meeting takes place in a neutral spot (paepae) at the Marae where they ascertain each other’s credibility and intentions. For immigrants, losing their identity and social connectedness, and feeling alienated and stigmatised by New Zealanders implied that their mana (dignity, prestige or reputation) was damaged and hence they entered a psychological realm of darkness. To achieve wholeness and restore their sense of wairua or well-being, they had to undergo an inner journey of “i e kore, ki e po, ki e ao marama”, which means a passage “from nothing, into the darkness, into the world of light”. Those who had attended a dawn ceremony at a Marae would have had a moving experience of being welcomed via a pōwhiri as a member of their wider whānau or extended family. This courtesy and acceptance of a stranger in their midst can provide a sense of resolution, integration and belonging in a new society that permits interdependence. It assists immigrants to achieve balance and harmony between the many conflicting sociocultural forces they have to negotiate during their immigration journey. At this stage, participants were able to view themselves as part of the South African diaspora, and those who had remained in South Africa, considered them as one of their global friends or family members. In New Zealand, these immigrants had become one of the brightly coloured strands that was weaved into the multicultural Korowai or cloak of Aoteroa. This cloak represents working towards well-being for all by connecting with others, celebrating uniqueness, sharing our stories and supporting
each other on our life journeys. Aletta concluded: “on your life journey you are accompanied by many different groups, and sometimes you walk alone. Your groups may change along the way, but you still follow the same life journey”.

In chapter 6 the themes depicted in the three thematic networks in chapter 5 will be integrated with relevant information from the literature review in chapters 2 and 3 to develop ecomodels for assessment and intervention with South African immigrants in New Zealand.
CHAPTER 6

ECOMODELS FOR ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION

Swerfliedjie

My bokkie is ‘n swerweling
My bokkie doen haar eie ding
Rust’loos roer dit diep in haar
Vreemde name pluk die goue snaar
Telkens word ‘n droom gepak
‘n Winkend ster in elke sak

(Andries [pseudonym])

Introduction

The general aim of this study was to explore the various factors that had an impact during the respective phases of immigration, acculturation and adaptation of South African immigrant families in New Zealand. A further objective was to examine the coping strategies and support systems utilised by South African families in New Zealand to serve as a buffer to immigration stressors, and to determine the efficacy thereof in terms of well-being, resilience and settlement outcomes. The practical goal of this study was utilising the themes obtained from participant narratives to develop ecomodels of assessment and intervention with South African immigrant families in New Zealand. An ecological framework was utilised for this study to examine the migration journeys of South African immigrants in New Zealand. The complex, reciprocal interactions between individuals and families, and the environmental systems they encountered, were explored to develop an ecomodel of pre-migration and post-migration assessment and intervention to facilitate adaptation, settlement and well-being of immigrants. This ecological framework included individuals and families in the microsystem,
intergroup attitudes and immigration agencies in the mesosystem, the sociocultural and physical environment in the megasystem, socioeconomic factors in the macrosystem, and government and political factors in the exosystem (Al-Baldawi, 2002; American Psychological Association, 2012; Bronfenbrenner, 1994, 1999; Deaux, cited in Awad, 2007; Johnson, 2007; Meares, 2007; Roer-Strier, 1996; Yakushko & Chronister, 2005). These five levels were explored within an overarching chronosystem that included developmental processes of individuals and families during phases of immigration process, as well as the sociocultural and political-historical contexts of both countries.

Immigration disrupts a person’s social networks and requires adaptation to a new physical, socioeconomic and sociocultural system that can affect biological, psychological, cognitive, behavioural and spiritual functioning (Berry, 1997, p. 15). The process of acculturation is similar for most immigrants, but the intensity of difficulties experienced, the course and outcome will vary from person to person (Berry & Sam, cited in Berry, 1997). Each person’s unique immigration journey is influenced by individual and social factors, circumstances and experiences in both countries, psychological responses to challenges, as well as the person’s ability to utilise appropriate coping strategies, problem-solving techniques and external support measures (Berry, 1997, p. 15; Ritsner & Ponizovsky, 1999, pp. 136-137; Van Coller, 2002, pp. 19-20).

Ecomodel for the assessment of immigrants

One of the specific aims of this study was to develop an ecomodel of assessment, by conducting a qualitative study of the factors, processes and contexts that had an impact on the immigration journeys of South African immigrant families in New Zealand. An ecomodel of assessment requires an understanding of the processes and challenges during the various phases of the immigration process, as well as risk and protective factors for individuals,
couples and families in terms of their adaptation and well-being. Factors to consider during pre- and post-migration assessment were based on the literature review in chapters 2 and 3, as well as issues identified in the thematic network analysis of participant narratives. An ecomodel for the assessment of immigrants is depicted in figure 6 in this chapter. The layout of the phases of immigration and type of Clip Art used in figure 6 were based on the framework of Van Coller (2002, pp. 41, 73). The main focus of Van Coller’s research was to develop guidelines for the psychological preparation of immigration, based on a framework of factors that affected the psychological well-being of five recent immigrants from South Africa to Australia. She also provided a brief overview of the demands and stressors of migration and adaptation, psychological effects during phases of the migration process, as well as internal and external coping strategies and resources. In the current study, Van Coller’s model was expanded to include a more comprehensive pre-migration assessment as well as a post-migration assessment, where the implications of a return migration were also considered. The phases of immigration were extended from four to six phases to include the experiences of settled immigrants, and risk and protective factors were explored across various ecological contexts encountered during the immigration journey.
Figure 6. Ecomodel for the assessment of immigrants.
Pre-migration assessment

Menges (cited in Grinberg & Grinberg 1989, p. 19) defines “fitness for emigration” (p. 19) as the ability of a person to regain his or her sense of stability within a short period, provided that his or her new environment is reasonably hospitable. Certain characteristics, attitudes and abilities may affect a person’s response to change and adversity that allow him or her to manage immigration-related stressors more successfully. If people’s motivation for immigration was realistic, their expectations were flexible, resources for immigration and support were adequate, and their mind-set remained optimistic, most immigrants were expected to eventually settle down in the new country and become productive members of society (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 96, 164-165; Hovey, 2000, p. 127). However, immigration is a highly individualised experience and several moderating factors have to be considered to assess potential risk and protective factors when formulating an intervention plan. A pre- and post-migration assessment of these modifying factors can be conducted as a self-assessment or can be performed in more formal settings, including the use of specific psychometric instruments (Van Coller, 2002, p. 77).

Challenges

South African immigrants were often reluctant immigrants in the sense that they felt that they were forced to leave their home country owing to the rising level of crime and violence, coupled with political instability and corruption, limited career opportunities and a devaluing rand. Prospective immigrants had to consider their limited options for immigration and explore opportunities for employment abroad. Obtaining sufficient and reliable information was vital to make an informed decision, but sources were often incomplete or contradictory, and often painted an overly positive view of New Zealand. Because emigration
from South Africa was interpreted from a political or racial perspective, and was viewed as a permanent relocation, it evoked an emotional response in those who stayed behind (Brokensha, 2003, pp. 6-7). Those who mentioned immigration to family, friends and colleagues were therefore often confronted with accusations of being part of the “chicken run”, that they were abandoning their families and that they were betraying the land of their forefathers.

During a pre-migration assessment it was important that prospective immigrants should carefully consider their reasons for immigration, as well as the feasibility of such an important decision. Participants warned that prior to departure people need to decide whether they are ready to pack up and move to another country, and that they are comfortable with their reasons for leaving South Africa. According to participants, the possibilities and opportunities to immigrate were often limited, and the “gap” to immigrate was small as a number of factors had to come together simultaneously to make it possible. Hence, a large number of people in South Africa probably wanted to immigrate, but only a small percentage actually succeeded. The main stumbling blocks were financial constraints, family connections, finding suitable employment and eligibility for immigration visas and permanent residency in New Zealand. Most participants felt that it was difficult to advise prospective immigrants about whether or not to immigrate. The decision depended on a person’s circumstances and experiences in South Africa. It was an individual decision that each person had to work through. Nevertheless, the majority of participants recommended that people should immigrate if they have the opportunity, and if they are mentally ready to pack up and leave South Africa.

The participants mentioned that it was advisable to have a job offer before leaving South Africa because this is a pre-requisite for obtaining a work visa. Some people arranged a visit to New Zealand beforehand to explore work opportunities and make contact with
prospective employers. Those who did not have a job offer prior to arrival needed to take enough money to tie them over for at least four months because it could take a while to find employment. Adequate financial resources were required to fund relocation and settlement, and the prevailing exchange rate had to be considered. Prospective immigrants had to ensure that their South African pensions and retirement annuities would be paid out in New Zealand. Some people sold everything in South Africa and arrived in New Zealand with only a few suitcases, while others came “lock, stock and barrel”. A few left the bulk of their furniture in storage containers in South Africa and only brought a few basic items, such as beds, because they were unsure what to expect in New Zealand and wanted to be able to move around easily.

*Individual risk and protective factors*

Identifying individual risk factors and high risk groups among immigrants can inform service planning in terms preventive, supportive and therapeutic measures. Individual pre-migration moderating factors for acculturation stress and adaptation in this study included demographic variables, such as gender, age, ethnic, cultural and racial group, home language, religion, level of education, marital, socioeconomic, work and health status, as well as the person’s life stage or developmental stage. Personal needs, values and attitudes towards acculturation, expectations of the immigration destination, English fluency and knowledge of New Zealand culture affected the person’s response to acculturation stress. Temperament, personality traits, attachment style, self-concept, self-esteem, locus of control, self-efficacy, previous life experience, social, stress management and problem-solving skills, coping style, hardiness and resilience played a vital role in the adaptation process (Berry, 1997, p. 15; Johnson, 2007, p. 1430; Kristal-Andersson, 2000, p. 19; Van Coller, 2002, p. 28). Additional factors were the roles the person fulfilled in the home and society, childhood experiences of
loss and separation, traumatic experiences, motivation and preparation for immigration (Berry, 1997, p. 15; Johnson, 2007, p. 1430; Kristal-Andersson, 2000, p. 19; Van Coller, 2002, p. 20). These individual factors, together with the circumstances during immigration and settlement, and the availability of external support systems either promoted or impeded post-migration settlement.

It can be argued that the women in this study experienced more psychological distress as a result of the disruption of their social networks, and hence may have been at higher risk of anxiety and depressive disorders. However, since the women found social networking and expressing their emotions easier than men, they were able to mobilise sources of information and psychosocial support that made the pain, loneliness and distress of immigration more tolerable. Men who were strongly motivated to immigrate owing to new career opportunities were committed to achieving success in New Zealand, and hence managed stress more successfully. However, being career driven and feeling compelled to take care of their families made them vulnerable to feeling humiliated, angry and defeated if their pre-migration expectations of achievement in the workplace and financial prosperity did not eventuate.

A person’s developmental stage overlaps with gender, because developmental challenges and the level of psychological maturity modulate the destabilising effects of immigration (Akhtar, 1999, p. 11). In this study, boys, pre-adolescent children, men in their early twenties, and adult males in search of career opportunities were generally more excited about emigrating. Teenage girls, young women in romantic relationships and women older than 30, were reluctant to leave their close friends, fiancées and family members behind and to give up their broader social network. Even though pre-school children were often included in family discussions, they were too young to understand the implications of immigration and were happy to abide by their family’s decision. Participants reported that young children
apparently found it easier to relocate because they did not really understand what was happening and “just got on with things”. As long as parents and siblings were supportive and the family unit remained intact during immigration, pre-school children were expected to adapt well as their family buffered the destabilising effects of the immigration process (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 113). However, because they relied on the confidence of their parents to feel secure, parental anxiety caused by the absence of familiar sociocultural support structures adversely affected the child (Akhtar, 1999, pp. 11-12; Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 114).

Youth was regarded as the best and the worst age for migration, and studies have indicated that the greatest incidence of mental health difficulties occurs in this age group (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 126). Prior to adolescence, children in this study usually viewed the move as an adventure and a new place to go. During primary school years and early adolescence, interacting with peers at school and imitating their behaviour helped children to acquire the language and customs of the host country more readily (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 113). However, children required love, safety and security, and were sensitive to the perceived emotional state and ability of their parents to attend to their needs (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-9). As adolescents were still in the process of identity exploration and were more willing to adopt a pattern of contextual biculturalism in the new society, and hence functioned better socially and experienced fewer symptoms of distress (Coatsworth et al., 2005, p. 168). Adolescents who did not have close friendships or were not part of the “cool crowd” at school were more motivated to make a new beginning in New Zealand. During middle and late adolescence, young people relied on their affiliation with an enduring cultural peer group to achieve their second individuation task (Blos, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 12), which was to consolidate their identity, establish future goals and develop autonomy. Adolescent participants, who were 15 or older, said they realised with sadness that
they were leaving their friends behind for good. In New Zealand, some were ostracised or bullied at school owing to stereotypical views of South Africans.

Harrison and Nortje (2000, p. 13-11) reported that South African adolescents were at risk for adaptation difficulties as they had often formed strong bonds with their peers back home. Hence, they often resented moving to New Zealand and afterwards urged their parents to return to South Africa. Their parents’ traditional patriarchal and religious values, in contrast with the secular, more liberal norms of their peers in New Zealand, made identity consolidation more problematic. They could also experience pressure to excel academically to warrant the “sacrifices” made by their parents to ensure a better future for their children. A secure attachment style, family cohesion and congruence, as well as the ability to problem solve and adapt were protective factors against identity conflict for adolescents (Lin; Stuart, cited in Ward, 2008b, p. 108; Johnson, 2007, p. 1430). Harrison and Nortje (2000, p. 13-11) found that once South African adolescents had established a new circle of friends and had settled down at school, they were usually strongly motivated to remain in New Zealand.

Ward (2008a, pp. 5, 22-26) reported that in New Zealand, migrant youth had better social and school adjustment, reported fewer symptoms of psychological distress and exhibited fewer behavioural problems than their national peers. Participants confirmed that South African children and adolescents usually settled quickly at their new schools, fitted in well with their peer group, participated in extracurricular activities and achieved well academically.

Young adults were more eager to pack up and relocate to another country because they were starting on the career ladder and viewed relocation as an adventure. Those in their twenties to mid-thirties usually found settlement easier than older adults, as they were more adaptable to acculturation and career changes (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-9) and found it easier to recover from the financial losses of immigration (Van Dalen & Henkens, 2007, p. 46). However, unmarried or unattached adults who had emigrated independently to assert
their emancipation from troubled family relationships, or had faced accusations and rejection by their families in South Africa owing to their decision to emigrate, or joined their family in New Zealand as a result of “emotional blackmail”, were at high risk of developing mental health difficulties. According to Akhtar (1999, p. 34), gay or lesbian individuals may have a greater tendency to migrate owing to discrimination in their home country, and those who married to meet societal or family expectations may divorce after migration to a more accepting host country.

South African immigrants in their late thirties to mid-forties have often invested many years in building a career in South Africa and could experience more adjustment difficulties and higher levels of distress if their career expectations are not met in New Zealand. Ritsner et al. (2001, p. 151) explained that unemployment and loss of professional and socioeconomic status could lower self-esteem and result in anxiety and depression. Harrison and Nortje (2000, p. 13-9) also suggested that this age group may be at higher risk of relationship breakdown and disruption of family relationships. Middle-aged immigrants are often aware of their declining physical vitality and diminishing opportunities to achieve their life and career goals in South Africa. Because the immigration policies of most countries have a cut-off age limit, these older adults have a sense of urgency to “take the big step” before it is too late. In this study, most participants had built a life for themselves in South Africa and were well established in terms of employment, owning property and having financial security. Hence, this age group did not feel excited about immigration because they were preparing for retirement and enjoying their lives in the comfort of their well-equipped homes. They were angry that they had to move at this stage of their lives, and had to work for at least another ten years before retirement.

Bakker et al. (2004, p. 401) observed that with age, people become more conscientious, agreeable, emotionally stable, mature and resilient. Elderly immigrants have
usually achieved a stable sociocultural and ethnic identity, which enables them to add new cultural elements without significant destabilisation of their existing personality structures (Doghramji, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 15). However, older immigrants who had left South Africa to be with a partner or to join their children in New Zealand could experience considerable adaptation difficulties. According to participants, it becomes more difficult for people to relocate the older they are, and making new friends becomes harder. Bakker et al. (2004, pp. 400-402) posit that as people age they become less extraverted and more reluctant to approach others, which tends to make new friendships and social integration more difficult. A few participants in this study were close to retirement age, and were looking forward to their pensions being paid out and having more time available to spend with their partners and families. They therefore found it extremely difficult to give up lifelong friendships and everything that had provided a sense of security, and were thus more vulnerable to the stressors of migration.

According to Bakker et al. (2004, p. 401), a pre-migration assessment of attachment styles may provide useful information to determine which immigrants are at risk of experiencing post-settlement difficulties. The infant-caregiver attachment style, as described by Bowlby, gradually becomes a stable personality characteristic as the person matures (Hazan & Shaver, cited in Bakker et al., 2004, p. 389) and affects subsequent responses to perceived loss and separation. Because immigration involves the disruption of important relationships and exposure to an unfamiliar social and physical environment, a person’s attachment style and personality structure affect sociocultural and psychological adaptation after immigration (Bakker et al., 2004, pp. 390-391). Attachment styles and Berry’s acculturation attitudes are useful adjuncts to explain people’s willingness to explore their new environment and establish new relationships in the host country (Van Oudenhoven & Hofstra, 2006, pp. 787, 794). Bakker et al. (2004, pp. 394, 396, 398-400) concluded that
dismissive, ambivalent, or pre-occupied attachment styles may hinder sociocultural and psychological adjustment owing to a sense of distrust, a reluctance to approach people or difficulties forming new relationships. Those with fearful, unresolved and disorganised attachment styles as a result of conflictual family relationships may suppress immigration-related attachment threats owing to fears of being overwhelmed, which could lead to an accumulation of unprocessed stressors and psychological problems in the long run (Bowlby, cited in Van Ecke, 2007, pp. 439-440). According to Menges (cited in Grinberg & Grinberg 1989, p. 20), people with insecure attachments and limited individuation are less able to tolerate separation and loneliness. Hence they may experience more homesickness after immigration and are at risk of maladjustment. Childhood experiences of loss and separation or the death of a close family member around the time of immigration intensifies the loss of being separated from family. Because attachment to caregivers during the developmental years affects a person’s sense of security while exploring new environments, a pre-migration assessment of attachment styles could help to determine who may be at risk of experiencing post-migration difficulties.

Individual characteristic such as temperament and personality style may promote or deter immigration and settlement. One person in the current study believed that having a “depressive personality” or being serious-minded or melancholic made people more prone to develop depression after immigration. Participants who were hesitant to immigrate were those who viewed themselves as not being the adventurous type and being scared of the unknown. They clung to what was familiar, and preferred to remain in their “safe zone”. Individuals who were homely did not like to move around much and preferred stability. Those who had not travelled internationally sometimes had a narrower view of the world and were more inward focused. Hence they were reluctant to acknowledge the escalating problems in South Africa and did not see any reason for wanting to live somewhere else.
People who struggled to make significant life decisions were reluctant to take the final step of leaving South Africa permanently, even though some of their family members had already immigrated. An older couple only considered immigration because of family sponsorship that enabled them to be reunited with their children in New Zealand. Balint (cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 16) posits that individuals with an ocnophilic personality style have strong attachments to people, places and belongings. Because they rely heavily on their social support structures they will be more reluctant to leave, despite adverse conditions in their home country (Boneva & Frieze, 2001, p. 482; Grinberg & Grinberg 1989, pp. 21-22). Nevertheless, they may be willing to leave their country of origin to be reunited with close family members who have emigrated. Despite ocnophilic individuals initially experiencing more emotional difficulties, forming new attachments in the host country could facilitate settlement (Akhtar, 1999, p. 16).

By contrast, participants in the current study who had previously travelled outside the borders of South Africa had a broader understanding of other cultures. Those who had lived in other countries viewed themselves as nomadic, and thus had the confidence that they could feel at home anywhere. Balint (cited in Akhtar 1999, p. 16), and Grinberg and Grinberg (1989, p. 21) reported that those with a philobatic personality style valued their independence, and had a pioneering spirit and sense of adventure. They were more inclined to seek out unfamiliar environments, take on new challenges and form new relationships. Boneva and Frieze (2001, p. 477) reported an immigrant personality type that was more work and achievement oriented and less focused on relationships and family affiliation. These individuals were motivated by better career opportunities, were willing to take risks, and they thrived on achieving mastery and gaining social recognition (Fersch; Glazer; McAdams; McClelland; Suarez-Orozco; Winter, cited in Boneva & Frieze, 2001, pp. 482, 486). In the current study, some participants asserted that instead of blaming historical struggles or
prevailing conditions in South Africa for their difficulties, they had been motivated to better themselves and improve their lives. Hence, when the opportunity for immigration arose, they were willing to “give it a go” as they thought they had nothing to lose. They viewed relocation as an adventure, doing something different and starting a new chapter in their lives. Akhtar (1999, p. 16) cautions that despite “philobats” enjoying the excitement and stimulation of a new environment, they may become restless and dissatisfied after a while and move on to other destinations. One of the families in this study confirmed that they now had the “travelling bug” and would consider onward migration to another country before they were too old.

According to Van Dalen and Henkens (2007, pp. 47, 55), a sense of self-efficacy encourages migration because it enables people to take calculated risks, tolerate change and uncertainty, explore and mobilise sources of support and to view adversity in the broader context of a life journey (Beiser & Edwards, 1994, p. 82). Kobasa (cited in Walsh, 1996, p. 3) reported that those with psychological hardiness and resilience were inclined to view difficulties as challenges, and they had a sense of internal control and self-efficacy that encouraged them to master difficulties and overcome adverse life events (Greeff & Holtzkamp, 2007, pp. 192-193; Pearlin & Schooler; Rutter, cited in Beiser & Edwards 1994, p. 82). Participants in the current study stated that effective observation and analysis skills enabled them to make comparisons and create scenarios for their future lives in South Africa versus New Zealand, and to draw logical conclusions that assisted with decision making and problem solving. A broad range of interests, constructive coping strategies, good social and stress management skills, as well as adaptability and an entrepreneurial spirit were essential to cope with changes and explore and maximise opportunities. People who were achievement oriented had the confidence that they would succeed again in a different environment, which allowed them to take the huge step to relocate. Participants stated that South Africans acquire
the habit during their formative years to assume responsibility and take charge of a situation, which would enable them to manage the immigration journey more successfully. Harrison and Nortje (2000, p. 13-9) confirmed that South African emigrants in New Zealand were seen as hard-working, resourceful and self-reliant. Optimism, subjective well-being, life satisfaction (Davydov et al. 2010, pp. 9, 13) and interpersonal trust (Nesdale et al., cited in Kristal-Andersson, 2000, p. 52) promote a positive settlement experience. Harrison and Nortje (2000, p. 13-9), as well as the participants in the current study, confirmed that South Africans had a sense of humour and that most were eventually able laugh at themselves and the hardships they had endured. They appreciated the new opportunities that had unfolded as a result of their immigration, as well as the natural beauty of their surroundings. The consensus among participants was that immigration was “not for cissies”, and that people must “have guts” and the right mental attitude to immigrate.

Akhtar (1999, p. 6) reported that the circumstances surrounding and the reasons for immigration played a key role in the psychological adaptation to a new country. The three overseas destinations that participants considered were the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. The main reasons for wanting to emigrate were escalating crime and violence, the rape or murder of friends and family, an encroaching sense of vulnerability and threat to their safety, living in a “jail” owing to elaborate safety systems, political corruption and unrest, fears of a civil war and that South Africa was going the same way as Zimbabwe. They were also concerned about job redundancies and a lack of career opportunities owing to affirmative action, the devaluing rand, as well as inadequate financial resources and healthcare support after retirement. Participants had a sense that the “writing was on the wall” and they thus sought a new way of living in New Zealand to ensure a better future for their children. Some were exploring new work opportunities abroad, while others were motivated to be reunited with family members who had already emigrated.
What sets South African immigrants apart from those coming from other Western countries, such as the USA or the United Kingdom, is that South Africans live in a sociocultural, socioeconomic and political environment that is in a state of radical change and perceived erosion of everything they value. In an effort to escape the turmoil and maintain a sense of cultural integrity, some migrate internally prior to considering an international migration. The research findings of Pernice et al. (2000, p. 27) as well as Khawaja and Mason (2008, p. 240) suggest that “semi-voluntary migrants”, “reluctant immigrants”, or “anticipatory refugees”, such as South African immigrants, who were mostly motivated by sociopolitical “push” factors and who may have been exposed to violence and trauma, could have a higher risk of mental disorder during and after settlement. According to Grinberg and Grinberg (1989, pp. 156-157) and Akhtar (1999, p. 7), leaving one’s country of origin to escape adverse circumstances, having to depart suddenly, leaving permanently and being unable to return adversely affects adaptation in the host society. In the current study, participants who had left in a hurry after a traumatic incident or felt that they had been “driven away from their fatherland” experienced more anger and apprehension about leaving South Africa, and their sense of uprooting, vulnerability and loneliness after arrival had a negative impact on their adaptation and settlement. Existing physical health problems or surgery close to the departure date were an added burden to the physical demands of packing up a home and sorting out immigration-related paper work, which further depleted their emotional resources.

Participants asserted that if people were not ready in their “heart of hearts” to leave South Africa, they would not be able take this important step in the right mind state. They would end up feeling guilty about leaving and would pine for South Africa. They would thus come to regret their decision. Those who had difficulty making decisions that would have significant repercussions sometimes second-guessed themselves, which led to several back
and forth migrations that disrupted family bonds and had detrimental financial implications. Immigrants who tried to persuade reluctant family members to join them in New Zealand often found that their efforts were unsuccessful, despite offering support to help them through a lengthy and expensive immigration process. Participants who approached immigration carefully, but with an open mind, and were committed to building a new life in New Zealand generally adapted well to their new environment. Some stated that they had no specific expectations of New Zealand, but were adamant that they would never return to South Africa, irrespective of conditions after their arrival. However, making a hasty and permanent decision, based on a predominance of push factors and a paucity of pull factors, could increase the risk of post-migration difficulties. Another family decided to keep a back door open to return by keeping the bulk of their financial resources in South Africa. This practice was discouraged by settled immigrants because they asserted that you cannot stand with one foot in South Africa and one foot in New Zealand. They believed that people’s expectations of life in New Zealand and the determination to “make things work” significantly affected their ability to adapt successfully. Hettie cautioned that “you must be sure that your reason for immigration justifies the pain and sorrow. Otherwise, you will be unhappy and you will go back to South Africa, and you will lose a lot of money”. Participants concluded that successful settlement required commitment, the right mindset, courage and endurance.

Family risk and protective factors

According to Walsh (1996), a systemic or ecological view of resilience in the face of immigration-related disruption focuses on the interactional processes in the developmental, chronological and sociocultural contexts of families. The implication here is that families require the flexibility to use a variety of coping strategies to meet the challenges of a particular situation during the various phases of the immigration process as part of the
family’s developmental pathway (Hawley & DeHaan, 1996, p. 4; Pearlin & Schooler, cited in Walsh, 1996, p. 4). Stability of the marital relationship, family structure and composition, gender roles and relationships, decision making and conflict resolution processes, parenting methods, family cohesion, as well as relationships with extended family are important mediating factors in the adaptation process (Hulewat, 1996, p. 131; Johnson, 2007, p. 1430; Van Coller, 2002, pp. 38-39). A stable marriage and a mutual decision to migrate could help to alleviate the losses and stress of immigration, whereas marital conflict and disagreement regarding the decision could contribute to immigration and adaptation problems (Akhtar, 1999, p. 31).

Some couples thought that their marriage would improve after immigration, but existing marital tension was intensified by immigration-related stressors and acculturation differences that sometimes led to marital breakdown and separation. Participants speculated that these couples possibly did not discuss the implications of immigration thoroughly enough beforehand. They explained that after arrival one of them had wanted to remain in New Zealand and the other one had wanted to return to South Africa. One participant emphatically stated that if people’s marriages are not strong, they should not even attempt immigration. Couples also had to be prepared that traditional gender roles might have to be renegotiated in New Zealand owing to the unavailability of domestic workers and gardeners to assist with household chores. Akhtar (1999, p. 31) cautions against a hasty pre-migration marriage to avoid losing the partner, as well as marriage within 18 months after immigration to avoid the mourning process. These marriages could be at risk because partners have to adjust to a new marriage as well as a foreign country. Owing to the additional challenges of migration they may not have the time and emotional resources available to lay the foundations for a strong marriage. One of the participants in the current study, who had married shortly after arrival, had found it upsetting to marry so far away from home and not
having her family present at the wedding. She had felt extremely lonely in the beginning because her new husband had been compelled to work long hours to keep them afloat financially. According to Akhtar (1999, p. 32), marriage after the mourning and identity transformation has occurred are more likely to have a favourable outcome.

In the families in this study, the person who was most convinced that they were making the right decision usually took the lead and directed the immigration process. Husbands and fathers often believed that the safety of their families was in their hands. They wanted a better future for their children, were determined to find employment and were ready to make a new beginning in New Zealand. It was imperative for the person directing the immigration process to be sensitive to the concerns of other family members and make an effort to ease their fears and sense of vulnerability. Those with an inclusive and caring parenting style involved their children during the decision making process, which provided a sense of unity. Participants emphasised that a strong marriage prior to immigration allowed the more fearful partner to “go with the flow” and to “hang in there” because he or she wanted to be with their spouse and children. Harrison and Nortje 2000, p. 13-12) recommended that families should draw up a “manifesto” of their reasons for leaving South Africa, which they can refer to when they experience difficulties after arrival in New Zealand. Couples also appeared to have more peace of mind if their parents supported them to lead the life of their choice, and viewed immigration as starting a new life in New Zealand. Prospective immigrants were warned that they were going to miss their family back home, and some participants had a big family get-together before they left. People with younger siblings, grandchildren or elderly parents in South Africa found separation due to immigration harder. Lack of close family connections in South Africa made immigration easier because the nuclear family was the main source of support and connectedness.
Migration causes ruptures between emigrants and their extended family network, and the perceptions of individual family members on relocation can cause conflicts (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 95). In the current study, where parents had decided to emigrate first, their adult children had felt abandoned and were torn between the close bond they had with their parents, and the life they had built for themselves in terms of friendships and romantic relationships. For the emigrant, disapproval and accusations of betraying their family could result in a lack of support after immigration, and feelings of guilt and pride could prevent immigrants from letting their family know that they are struggling. During the immigration process, family members may be temporarily separated owing to visa requirements, or to meet occupational and financial commitments. For female partners and mothers, staying behind to sell the family home and pack up their belongings can be a daunting and physically demanding task.

Sociocultural risk and protective factors

Sociocultural factors that played a role in adaptation were social support in the home and the destination country, the quality and duration of relationships, social roles in society, cultural values of the home and host environments, racial and ethnic composition of the home and host environments, home language and English fluency, and religious values and beliefs. Participants reported a range of responses from friends and colleagues about their intention to immigrate, but most were either judgemental or warned of the gravity of their decision. There was a belief that these critics were in denial about the rising level of threat in South Africa, or were envious because they also wanted to emigrate, but were unable to do so or could not pluck up the courage. Most participants had long-standing friendships and some consulted with trusted friends, who were estate agents, to assist with selling or renting out their family home. Even though one family had a positive experience, other participants found that
renting their home in South Africa to friends or using a rental agent who was a family friend had a negative impact on these relationships because of unpaid rent and property neglect. The conclusion was that mixing friendship and business was not a good idea.

Some people were thrown into the deep end when they immigrated because they did not know anybody in New Zealand. Participants agreed that immigration was easier for those who already had an infrastructure of family and friends in New Zealand. The consensus was that New Zealand was a good option as an immigration destination because of the country’s similarities with South Africa, such as culture and lifestyle, an interest in rugby and driving on the left side of the road. New Zealanders were perceived as welcoming, and the country offered many opportunities for those who were willing to put in the effort. However, Afrikaans-speaking immigrants were often perceived as arrogant, rude or aggressive by Kiwis because of their accent and direct way of communicating with others. Hence, they were at higher risk of experiencing prejudice, discrimination and bullying. Prior to immigration, some Afrikaans-speaking parents had sent their children to English-medium schools and had started speaking English at home to enhance their language skills, and assist with their transition to New Zealand schools. Some families also benefited from buying an English bible and attending an English church before immigration to become comfortable with practising their faith in another language. Johnson (2007, p. 1430) confirmed that language proficiency promotes post-migration settlement. South African immigrants of British descent usually had English as their home language and found it easier to slot into New Zealand society. Pernice and Brooke (cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 26) noted lower rates of mental illness among British immigrants on account of similarities in language and culture to New Zealanders. The majority of participants said that they relied on their religious beliefs and guidance from God during the decision-making process, which provided a sense of security and confirmation that they were making the right decision.
Environmental risk and protective factors

Environmental factors included elements of the natural and human-made world that formed part of people’s daily lives, such as the climate and landscape, fauna and flora, and whether they lived in an urban or rural environment. South Africans were accustomed to distinctive seasons, an abundance of sunshine, a temperate climate, an outdoor lifestyle and a large variety of plant and animal life. Promotional material portrayed New Zealand as a country where the environment, air and water are clean and pure, population density is low and traffic congestion is less than in most developed countries (Reyneke, 2004, pp. 193, 208). It has a fragile ecology, blue-green oceans, fern-clad forests, glaciers and snow-frosted mountains, riveting cloud formations and rainbows, as well as frequent earthquakes, geothermal activity and active volcanoes (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 2-8; Reyneke, 2004, pp. 193-194).

Participants, however, cautioned that New Zealand has a much colder, wetter and unpredictable climate than South Africa, particularly the lower part of the North Island and large parts of the South Island. This could potentially lead to an exacerbation of existing health problems, such as hay fever, asthma and arthritis. Because New Zealand consists of two islands in an isolated part of the Pacific Ocean, returning to South Africa for visits tend to be time consuming and expensive. Some participants felt that it would be better to initially settle in a small town rather than a big city because it is easier to find your way. However, for those who had been accustomed to living in large cities in South Africa, small-town life in New Zealand could be extremely lonely owing to the absence of other South Africans and few recreational opportunities. For those who had been close to nature and the animal life in South Africa, reading or looking at video material about New Zealand beforehand, and
finding some similarities between the two countries could have been helpful in facilitating adaptation.

Economic risk and protective factors

Migration involves the movement from one socioeconomic system to another, which affects employment, occupational and socioeconomic status, as well as social class (Kohn et al, cited in Rogler, 1994, p. 705). Economic factors that have to be considered are the financial resources available for immigration and settlement, a person’s educational background, finding equitable employment, exploring opportunities for career advancement, as well as long-term financial security. In the current study, relocation was much easier for participants when their immigration process was well organised and they had employment in New Zealand, or had family or friends who had offered business opportunities. Spoonley et al. (2007, p. 21) emphasise that being fluent in English, and having a professional or trade qualification and a firm job offer in New Zealand are important selection criteria for skilled migrants. Reputable immigration consultants assisted participants with assessing qualifications, suggesting suitable job opportunities and providing employer contact details. Prospective employers also provided information on visa requirements and sometimes assisted with immigration documentation. Some organisations offered to pay for immigration medicals and visas, passports, plane tickets and accommodation for one month after arrival. Others also contributed a set amount for the shipment and customs clearance of household goods to New Zealand. Employees were usually required to cover the shortfall on shipping container fees and paying for transit insurance.

Participants recalled that recruitment agents often attract prospective immigrants by painting New Zealand as a lucrative paradise that offers more favourable career opportunities. These agents create the impression that people would be better off financially
and could acquire material possessions much quicker. Participants, however, warned that people do not get wealthy in New Zealand and that Australia offers a better financial future, particularly for younger people. Immigration consultants who arrange seminars in South Africa sometimes encourage people whose professions are not on the Skilled Shortage List to pack up and travel to New Zealand on a visitor’s visa with assurances that they will find work without difficulty. An offer of employment will open the pathway towards permanent residency and citizenship. However, after arrival in New Zealand the participants realised it was more difficult to find employment than expected, particularly older people and those without tertiary qualifications or the scarce skills needed in New Zealand. Participants warned that cultural differences could affect those without suitable qualifications and scarce skills more acutely because they had to start at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder again. Firkin et al. (2004, pp. 21, 46) confirmed that older migrants could have difficulty finding work and might be unwilling to start at the bottom rung of their career ladder again.

Having an Afrikaans surname or a strong Afrikaans accent, despite being fluent in English, could be a barrier to employment or lead to underemployment. Grinberg and Grinberg (1989, pp. 99, 110) reported that language was one of the traditional elements that was most resistant to change during adulthood, particularly accent. Participants believed that South Africans were generally more highly qualified than Kiwis and hence posed a threat to them in the workplace. Statistics New Zealand (2004, pp. 2, 22) confirmed that people born overseas were almost twice as likely as New Zealanders to have a university degree, and the difference was even more pronounced for post-graduate qualifications. Firkin et al., (2004) cautioned that employers and recruitment agencies often used a lack of New Zealand work experience (pp. 16-17, 23, 46), or being “overqualified” (pp. 15-17, 21, 35, 47) as smokescreens for discrimination. Participants confirmed this paradoxical experience of being
“unemployable” owing to not having work experience in New Zealand, but that nobody wanted to give them the opportunity to gain the necessary experience.

Immigration consultants were inclined to present an overly simplified version of the job market in New Zealand and the immigration process. They also omitted essential information on alternatives, such as the business visa and entrepreneur visa route to permanent residency, in the event of people meeting stumbling blocks to employment. Unemployment after arrival resulted in considerable stress and financial hardship as people had to live on their dwindling savings brought from South Africa. If they were in New Zealand on a visitor’s visa they would also be ineligible for financial support via Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ). Participants recommended that prospective immigrants either secure employment prior to departure, or at least have a thorough understanding of employment conditions and immigration visa options to make an informed decision about the advantages and disadvantages of immigration.

**Political and governmental risk and protective factors**

Important sociopolitical factors in the home and host nations are the level of democracy, political freedom, human rights and the rights of minority groups (Afolyan, 2001). According to Rogler (1994: p. 703), migration is governed by political and historical forces, migration policies and public opinion on immigration. The participants in the current study generally regarded New Zealand as a relatively safe country with a low level of corruption. Harrison and Nortje (2000, p. 2-11) add that the legislative and judicial systems in New Zealand are efficient and strive to ensure peace and stability, permitting a sense of safety and personal freedom to its inhabitants. The attitude of New Zealand society towards immigrants, the behaviour of government officials, as well as the waiting period for work or residency visas affect the level of distress and uncertainty experienced by immigrants.
Because South Africans often regard themselves as “reluctant immigrants”, who have been forced to leave their home country, ambivalence about emigration may add to their feelings of insecurity. Akhtar (1999, p. 17) asserts that those who have left politically unstable countries often experience violence, trauma and discrimination, and may continue hoping that an improvement in conditions in their homeland will allow them to return. Migration laws that value the integrity of family networks are inclined to endorse family reunification (Rogler, 1994, p. 704), which has a positive effect on the emotional well-being and life satisfaction of immigrant families. In the current study, for the purposes of a family reunification, an elderly couple were encouraged by their children to immigrate to New Zealand, which was possible because of family sponsorship. Another participant stated that her brother’s immigration had “completed the family picture” in New Zealand.

According to participants, reputable and experienced immigration consultants who are able to provide the correct guidance, submit comprehensive documentation and are in good standing with immigration officials are worth their weight in gold. A South African immigrant, who had been unable to practise as a lawyer in New Zealand, had become an immigration consultant after gaining experience by assisting her family members to immigrate. Her wealth of knowledge on legal and immigration systems stood her in good stead, and she was well respected in the South African community in Wellington. Settled South African immigrants were a useful resource for recommendations in this regard, which helped to weed out “fly-by-night” immigration consultants. People who entered New Zealand on a visitor’s visa and were subsequently unable to find employment would be regarded as an “overstayer” when the visa expired, and could be deported by immigration authorities. Hence they experienced constant uncertainty, as well as feeling unwelcome and unwanted in New Zealand, which made them vulnerable to discrimination and exploitation. The psychological outcome of immigration was better if a person entered New Zealand with a legal immigration
status and the appropriate documentation. However, the requirements for the various New Zealand immigration categories were complex, and completing immigration documentation could be confusing and frustrating. The prospective immigrant had to submit the results of a comprehensive medical examination, including HIV testing and chest x-rays to exclude tuberculosis.

Owing to South Africa’s history of apartheid, prospective immigrants had to be aware that their reception by New Zealand society could somewhat frosty or hostile at times. This was mostly because of the dominant narrative created by the media of white South Africans as immoral racists, as well as the upheaval the 1981 Springbok tour caused in New Zealand society. In addition, because New Zealand regarded itself as a bi-cultural society, it was still struggling to come to terms with its rapidly emerging multiculturalism. As a result, xenophobia and ethnocentrism were not uncommon among certain members of society, particularly those who had not travelled outside the borders of the country and had not had much personal exposure to other cultures.

Post-migration assessment

An assessment of post-migration stress, adaptation and well-being should include a number of predisposing biological, developmental, psychosocial, sociocultural, socioeconomic, and sociopolitical vulnerabilities that interact with resettlement stressors to create a potential health risk. Stressors may be intrapersonal, interpersonal or extrapersonal (Samarasinghe & Arvidsson, 2002, p. 293) and usually stem from changes in socioeconomic status, social networks and cultural differences (Rogler, 1994, p. 707). Bennett et al., 1997, p. 162) found that for recent South African immigrants, the most significant stressors were leaving family and friends behind, uncertainty about their decision to immigrate, financial difficulties, adapting to new cultural norms and the lack of support networks. Personal
characteristics, coping styles and hardiness, as well as social support could buffer the impact of these stressors to reduce the level of risk and promote well-being. A recursive interplay between individuals and families and the larger social environment determined whether predisposing factors and stressful events led to resilience and successful adaptation, or resulted in social maladjustment and psychological dysfunction. According to Hulewat (1996, p. 129), resettlement difficulties could precipitate a cultural and psychological crisis, but also offered opportunities for growth and development. An assessment of risk and protective factors could direct preventive, supportive and therapeutic interventions to improve health and settlement outcomes for immigrants.

Challenges

Immigration involved loss and separation from South Africa, family and close friends, cultural norms and traditions, as well as a well-known physical environment. Upon arrival, newcomers had to negotiate unfamiliar physical, sociocultural, economic and political-governmental contexts. While attempting to manage various adaptation stressors, such as obtaining permanent residency, re-establishing careers, setting up a family home, and managing financial difficulties, they had to build a new life for themselves in New Zealand. Separation from family and long-term friends, as well as an unfamiliar sociocultural and physical environment, resulted in feelings of uprootedness and a loss of identity. The reason for immigration (Timotijevic & Breakwell, 2000, pp. 358-359), cultural differences between the two countries, perceived discrimination and frequency of contact with people from the same culture may also affect the perceived threat to identity (Ward, 2008b, pp. 107-108). Consistent with Bronfenbrenner’s (1994, 1999) ecological perspective, during the interaction of individual and environmental contexts over time, the person has to reconcile and integrate elements of the destination country into his or her personal, social and cultural identities. In
an effort to achieve a fit between their traditional values, beliefs and attitudes and that of the host country, immigrants experience cultural dissonance and culture shock. The changes experienced after immigration coupled with various ecological risk and protective factors, determine to what extent a person experiences mental health difficulties or thrives in New Zealand. Eventually he or she has to decide whether to remain in New Zealand, return to South Africa or relocate to another country.

When assessing the mental health risk of immigrants, recognising individual adaptation patterns could assist with distinguishing between ordinary adaptation difficulties and those that are cause for concern (Ritsner & Ponizovsky, 1999, pp.126-127). A “normal pattern” is characterised by consistent low levels of distress, while individuals with a “positive pattern” have ongoing moderate or decreasing levels of distress (Ritsner et al., cited in Ritsner & Ponizovsky, 1999, p.127). People with a “negative” pattern experience persistently high or increasing levels of distress (Ritsner et al., cited in Ritsner & Ponizovsky, 1999, p.127) that may require clinical intervention. Stressors have an additive effect and the interplay between various stress-related symptoms affects the psychological outcome (Ponizovsky et al., 2000, p. 293). Gonsalves (1992, p. 387) cautions that even after returning to normal life, delayed grieving and depression may occur, and the person may struggle to come to terms with long-lasting personality changes. Ritsner and Ponizovsky (1999, p. 137) also posit that psychological distress may follow a recurrent pattern, in light of the moderate elevation found in their study after five years of settlement. They (1999, p. 137) recommended that practical assistance and resources to strengthen immigrants’ coping strategies should be offered for at least the first two-and-a-half years after arrival. Issues that are unresolved during this adaptive process may remain dormant for years, but may resurface during family transitions (Gonsalves, 1992, p. 387) and be transmitted to the second
generation in the form of intercultural and intergenerational conflict (Hulewat, 1996, p. 131; Sluzki, 1979, p. 6).

Individual risk and protective factors

It was evident in the current study that the ability to deal with the demands of acculturation was influenced by individual characteristics, pre-migration circumstances, the particular phase of the immigration process, and circumstances in the host society. During a post-migration assessment, similar individual factors as discussed under the pre-migration assessment should be explored to determine a person’s relative level of risk, and to identify potential protective factors. Important demographic factors were gender, age, ethnic, cultural and racial group, home language, religion, level of education, marital, socioeconomic, occupational, and health status, as well as the person’s life stage or developmental stage. Personal needs, values and attitudes towards acculturation, personal and social identity, expectations of life in New Zealand, reception by New Zealand society, English proficiency and knowledge of New Zealand culture affected the person’s response to acculturation stress and culture shock. The reasons for emigration, level of preparation and circumstances around immigration, including pre-migration trauma, childhood experiences of loss and separation, the level of commitment to New Zealand, spiritual beliefs and social support, affected responses to loss and change. Temperament, personality traits, attachment style, self-concept, self-esteem, locus of control, self-efficacy, previous life experience, social, communication, stress management and problem-solving skills, coping style, hardiness and resilience play a vital role in the adaptation process (Berry, 1997, p. 15; Johnson, 2007, p. 1430; Kristal-Andersson, 2000, p. 19; Van Coller, 2002, p. 28).

Women, youth, middle-aged and elderly immigrants often face additional post-migration stressors, and may require more support. Adolescents, unmarried immigrants,
women and older adults find it hard to say goodbye to close friends, whom some have known since childhood. For a number of them, this loss of social connectedness may become a source of considerable distress and heartache after arrival in New Zealand that put them at higher risk of developing anxiety and depressive disorders. Men tend to be more distressed by “humiliating” events (Lerner et al., 2005, pp. 1812-1813) such as unemployment or underemployment, work stress, lack of career advancement, being underpaid, financial problems and feeling that they have let their families down. A factor that increases children and adolescents’ risk of anxiety and depression is being subjected to bullying by peers. Mason (cited in Higgins, 2008, p. 100) reported that South African immigrant children had a significantly higher state anxiety than New Zealand children. Mason (cited in Higgins, 2008, p. 100), however, found that South African children had lower state anxiety and higher self-esteem if they were happy to be living in New Zealand and already knew another child at the first school they had attended in New Zealand. A participating family confirmed that their adolescent children had been eased into an adolescent social circle by teenagers of a Kiwi family they had initially lived with, which had made adaptation at school much easier.

In the current study, risk factors for distress among middle-aged immigrants were a lower level of education, ongoing unemployment or underemployment after arrival, financial hardship, poor housing, arriving on a visitor’s visa and uncertainty because of fears of being deported. Separation of family members during immigration, immigrating alone or being divorced could lead to a higher level of distress owing to the lack of social support. For middle-aged people, marital satisfaction, finding employment and rebuilding their financial resources, as well as establishing new friendships contributed to their psychological well-being. Older adults could be at increased risk of developing depression owing to cultural inflexibility, loneliness, health problems and lack of family and social support. A loss of economic, professional and social status after immigration, and realising that their mentorship
and advice were no longer welcomed, led to an erosion of their self-worth. According to Diehl et al. (cited in Bakker et al., 2004, p. 402), older people often have a need to assert their independence. Hence they do not request assistance for physically demanding tasks, such as moving furniture to a new home. Health problems and poor mobility increase their social isolation and dependence on family members, and they may end up feeling useless, unappreciated and being a burden on their families. Elderly people have concerns about medical and aged care, as well as dying and being buried in a foreign country. Grinberg and Grinberg (1989, p. 161) describe this as a “double death” because it destroys the fantasy of returning home one day. Some may migrate internally to a retirement home or aged-care facility, while others may return to their homeland after an extended period abroad in preparation for their impending death (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 128).

Akhtar (1999, pp. 48, 55) states that a person’s identity provides a sense of cohesion and stability, while Srivastava (cited in Bakker et al., 2004, p.402) proposes an ongoing, reciprocal shaping process between the personality structure and a changing environment. The process of adaptation and reformulation of identity contains elements of the separation-individuation phase of childhood (Mahler, et al. cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 78) as well as the psychological turmoil of adolescence (Blos, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 77). This is regarded as a person’s “third individuation” (Akhtar, 1999, pp. 163, 179) and is characterised by ambivalence, identity diffusion and temporary regression. This process is influenced by the acquired attachment style and reinforces a person’s pre-migration temperament (Srivastava, cited in Bakker et al., 2004, p.402). According to Bakker et al. (2004, pp. 389, 391, 396, 399), individuals with secure attachment styles are more extraverted, confident and resilient, which enables them to form relationships in their native and host cultures. Closely knit participant families reported that their children had settled fairly quickly at school, made
good friends and were well liked by peers and teachers. These families often befriended immigrants from other countries, as well as South Africans and New Zealanders.

Emotional intelligence, coupled with cultural competence and cultural flexibility, may facilitate sociocultural adjustment because these immigrants are more open to new experiences (Jhutty, 2007, p. ix; Shaffer et al., 2006, pp. 122-123). Participants who had travelled abroad prior to immigration, as well as those that had done missionary work in other African states, were accustomed to interact with a variety of cultures. They thus felt comfortable with people from Samoan and Pacific Island cultures, and slotted in with ease at multicultural churches. Emotional stability and effective social skills, as well as practical intelligence and implicit knowledge, promote decision making and problem solving that enable people to maximise available opportunities (Nevo & Chawarski, 1997, p. 90). Hence, according to Shaffer et al. (2006, p. 120), they adjust better and are less likely to return to their home country. Seeking help from other people, social integration, the ability to adjust to new situations, willingness to compromise and patience are significant factors for immigration success (Nevo & Chawarski, 1997, p. 90). Those high in self-monitoring are able to adjust their behaviour to suit social situations, and are more likely to initiate conversations with strangers to obtain essential information and establish relationships (Graziano & Waschull, cited in Kosic et al., 2006, p. 143). Van Ecke et al. (2005, pp. 658-659) also suggest that immigrants with a secure attachment style are more confident to approach strangers for support and resolving problems. These qualities, abilities and attitudes were illustrated by a couple who arrived with visitor’s visas and had shipped all their household goods to New Zealand because they were assured that they would readily find work. When their employment aspirations did not eventuate, they were compelled to live off their savings for an extended period and had to explore other options for making money and remaining in New Zealand. They did not leave a stone unturned and were not hesitant to
approach strangers in various settings to acquire further knowledge and explore all their options. They eventually bought their own business franchise, which was a completely new venture for them, and built it up into a successful and well-respected business after three years.

Problem-focused coping styles, those that emphasise support, as well as cognitive and emotional management strategies, such as humour, acceptance, religion, positive reframing (Farley et al., 2005, pp. 214, 216, 218) and focusing on the present (Beiser & Edwards, 1994, p. 82) could lower stress levels and lead to better health outcomes. In the current study, participants believed that successful settlement required commitment, the right mindset, courage and endurance. Those who decided that if they relocated there would be no turning back, were committed to make things work in New Zealand. Hence they deemed it wise not to keep one foot in South Africa and one in New Zealand. Setting aside the negative experiences of the past and focusing on the positives in New Zealand helped people to make the best of their circumstances. They enjoyed the benefits of being in New Zealand, embraced what was on offer and “got the best out of it”. The conclusion was that whatever the reasons were for leaving South Africa, people had to put their energy and focus into a new life and what they could create for themselves in New Zealand. By focusing on getting the most out of the positive aspects, the negative ones seemed less important and stressful. Those with a positive attitude were also more inclined to use constructive coping strategies, such as hobbies and outdoor leisure activities, to manage stress-related problems. Participants believed that even people who had an uphill battle with factors that hampered settlement could potentially adapt if they had the right mindset. Annabella stated that “there will be days that aren’t so good, but with the right mindset you are halfway there”. According to Krohne (2001, p. 15167), paying attention to the stressful aspects of adaptation may initially increase stress reactions and lead to excessive worrying. However, searching for information and
focusing on problem solving allows people to gain a sense of control that reduces the impact of stressful situations in the long run. Participants believed that irrespective of how rough things became, it was important how they got through it and continued with their lives. People recalled how a South African man, who could not find employment, was enlisted to help clean the portable toilets on the local beach for some pocket money. A group of women, who cleaned people’s homes for an income, jokingly referred to themselves as the New Zealand ousies (maids). Acquiring do-it-yourself skills and being willing to do things independently helped immigrants to survive in New Zealand. Having a “can do” attitude and utilising creative problem-solving techniques allowed them to gain a sense of mastery. This was illustrated by a man who built his own home, and enlisted the help of his wife who became adept at mixing concrete and tiling their home. Aletta warned that “immigration is not for cissies, and you must be very resilient”. She concluded that the quality of life in New Zealand was better, but that people had to be brave and have fortitude.

According to Bakker et al. 2004, p. 391), people with preoccupied and fearful attachment styles are more comfortable with forming new friendships in their own cultural groups, but a constant need for reassurance and dependence could hinder adaptation. Participants reported that newcomers often required the support of other South African immigrants to regain a sense of normality and find their feet, but sometimes they became overly reliant on their benefactors for social, emotional and practical support. People with a dismissive attachment style often lacked interpersonal warmth, which limited social interaction with both native and host cultures (Bakker et al., 2004, pp. 390-391) and despite reporting low levels of distress, their level of adjustment could be compromised (Onishi et al., cited in Bakker et al., 2004, pp. 389, 400). Older, unemployed participants from previously disadvantaged groups in South Africa, in particular, were at risk of feeling criticised, rejected and ostracised by New Zealanders. This could evoke painful memories
from the past that could hinder meaningful engagement with both New Zealanders and the South African community, which could lead to social withdrawal and occupying a marginal position in society.

People’s reasons for leaving South Africa and their expectations of New Zealand influenced adaptation after immigration. A number of South Africans felt that they had been forced to leave South Africa because of crime, lack of job security and political instability. A participant, who knew a number of people who had died as a result of crime and had left South Africa after a family friend had been murdered, subsequently developed depression. According to Beiser (2005, p. 38), exposure to more than three pre-migration traumatic events can be associated with a fivefold greater risk of subsequently developing a mental disorder. If people are simply running away from South Africa, it does not necessarily open up new opportunities for them in New Zealand. Some reflected on what they had lost by leaving South Africa, and focused on the negatives in New Zealand. They had to realise that things would not be the same in New Zealand, and that it was impossible to simply pick up their life and live it the same way as they had done in South Africa. Participants asserted that if newcomers continued to look backwards they were facing the wrong direction, and would remain unhappy and unsettled in the future. Some participants preferred avoidant coping styles, such as suppression or denial, to manage painful memories about South Africa, but in the long run this could lead to psychosomatic symptoms, anxiety and chronic depression. According to one participant in the current study, her habit of overeating worsened in New Zealand, particularly after experiencing workplace problems, which required intervention. Farley et al. (2005, p. 214) confirm that avoidant coping strategies, such as passivity, overeating, and emotional distraction are associated with higher perceived stress and poorer health outcomes.
In the current study, some participants who had not been fully committed to immigration, had decided to come to New Zealand to “look things over” and had kept the option of returning to South Africa open if, despite their best efforts, things did not work out. However, immigration was like a marriage; if you started with the notion that you could simply get divorced if the arrangement did not suit you, you would opt out as soon as the going got hard. Some immigrants were unwilling to adapt and fit in because of the wrong mindset and unrealistic expectations. Participants cited examples of people who had returned to South Africa because they had been unwilling to clean their own shoes, do their own chores and garden work at home, or did not have a secretary at work to take care of administrative duties. One person stated that unless you adapt, you will either die or return to South Africa. Hence participants felt strongly that if people were not committed to the immigration process, it would be better if they remained in South Africa.

Family risk and protective factors

The disruption and uprooting of cultural norms, values and beliefs, coupled with multiple immigration stressors pose a critical developmental challenge for families that could overwhelm their coping efforts (Walsh, 1996, pp. 5-6). This could affect their ability to reorganise and adapt to the changes in the host society (Reiss, cited in Walsh, 1996, p. 8) and could result in fragmentation or disintegration of the family (Walsh, 1996, p. 6). A family’s appraisal of stressful situations, the meaning they attach to it and how they respond are influenced by their historical experiences, cultural heritage and spiritual values (Beavers & Hampson; Carter & McGoldrick, cited in Walsh, 1996, p. 8). The interplay between families and events in their sociocultural, economic and political environments must therefore be considered (Walsh, 1996, p. 4). A systemic, strength-based approach to intervention aims to fortify key interactional processes that minimise the disruptive impact of stressors and foster
resilience (Walsh, 1996, p. 8). The characteristics, resources, processes and collaborative
efforts of families are therefore deemed important (Hawley & DeHaan, pp. 1, 6, 7) because
despite adversity, leading to growth and development for
individual members, as well as the family unit (Greeff & Holtzkamp, 2007, p. 189; Walsh,
1996, pp. 1-2, 5).

Greeff and Holtzkamp (2007, p.198) identified the following factors associated with
resilience in South African immigrant families: (1) traits and abilities of individual family
members, such as optimism, humour and self-efficacy; (2) internal family strengths, such as
cohesion, problem-solving ability, open and honest communication, emotional and practical
support; (3) maintaining family structure via routines and spending time together; (4) social
support networks; and (5) a passive coping style during a crisis, such as acceptance of
circumstances. Kamya (1997, pp. 159-160) found that for African immigrants in the USA,
spiritual well-being was related to hardiness, self-esteem, coping resources and stress
reduction. Hawley and DeHaan (1996, pp. 3, 5), McCubbin (cited in Hawley & DeHaan,
1996, p. 3), Silliman (cited in Greeff & Holtzkamp, 2007, p. 190) and Walsh (cited in Walsh,
1996, pp. 5, 8) add additional core traits of family resilience, namely connectedness and
coherence, a shared set of values, goals and attitudes, adaptability and flexibility,
commitment and a confident, empowering and hopeful outlook.

In the current study, participants cautioned that immigrants had to ensure that their
marriages were stable and supportive. They also had to be prepared to work harder at their
immediate family relationships than ever before. A lack of consensus on the decision to
immigrate, different expectations of the new country, unemployment and financial difficulties
could lead to marital disputes after immigration and increased the risk of depression.
Participants recalled that in some marriages, the husband had found a good job and was
happy in New Zealand, whereas the wife was unhappy from the start and wanted to return
home. In some instances, pre-migration marital difficulties, coupled with the stress of immigration and acculturation differences, led to marital infidelity. According to Grinberg and Grinberg (1989, p. 115), the child could be triangled into the parents’ conflict or could be neglected by parents who were overwhelmed by their own problems. Participants reported that South African children would often hide their adaptation difficulties from their parents because they were concerned about their parents’ well-being in the face of overwhelming stressors.

Separation from spouses and children during immigration disrupted family structures and caused feelings of isolation and having to cope without support. In their research, Beiser and Edwards (1994, p. 79) reported significantly higher levels of depression in individuals who were separated from their spouses. For newcomers, loneliness often occurred where a spouse had to work long hours to provide adequate financial support for the family. Women, who initially stayed at home to help the children settle at school, often reported feeling extremely lonely and homesick. This finding contrasts with that of Beiser and Edwards (1994, p. 76) who suggested that women who stayed at home during the early stages of settlement initially experienced fewer stressors and mental health problems than their husbands, who were exposed to employment difficulties and workplace discrimination. Female participants reported that after a few months their mental health usually improved as they became used to their new surroundings and started knowing people, or after finding employment.

Marital conflict may result from differences in child rearing practices, gender role changes or role reversals (Gonsalves, 1992, pp. 385-386). The challenges associated with immigration and settlement, as well as different conditions in the host society, may necessitate the renegotiation of roles, rules and boundaries in immigrant families, which could affect the marital relationship and family functioning (Berry, 2001, p. 627; Dion &
One couple in the current study stated they were used to having separate workplaces in South Africa and were looking forward to having more time together after retirement. However, after being with each other all the time while running their business in New Zealand, one person started feeling suffocated and wanted more space. Those who were used to domestic workers in South Africa found it harder to adapt to New Zealand where most people did their own household chores. Noh et al. (cited in Dion & Dion, 2001, p. 153) caution that women could experience “role overload” if they are employed, but still expect to fulfil all the household and childcare responsibilities.

According to Harrison and Nortje (2000, p. 13-6), South Africa is a patriarchal society, where traditionally the man has always been regarded as the head of the household and is accustomed to making major decisions for the family. This places considerable responsibility on his shoulders for keeping his family safe, making “the right” decision about immigration and providing for his family financially. Reyneke (2004, pp. 213, 214) posits that New Zealand can be regarded as a “feminist” and liberal society, where role flexibility and renegotiation of the hierarchical structure to fit the needs of the family are the norm. For instance, if the woman is able to provide a higher income for the family, it is deemed practical for the man to take on household and childcare duties. By the same token, New Zealand women do not mind mowing the lawn or fixing a leaky roof. Competition regarding career and income, however, may create difficulties in South African marriages. One participant in the current study, stated that even though his wife was the “boss” at home, it would have been hard for him if he was unemployed, and his wife was more qualified and earning a good income.

South African parents may find that their more authoritative or autocratic parenting styles and child-rearing practices are not congruent with the more permissive cultural norms of New Zealand. New Zealand society encourages children to question, debate, explore and
make their own decisions, instead of complying with the directives of authority figures (Reyneke, 2004, p. 217). The anti-smacking law had made physical punishment illegal, and parents are often unsure how to effectively discipline their children or rebellious teenagers. It is commonplace for children to call adults by their first names and respect for adults and authority figures has to be earned. Young people have access to “adult” privileges at an early age; at 16 they can leave school, get married, obtain a restricted driver’s licence and smoke cigarettes, and at the age of 18 they can vote and buy alcohol. As a result, bullying and school truancy, unemployment, petty crimes, “boy racers”, binge drinking, substance abuse, sexual promiscuity, self-harm and suicidality among the youth have become a source of considerable concern in New Zealand society. Researchers have reported that immigrant youth are at risk of behavioural problems, depression and suicidality, substance abuse and delinquency, as well as a decline in academic achievement owing to cultural assimilation (Foliaki, cited in Cheng & Chang, 1999, para. 20; Pumariaga et al., 2005, p. 586).

Concerned parents sometimes prefer a Kangaroo parenting style (Roer-Strier, 1996, p. 3) to conserve their South African cultural norms and to protect their children from harmful influences in New Zealand. Parents are usually eager for their children to start attending school soon after arrival. South African families who are religious want to ensure that their children are enrolled in a school that endorses similar moral values. Parents therefore often prefer to send their children to a Christian, Catholic or Jewish school, or at least one with a religious principal. However, enrolment in state schools has zone restrictions that require the family to live in the area. This may create problems for new arrivals because they are often live in temporary accommodation. Some schools also have serious problems with peer bullying and defiant behaviour towards teachers, and parents who can afford the fees prefer to send their children to private schools with stricter rules.
According to Reyneke (2004, p. 2), if family members adopt different acculturation strategies, some South African men may feel that their authority is being undermined owing to the more emancipated position of women and children in New Zealand society. If the man fears that his family is being corrupted by the unchecked level of freedom in New Zealand society, he could become autocratic in an effort to maintain control. However, this could alienate family members even further and intensify doubts about their decision to emigrate (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-6). Changes in socioeconomic status sometimes require fathers to work long hours, which limits time for meaningful interaction and exacerbates emotional distancing from his family (Qin, cited in Yeh et al., 2008, p. 42). If the rest of his family have settled well in their new environment, suggesting that they return to South Africa may be strongly opposed and exacerbate estrangement from his family (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, pp. 13-6). Feeling marginalised, malcontent and overwhelmed, these men often react with stubborn bravado or aggressive behaviour in an effort to assert their position of power (Reyneke, 2004, p. 2), which may further erode the marriage and increase the risk for verbal or physically abusive behaviour. Some may seek escapism via hobbies, alcohol or extramarital affairs, or by dissolving their marital relationship and disengaging from their families (Reyneke, 2004, p. 2). If parents remain in survival mode and project their anxieties on to the outside world, their grief and mourning may be delayed and they appear to function adequately. According to Grinberg and Grinberg, 9089, p. 168), this postponed mourning could be passed on to the next generation and have a detrimental impact on the children born in New Zealand.

It is encouraging that research on migrant youth in New Zealand has indicated little change in family values over generations, with an emphasis on parental obligations in favour of children’s rights (Ward, 2008a, pp. 4-5, 25). Resilience may also be forged by friends, neighbours, teachers, coaches, clergy or mentors in the young person’s social environment.
Participant families, who had been in New Zealand for eight years or longer, did not report any of the problematic behaviour observed in New Zealand youth. Their children did well academically, built successful careers and were engaged in community life. One family proudly showed the researcher a newspaper article about their son’s achievements. The positive outcome for South African youth was possibly because of families retaining most of their traditional South African norms and values, such as religious affiliation, close family ties, being achievement oriented and children not wanting to disappoint their parents.

Parents with effective cognitive, social and problem solving abilities, as well as stress management skills may provide a supportive environment (Johnson, 2007, p. 1430) that promotes a sense of belonging, self-esteem and emotional well-being for children (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2003, p. 7). Immigrant families who had settled well believed that it was important not to look back, but to move forward with their lives. They set goals and worked towards them, and did not use excuses or allowed anything to stand in their way. One father stated that, “we were committed to make a full go of it, to work hard together as a family and to make it work”. These families believed that anything was possible and expected the same of their children. According to Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2003), parents with higher levels of education, who have clear expectations in terms of behaviour and academic achievement, improve the educational outcomes of children. Harrison and Nortje (2000, pp. 10-1, 10-7) found that most South African children were accustomed to an education system that emphasised values, standards, diligence and discipline, and some initially felt unsupported by the New Zealand school system that was based on self-discipline, creativity and an enquiring mind. However, once they realised that they were working towards their own goals, their motivation and commitment towards academic excellence returned (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-10). As South African children matured and gained
new skills via tertiary education, they were able to provide guidance to their parents, such as establishing a family trust. Roer-Stier (1996, pp. 2, 4) confirmed that the Chameleon parenting strategy or bi-cultural style enabled parents to shape traditional, culturally desirable characteristics in their children, while permitting sufficient adaptation to manage the contextual demands of both cultures.

Immediate and extended family networks in New Zealand, as well as contact with loved ones in South Africa, may affect adaptation and well-being. People from closely knit families or families with enmeshed boundaries may have more difficulty with separation, and hence experience more intense loneliness and homesickness because of a dependency on their family (Menges, cited in Grinberg & Grinberg 1989, p. 20). New Zealanders spoke of a young, South African woman who had moved into their neighbourhood, who never opened her curtains or spoke to anybody, and returned home after about six months. A newly married woman recalled with sadness how she had written numerous letters to family and friends in South Africa, but had received only a few, infrequent replies. This could be particularly problematic if family members do not support the person’s decision to emigrate from South Africa and decide to keep their distance. Some immigrants in the current study were hesitant to share their emotional difficulties with family members because they did not want to upset them, or were reluctant to admit that they had made a mistake immigrating. Newcomers often encouraged other members of their family to move to New Zealand to ease their loneliness. However, if these family members were not ready for immigration or felt coerced, they often changed their minds after applying for residency and lost a lot of money in the process.

A sense of connectedness and encouragement by those who remained in South Africa was important for the adaptation of newcomers. Immigrants often acutely missed their family members and close friends in South Africa, particularly during family celebrations and the festive season. One woman, whose family members had been unable to attend her wedding in
New Zealand, appreciated receiving their cards and letters of congratulation. When distressed newcomers called home, they found it constructive if family members were “stronger” than them and advised them to make the best of their situation so that they could be happy in New Zealand. Participants felt that it was important to stay in regular contact with family back home and that modern technology made it easier. Those who were not keen on writing letters or e-mails phoned on birthdays to catch up with family members. Others kept in regular contact with a particular person, who acted as a source of information about the extended family.

Participants agreed that it was easier to immigrate if you had family and friends in New Zealand because they could provide valuable practical assistance and psychological support. One participant recalled how “wonderful” the women in her extended family had been; they had taken her shopping, shared their own immigration experiences and validated what she was going through. Immigrants found the transition process easier if they were financially secure or had an organised and fully funded relocation, such as one person who joined a family business. Some participants felt more settled after other family members had moved to New Zealand. In families where husbands came first, their spouses and children were often excited to be reunited and to explore their new surroundings. Some reluctant spouses decided that they would “stick it out” in New Zealand because they wanted to be with their partners and children. Finding employment, enrolling the children in school and buying a family home helped families to put down roots.

**Social risk and protective factors**

Social support has consistently been found to be a protective factor against the various forms of psychological distress associated with migration (Cheng & Chang, 1999, para. 10). Newcomers experience depletion of their social support networks owing to separation from
extended family, close friends and neighbours, as well as secondary relationships such as shop assistants or hairdressers. They encounter changes in their social status and lifestyle, and have to establish new recreational patterns and find opportunities for community involvement (Bennett et al., 1997, p. 160; Cheung & Spears, cited in Abbott, 1997, p. 254). A supportive ethnic community and the family’s ability to utilise it, the re-establishment of social networks, religious and other group affiliations may facilitate adaption and resilience because it offers practical assistance, social and emotional support and a sense of connectedness.

Participants stated that it made a huge difference if people already had friends or other contacts in New Zealand. Some believed that current South African immigrants had more friends and family in New Zealand than those who immigrated in the 1990s. Others, however, found that some immigrants still arrived in New Zealand without having any family or friends here. Abbott (1997, p. 257) reported that social isolation and loneliness in the host country was linked to a higher incidence of mental disorder. Participants asserted that the survival of those without family in New Zealand depended on having good friends or members of the settled community to help them out. A divorced man, who had immigrated alone, had found it helpful to phone another South African immigrant male friend on a daily basis as an emotional release. In their research, Cheung and Spears (cited in Abbott, 1997, p. 254) confirmed that a close, confiding relationship was associated with higher levels of mental well-being. Perceived social support from the ethnic community was also associated with higher mental well-being in migrants (Abbott; Briggs & Macleod; Briggs et al.; Schweitzer et al., cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 29). Participants stated that whereas people felt obligated to help a family member, friends had a choice. In addition, friendship was conditional and some settled migrants refrained from giving unsolicited advice because it was not always appreciated by newcomers. Maintaining strong links with one’s own cultural group may, however, be counter-productive in the longer term because contact with people
from the home as well as the host cultures is associated with better levels of mental well-being (Jackson; Rudmin; Schmidt & Poole, cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 29). According to Samarasinghe and Arvidsson (2002, p. 296), to be met with kindness, being accepted and being involved with the host country and its culture are related to better mental health because this may strengthen the coherence and emotional stability of family systems.

Participants felt that it was essential for immigrants to adapt to mainstream New Zealand society to achieve social connectedness and inclusion. Newcomers were advised to befriend South Africans and Kiwis, as well as other immigrants. Some reported that in the beginning when they had interacted socially with a group of Kiwis, they had felt excluded from the conversation as they had nothing in common with them. They later realised that they felt like strangers because they could not share the same historical memories and stories. Some said that even though Kiwis were friendly, they found it difficult to establish friendships with them because they were not as hospitable as South Africans. For instance, South African immigrants invited work colleagues over for dinner at their homes, but Kiwis did not readily invite newcomers to their homes. Butcher et al. (2006, p. vi) confirmed that South Africans initially found Kiwis reserved and aloof. Friendships with colleagues were also difficult to establish as they did not want to socialise outside the work environment. However, older Kiwi women in rural areas, particularly church members or people who had travelled extensively, appeared to be more willing to invite newcomers over for tea or dinner because they were more tolerant of other cultures. South African immigrants also found it useful to befriend immigrants from other countries because they often shared the same experiences and feelings, and hence could provide validation and support.

People were advised to choose their friends carefully because this encouraged adaptation and gave them a reason to stay in New Zealand. Newcomers did not necessarily establish close friendships with people merely because they were South Africans. The reason
was that most immigrants came from large cities and had a select group of friends in a large population. South African immigrants in New Zealand constituted a small group, and members were from various socioeconomic strata and originated from a broad range of geographical areas, and they represented different waves of immigration after 1976. In other words, South Africans at home and those in New Zealand were “not the same people” because of their different backgrounds, immigration journeys and levels of acculturation, with the result that co-nationals sometimes seemed more foreign than immigrants from other countries. Newcomers who settled in small, rural towns found that they had to interact with people they would not normally mix with socially in South Africa, and had difficulty locating others who shared the same interests and views. Those who endorsed religious or political views that differed from mainstream South African society sometimes perceived other South African immigrants as intrusive, overly conservative or racist. They did not feel at home at South African social events if they were unable to find points of connection with other expatriates. Talking incessantly about superficial commonalities such as “biltong, braaivleis, sonskyn and rugby” became irritating and meaningless. Owing to different rates of acculturation, some expatriates continued to focus on the “horror stories” or “the good old days” in South Africa, while others had moved on and wanted to talk about other subjects. For these reasons, immigrants sometimes deliberately avoided contact with expatriate groups to allow themselves to let go of South Africa, instead of clinging to the past.

Invitations to social events, such as a braai during the festive season, made newcomers acutely aware that they also had no shared history with the settled South African community in New Zealand. Hence, being with other South Africans, who had acculturated to New Zealand society and appeared well settled, could make newcomers reluctant to talk about their adaptation difficulties and heartache. Vague assurances that, “things will get better after two years” were of little comfort, and increased the person’s sense of invalidation
and disconnection. Contact with other South African immigrants therefore sometimes led to more sadness and loneliness because it accentuated loss and isolation. Some newcomers ended up in a “no-man’s land” where they felt estranged from fellow South Africans, as well as mainstream New Zealand society. The best way to describe it was like attempting to tune in to a radio station, but being unable to find the exact wavelength. The effect was that only a few bits of conversation could be distinguished from the background noise, with the result that the newcomer had the persistent feeling of being “slightly off” regarding social cues. Instead of social interaction being relaxing and replenishing emotional resources, it was simply another cross-cultural burden to overcome, and spending leisure time in front of the television set became more inviting.

Another factor that caused splitting in the South African immigrant group had its origins in historical events that people thought had been laid to rest. Prior to immigration, most had not been aware that certain historical issues between English- and Afrikaans-speaking South Africans still existed, but after arrival, these old differences had resurfaced. According to Durkheim (cited in Rogler, 1994, p. 705), being part of a cohesive cultural group anchors a person’s identity, and migration challenges group cohesion by disrupting these social bonds. During social events, Afrikaans people were shocked to find out that some English-speaking South African immigrants still did not regard them as equals and looked down upon their Afrikaans accent. Sayad (cited in Oboler, p. 124) maintains that emigration may expose pre-existing cracks in the societal structure of the home country that used to provide a sense of unity and coherence. Oboler (2006) adds that, in some instances, the host country may play a major role in this disintegration process (pp. 124-125) and this could have a detrimental effect on the social status of the immigrant. This was illustrated by a couple who overheard Kiwis concluding that Afrikaans speakers were extremely “boorish”, thus indicating that they were an uncivilised low-class group of South Africans. Another
Afrikaner was shocked when she saw a photo of Lord Kitchener on proud display in a public area to celebrate his victories as a war hero. Participants commented that Afrikaners did not wish to fight the Boer War all over again in New Zealand.

Rogler (1994, p. 704) reported that despite people encountering stumbling blocks to social integration, extra-familial support networks often provided emotional, as well as material support and information that reduced the impact of external stressors in the host society. Even though some immigrants had good friends in New Zealand, it was not the big network they had had in South Africa. Families said that they missed the South African custom of friends popping in unannounced to say “hello”. Months would go past without anyone knocking on their door, but they gradually got used to the New Zealand lifestyle of pre-arranged visits. Some found that moving to a larger city improved their social life as there were more things to do and the settled South African immigrant group was larger. Even though people missed their close friends in South Africa, some found that their social life was not much different in New Zealand. Other immigrants said they had more good friends in New Zealand than in South Africa, and that they valued these friendships. They constantly met and befriended new people, with the result that they had a full social calendar. They enjoyed discovering new things or places, and sharing their experiences with friends. South African immigrants were inclined to establish their own “family” in New Zealand, consisting of a circle close friends. Some people were prepared to travel for four hours over weekends to visit good friends in a neighbouring town. Those without family in New Zealand enjoyed spending the festive season with their circle of friends because they had become like their extended family.

Primary school children, particularly boys, appeared to have found it easier to make good friends shortly after arrival, which helped them to feel accepted and that they were fitting in with their peer group. Children who lived in rural areas settled fairly quickly and
were happy at school. Their acquired confidence helped them to settle equally well when they later transitioned to a new school in the city. Most children had an active social life, which included sleepovers at friends’ homes. Their school and sport activities also helped to widen their parents’ social network. Adolescents, particularly girls, often missed the close friends they had left behind. Even though they had established new friendships at school and university, some missed the childhood friends they had grown up with. Teenage girls, who had had a small circle of friends in South Africa, were inclined to have only one or two close friends in New Zealand. Adolescent girls found that befriending another new immigrant, even though she was from another culture, made adaptation easier and helped them to fit in with their teenage peer group. Owing to the relatively lower crime level in New Zealand, young people could go out alone at night by car or using public transport. Adolescents agreed that New Zealand had a good lifestyle, and that it offered more independence for the youth.

Cultural risk and protective factors

According to Abbott (1997, p. 257), although involuntary migration, traumatic experiences or prolonged stress during the pre-migration phase may adversely affect mental health, what happens to people after arrival in the host country have a profound impact on their mental health during resettlement. Cultural differences between the home and host environments, the level of cultural tolerance of the host society, historical relationships between the two countries, and attitudes towards immigration may therefore affect the adaptation and well-being of immigrants. New Zealand is a popular immigration destination for South Africans because of their shared British roots, as well as a perceived likeness between the two cultures. However, superficial similarities between cultures mean that the losses and disruption of immigration are more subtle and disguised, which makes them harder to acknowledge and manage (Akhtar, 1999, pp. 21-22). Hofstra et al. (2005, p. 614) and Van
Oudenhoven and Hofstra (2006, pp. 793-794) suggest that the attachment style of host society members often determines their preferred acculturation strategy for immigrants. Those with a secure attachment style usually have more positive attitudes towards immigrants and they endorse integration. However, those with dismissive, fearful or preoccupied styles are distrusting towards other cultures and prefer separation or assimilation (Hofstra et al., 2005, p. 614; Van Oudenhoven & Hofstra, 2006, pp. 793-794).

A cultural identity is based on shared values, customs and beliefs, and provides a sense of connectedness and self-worth. The immigrant’s cultural intelligence, coupled with ethnic support networks and cross-cultural experience, facilitates integration in the new society. The racial and ethnic mix, political ideology and attitudes towards diversity in the host country may also affect the adjustment process (Berry, 1997, p. 15). Hence acceptance of multiculturalism by the host society, and the level of ethnocentrism, xenophobia, prejudice, discrimination and racism will play a key role in the acculturation strategy employed by the immigrant. In the current study, South African immigrants without qualifications or scare skills felt the cultural difference more acutely owing to underemployment, and having to start at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder again. Discrimination in the workplace and by health professionals, as well as negative stereotyping by the public and the media were reported as the most significant mental health risk factors, which resulted in high levels of anxiety and depression (Pernice & Brook, 1996, pp. 515-516). At times, participants resorted to passive, emotion-focused coping strategies when acculturation stressors were overwhelming or uncontrollable, which sometimes led to adverse health outcomes in the absence of social support by the settled South African immigrant community.

Reyneke (2004, p. 219) describes New Zealand as a “classless” society where occupational roles and residential communities are not linked to a specific gender,
socioeconomic status or ethnic group. The social interactional style is informal and first names are usually preferred over formal titles (Reyneke, 2004, p. 219). In contrast to South Africa, where introductions are usually followed by questions about career, residential area and motor vehicles, in New Zealand the most common question for native citizens as well as immigrants is: “Where are you from”? In New Zealand people are less suspicious and paranoid in their social and business lives as people generally interact with greater trust and integrity (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 2-26), for instance, courier parcels are left on the front porch if the recipient is not at home and cheque books are delivered to residential post boxes. New Zealanders’ dress sense is simple, comfortable and practical to manage the inclement weather, and they frown on a too “flash” wardrobe (Reyneke, 2004, p. 221). For instance, a colleague was reprimanded for wearing her new, red shoes to an appointment with a client from a low socioeconomic group because it would “make him feel bad”. New Zealanders have a more relaxed attitude towards their work ethic and those who strive for excellence are confronted with the “tall poppy” system of disapproval (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 2-22). Socially unacceptable behaviour is often addressed by “naming and shaming” the person publicly, or lodging a formal complaint. South Africans come from an individualistic society with strong collectivistic cultural ties. Hence male participants in particular are more inclined to utilise active, problem-focused coping styles in practical and occupational matters, or when faced with discrimination. New Zealanders generally avoid confrontation and conflict (Reyneke, 2004, p. 220) and consequently tend to misinterpret the more direct and assertive style of South Africans as arrogant, rude or aggressive. In addition, owing to South Africa’s patriarchal society, South African men are often perceived as chauvinistic.

Adjusting to a new culture and making the effort to connect socially was an important factor that assisted the participants with settlement and prevented loneliness. To embrace other cultures and languages it was necessary to focus on the commonalities rather than the
differences, and to find new ways to communicate. Participants confirmed that immigrants should come with an open mind and accept that things will be different. Those who had approached it as an adventure or had not had specific expectations of New Zealand said they had avoided disappointment. Those who had remained in New Zealand decided that they would hang on and keep going, because they firmly believed that the bad times would pass. They endorsed the sentiments of Elisabeth Eybers (1973) that, step by step, you become an immigrant, which implies patience and endurance. Aletta explained that “immigration is like going on a diet; if you persist long enough it will work”. A common protective factor among South African immigrants was their religious beliefs and their unwavering faith in the will of God. They were willing to walk through the doors that God had opened for them as they trusted that He would guide and assist them throughout their immigration journeys, just as he led Moses through the Red Sea.

According to Grinberg and Grinberg (1989, pp. 99, 108-109), language is used from childhood to make sense of the world, and hence memories are embedded within a particular language. For Afrikaans speakers, moving to New Zealand involves significant changes because language affects a person’s sense of self, as well as relationships with others. They may find it difficult to understand Kiwi expressions, gestures, accents and intonations and thus lose their “inner compass” (Boesch, cited in Tannenbaum, 2007, p. 149) to negotiate their social environment. Afrikaans immigrants often alternate between Afrikaans and English in their private and work lives, and pronounce their names in two different ways, which Akhtar (1999, p. 99) refers to as “linguistic cleavage”. Some participants found it tiring to continuously converse in English, and it was difficult to express their emotions in English as certain terms, such as “ontredded” were not readily translatable. Children who emigrate at a young age or who have been born in the adopted country, and have been raised without much of the parents’ original culture or language, could experience separation and
detachment from their parents, as well as from their country of origin (Akhtar, 1999, p. 143). These children may not understand the cultural habits, customs and traditions of their parents, such as issues involving respect and nuances of language (Akhtar, 1999, p. 143). For instance, children of Afrikaans families in New Zealand may get used to calling adults by their first name, instead of addressing them as oom or tannie (uncle or aunty) as is customary in South Africa. Some participants believed that it was not a good idea for parents to speak English as a family, but then to converse with each other in Afrikaans. Their children would not understand what they were saying during these “private” conversations and it would create an atmosphere of secrecy. Barkhuizen (2006) reported that Afrikaans-speaking children experienced language attrition after immigration, which included loss of vocabulary and using a simplified grammatical structure. Mixing languages in one sentence (code mixing) or between sentences and speakers (code switching) were common (Barkhuizen, 2006, pp. 70-71), and parents had to make the difficult choice between their loyalty to Afrikaans or using English to ensure that their children could understand them (Barkhuizen, 2006, pp. 72-74). Some parents tried to maintain Afrikaans in their home and social environments to preserve their linguistic and cultural roots, but others rationalised that a loss of the Afrikaner language and culture was inevitable as their children grew up (Barkhuizen, 2006, p. 74).

Hettie, however, cautioned that “your mother tongue is the language of your heart, and if you don’t speak it, you lose a part of your soul”. Hence Afrikaans-speaking immigrants were urged to speak Afrikaans at home, as well as with their friends, because it provided a tool for emotional release and helped to maintain verbal fluency. Speaking Afrikaans at home with children provided them with an additional language that enabled them to understand similar languages, such as Dutch, Flemish and German. Parents were assured that they did not have to be scared that their children would not adjust at school as they usually learnt
English very quickly. According to Grinberg and Grinberg (1989, p. 110), children learn a new language by imitating others and adopting the local accent, intonation, and rhythm easier than adults. Since women are often regarded as the glue that holds an ethnic community together (King (2002, p. 97), mothers play a crucial role in ensuring the continuation of Afrikaans in their families, as well as the transmission of traditional values and practices to the next generation. The 2013 New Zealand census results indicated that 27,387 of 54,279 South African immigrants (50%) were Afrikaans speakers (Statistics New Zealand, 2013), which was encouraging. Some South Africans continued their traditional patterns of home-cooked family meals, which could protect them from the fast food lifestyle and obesity problems experienced by New Zealand society. The retention of cultural norms and traditions could also serve as a protective factor against mental disorders and promote educational success owing to traditional parenting strategies and the support of a close-knit family. Beiser (2005, p. 33) confirmed that maintaining protective cultural health behaviours and abstaining from the detrimental habits of the host society could account for the “healthy migrant” effect in terms of improved physical and mental health.

Marrying within one’s own ethnic group may be beneficial because it provides ongoing ethnolinguistic “refuelling” after immigration (Akhtar, 1999, p. 32). It is nevertheless inevitable that South African immigrants and their children will eventually marry people from other ethnic, cultural and language groups in New Zealand. Marriage to a person born in the destination country could be enriching if both partners learn to accept and appreciate each other’s cultures (Akhtar, 1999, p. 32). For participants who marry someone from another culture, it is prudent not to focus on the differences and attempt to compromise or change the other person to fit in with their own values. For these couples, common values and interests provide a point of connection. Obtaining information from the internet or reading books about the political and religious history of South Africa provide the partners of
South African immigrants with a better understanding of their background. Visiting South Africa with their partners, meeting their family and friends and seeing the places where they grew up and lived, would give them first-hand experience of their partner’s “previous life”. It would also improve their understanding of South African culture, for instance, the nuances of local humour, and afford opportunities to find additional commonalities between their two cultures. One participant cited the example of her brother who had been happily married a Hungarian refugee, and Akhtar (1999, p. 32) confirmed that marital partners from two different cultures could utilise their new country to form a mutual bond.

Environmental risk and protective factors

The country of origin and the host country may differ considerably with regard to physical environmental factors, such as climate, seasons, landscape, wildlife, pollution levels, as well as exposure to natural disasters, such as earthquakes and tsunamis. Social contextual factors, such as population demographics, ethnic groups, population size, lifestyle, housing and residential characteristics could require considerable adaptation. Public amenities such as roads, public transport, schools, shopping malls, and recreation facilities are also vital issues for immigrant settlement (Berry, 1997, p. 15).

South Africans are accustomed to sunny skies and mild winters, and arriving in New Zealand on a chilly summer’s day can often be a massive shock. Participants warned that New Zealand has a much colder and wetter climate than South Africa, particularly the lower part of the North Island and large parts of the South Island. This could potentially lead to an exacerbation of existing health problems, such as hay fever, asthma and arthritis, and some participants found the wet and windy weather extremely depressing. In addition, New Zealand is situated beneath a hole in the ozone layer, resulting in high levels of ultraviolet radiation that significantly increase the risk of skin cancer. Being with a supportive spouse or
family members can often help to ease the discomfort caused by climatic conditions, and they can offer practical assistance. A few brave souls in the current study decided not to allow the weather to affect their lifestyle, and continued doing garden work and going on outings despite the rain. Some families missed their weekend lifestyle of having a braai with friends, while the children were playing in the swimming pool. Because outdoor wood fires are not allowed in New Zealand, an intrepid South African man set up a braai on the log fireplace in his lounge. Some nature lovers were eager to familiarise themselves with the plant and animal life in New Zealand, and viewed it as part of their adventure. In contrast, others experienced intense grief and a sense of alienation when they were confronted with fauna and flora that were foreign to them, or when they encountered flowers or the sound of turtle doves that reminded them of their childhood in South Africa.

South Africans who were accustomed to living in large cities, such as Cape Town, sometimes found it difficult to adjust to life in a small, rural town. They missed the opportunities for work, recreation and socialising with other South Africans that a cosmopolitan environment could offer. After living in New Zealand for a while, some families decided to migrate internally to a city or to a town with a more temperate climate. None of the participants seemed particularly perturbed about the frequent earthquake activity in Wellington, or the number of semi-active volcanoes in New Zealand. However, after the interviews had been completed, Wellington was rocked by two earthquakes of larger than six on the Richter scale, which even seasoned Wellingtonians found unsettling. Ongoing earthquakes and aftershocks in the Christchurch and Wellington regions could potentially add to the stressors of immigration, particularly for people who had experienced trauma in South Africa. Some South Africans were injured in the Christchurch earthquakes and their homes were damaged, which may have caused feelings of loss and grief to resurface. Researchers caution against the arbitrary distinction between immigrants and refugees when assessing
pre-migration trauma and PTSD symptoms, because a broad range of involuntary immigrants may have been exposed to a comparable level of danger in their homelands (Rousseau & Drapeau, 2004, p. 852).

Immigrants also have to adapt to a new housing system and may have little official or family assistance available in the new country in terms of accommodation (Johnston et al., 2005, p. 417). Johnston et al. (2005, pp. 406-407, 411) found that most South African immigrants started off in a hotel, motel or temporary rental accommodation, or stayed with friends or relatives, before moving to a privately rented house or buying their own property after about four years. In this study, participants also used other temporary accommodation, such as a caravan, backpackers, lodging with a recommended Kiwi or South African family, and doing house sitting. Most South Africans were accustomed to spacious brick homes with ample cupboard space, and felt that New Zealand’s small and damp wooden houses, with almost nonexistent built-in cupboards were inferior. Abbott (1997, p. 257) cited poor quality housing as an important post-migration stressor among migrant populations. However, despite being constructed around a wooden frame put together with a staple gun, these houses are remarkably resilient against gale force winds and earthquakes. Over time, people can build on to their homes or change the furnishings to better suit their needs and become more content with their homes and neighbourhoods. Johnston et al. (2005, p. 402) found that owning a home assisted integration into the host society, and was facilitated by a higher educational level and socioeconomic status.

Economic risk and protective factors

Economic factors that may affect adaptation and settlement are the financial resources available for settlement, a person’s educational background, equitable employment and career advancement, socioeconomic status and access to social benefits. Employment at a level
consistent with pre-migration training and work experience may help to maintain financial
stability and socioeconomic status, and develop broader social networks (Rogler, 1994, p.
705). In the current study, immigrants, who were financially secure, obtained an employment
offer prior to departure and had an organised and partially funded relocation, found
settlement less stressful. Immigration and resettlement were an expensive undertaking and if
people brought insufficient funds or did not obtain gainful employment, their savings were
rapidly depleted because of the unfavourable exchange rate and the high cost of living in
New Zealand. In addition, the South African Reserve Bank limited the amount of money
people could take overseas and it was illegal to use credit cards to exceed the annual offshore
investment limit. Some immigrants shipped vehicles, such as bakkies or caravans, to New
Zealand as potential sources of capital or for temporary accommodation. It was prudent for
new immigrants to live frugally if they had limited funds available, and to factor in the
exchange rate until they had become accustomed to the value of the New Zealand dollar. The
main breadwinner usually took up employment immediately for financial security while some
spouses initially stayed at home to help the family settle.

From the early 1980s, each new wave of South African immigrants entered New
Zealand with different skills, and faced different challenges. The early settlers were mostly
people with the financial resources to establish their own businesses. They were followed by
professionals and people with specific vocational skills, such as electricians and those in the
information technology field. The current wave of South African immigrants often had fewer
qualifications and scarce skills, and hence found it harder to enter New Zealand and secure
employment. A few years ago the recruitment section in newspapers consisted of a number of
pages, but jobs had become scarcer owing to the worldwide recession and because a number
of companies had taken their businesses offshore because it was more economical. It was
particularly difficult for older people to find employment, as most people in their fifties
stayed in their jobs until retirement. Employers’ insisting that applicants had New Zealand work experience was problematic for newcomers as nobody wanted to give them the opportunity to gain the requisite experience. Some took on volunteer work or a temporary position with lower responsibility to ease them into the job market, and allow them to gain New Zealand work experience. It was stressful for South Africans who arrived on tourist visas to find jobs in New Zealand, even with help from the immigrant community. Owing to the recession, all job applications had to go through WINZ and if a Kiwi could be upskilled to do the work, an immigrant could not be employed and granted a work visa. Participants warned that if a job offer fell through they could be in a difficult position if their shipping container was already on its way. People who had used all their life savings to immigrate, and were unable to make things work in New Zealand, felt that they had made the biggest mistake of their lives. Some people decided to return to South Africa owing to employment difficulties and family commitments, or after having second thoughts about immigrating. However, trying to find work again, and having sold their homes and cars before leaving South Africa, added to the financial cost of a return migration.

Economic insecurity and a paucity of employment prospects frequently led to unemployment, underemployment and a decline in socioeconomic status. Immigrants to New Zealand are not eligible for a social welfare benefit or student allowance during the first two years in the country, and financial difficulties may give rise to mental health problems within the first few months after arrival. According to Pernice et al. (2005, p. 25), employment has a significant effect on the level of distress and mental health of immigrants because it not only provides an income, but also influences identity and social relationships. A low level of education and financial hardship may have a detrimental effect on psychological well-being and affect the degree of symptomatology and impairment experienced (Hermansson et al.; Hsu, Davies & Hansen; Weine et al., cited in Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 588). Unemployment
or underemployment can cause financial hardship, loss of social status, dissatisfaction, anger and resentment towards the host society (Beiser & Edwards, 1994, p. 78; Pernice et al., 2000, p. 25). An older participant with extensive work experience reported that employers did not accept him and were therefore not willing to employ him. He was reliant on his South African pension, and felt hurt and angry for being criticised by the community because his younger wife was still working. The stigma of unemployment caused significant levels of emotional distress (Pernice & Brook, 1996, p. 517) and was associated with higher levels of depression, which in turn made it more difficult for the immigrant to secure or retain employment (Beiser & Edwards, 1994, p. 78). In some instances, families immigrated after the father had received a lucrative job offer, but sometimes his contract was not renewed and other offers were not forthcoming. After being rejected for jobs numerous times the man often became disheartened and depressed, with the result that his wife urgently had to look for work to financially support the family as the children had settled well at school. Some immigrants managed to find work in another town or city, which meant a long and tiring daily commute. Grinberg and Grinberg (1989, p. 94) reported that families with financial insecurities continued to function in survival mode and experienced a “money hypochondria” because they feared poverty. South African immigrants were often criticised for being “tight with their money”, but one participant stated that New Zealanders would do the same if they had to divide all their savings by a factor of six or more due to an unfavourable exchange rate.

A higher level of education or a professional background could also be a risk factor for psychological distress if the immigrant is unable to find equivalent work in his or her chosen profession (Naveh et al., cited in Lerner et al., 2005, p. 1812). In the current study, participants with professional qualifications found that the “employment glove” did not always fit their previous level of employment or expertise, and they had to adapt their skills.
and knowledge to the New Zealand work environment. Participants sometimes had to accept employment that was qualitatively different from their educational background, or had to undertake additional training courses. Sometimes it was easier for someone with a trade to find employment than someone with a degree, and trades people are some of the best-paid workers in New Zealand. According to Rogler (1994, p. 705), a bureaucratic system that requires accreditation of professional qualifications via the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) produces institutional barriers that prevent immigrants from using the skills that allow them to immigrate. Lerner et al. (2005, p. 1808) reported a downward mobility trend in immigrants with a high level of education and professional backgrounds, particularly for females. Firkin et al. (2004, p. 14) highlighted the misconception created by immigration policies, official publications, immigration consultants, and the acceptance of overseas qualifications that skilled migrants would be welcomed by New Zealand society. However, upon arrival they were shocked when employers questioned the validity of their qualifications, competence and years of work experience and treated them in a disrespectful or humiliating manner (Firkin et al., 2004, pp. 10-11, 15, 21-22, 46).

According to Harrison and Nortje (2000, p. 2-10), New Zealand takes pride in equal education and work opportunities for all, and a “cradle to the grave” social welfare system to provide for those who were unable or unwilling to work, resulting in low levels of abject poverty, but also in a culture of dependency and a lack of self-responsibility. Some hard-working or highly qualified participants were sometimes excluded from employment, and believed that employers feared they would make other employees look bad and disrupt workplace relationships. In their study, Ward and Masgoret (2008) confirmed that newcomers were sometimes perceived as competitors in the workplace or they posed a threat by eroding valued norms and beliefs. Coates and Carr (2005) indicated that in New Zealand, job selection bias by employers favoured Australian and British immigrants over South

652
African immigrants. They believed this was because of more perceived similarities between New Zealand and these two countries (p. 590), as well as their more prominent position in the world economy (pp. 592-593).

Coates and Carr (2005, p. 594) also highlighted more covert forms of discrimination during employment, such as poor performance appraisals and withholding promotions. This tendency was confirmed by two highly qualified participants who had worked exceedingly hard. One person’s salary increases and performance-related bonuses were repeatedly withheld, and the other person was considerably underpaid for his high level of expertise, working hours and the quality of work he produced. Participants cautioned immigrants who worked on a contractual basis to disregard enticing performance bonuses being offered by prospective employers because they are rarely paid out. Instead, people should calculate whether they would be able to live on the basic salary when signing their contracts.

Employees who were treated in this manner had their confidence eroded, felt denigrated and powerless, and reported a loss of professional identity. Lerner et al. (2005, p. 1812) reported that after five years, the pre-migration goals for occupational and financial success had often not been achieved, resulting in a sense of disappointment. For older adults, the loss of economic and professional status, and failure to maintain financial security in the host country, could be crippling because the prospect of recovering losses and regaining their former status was slim (Lerner et al., 2005, p. 1811). Even though most professional South African immigrants eventually found suitable employment in New Zealand (Johnston et al., 2005, p. 405), they experienced a low level of mental health, presumably because of being semi-voluntary immigrants and not being able to return to South Africa (Pernice et al., 2000, p. 27). Khawaja and Mason (2008, p. 225) also reported psychological distress among South African immigrants in Australia owing to immigration-related grief, low self-esteem and exposure to crime and violence in South Africa.
Families who had sold up and came “lock, stock and barrel”, and did not have the financial means to return to South Africa, were obliged to stay for better or worse. They had to make things work, “come hell or high water”. Those who could not find suitable employment had to explore other options to provide an income, such as additional training or changing careers. People who attended business expos and who were willing to approach strangers for advice and business contacts found it easier to explore new opportunities. Those who were adamant that they were not returning to South Africa did not consider it as an option when they encountered stumbling blocks. Some immigrants became “reluctant entrepreneurs” by downgrading from professional positions to set up small businesses (Rogler, 1994, p. 705). In the current study, one couple were willing to take this risk, and after buying a business franchise realised that they had to adopt a positive attitude and work hard to be successful. Participants warned that people should be prepared for periods of unemployment upon arrival or later on, but that they should trust that they would eventually find work. Even with the worldwide recession, the New Zealand economy was still doing fairly well. Participants assured newcomers that they would eventually overcome the financial disadvantages of immigration if they had endurance, and persevered despite financial difficulties. Those who returned to South Africa and wanted to keep the option open to return to New Zealand chose to leave their money behind in a New Zealand bank account because of the strength of the New Zealand dollar. They rented out their New Zealand home because it provided additional funds for their retirement.

**Political and governmental risk and protective factors**

A person’s immigration status and ethnicity, the racial and ethnic composition and the political and economic climate of the host environment, as well as the historical and current relations between the home and host countries, influence attitudes towards immigrants.
Involuntary immigrants, such as South Africans, often suffer personal injury and the loss of loved ones and possessions, as well as discrimination, attacks on their cultural identity and loss of self-esteem (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 148). It could be argued that South Africans have a “low vitality” relative to New Zealand society (Bourhis et al., 1997, p.382) because they belong to a small immigrant group with limited influence on decision making and low international prestige. This power differential makes them vulnerable to the impact of negative stereotypical views by the broader society.

Many participants stated that they had been driven from their fatherland and were forced to live in exile, and thus felt angry, bitter and resentful. According to Timotijevic and Breakwell (2000, pp. 367, 369), being part of a minority group could enhance an immigrant’s sense of distinctiveness, but his or her identity may also be coloured by its historical meaning. New Zealand has a strong sense of social justice, and owing to the international condemnation of apartheid and the controversy surrounding the 1981 Springbok rugby tour, South Africa has had a chequered historical relationship with New Zealand. South African immigrants could therefore be at risk of being confronted in public, social, educational and work environments, and being told off or interrogated about South Africa’s political past. Most New Zealanders acquire their impressions from the dominant narrative in the media that South Africans are immoral racists who live a life of luxury with several black servants in tow. They believe that South Africans immigrate because they cannot cope with losing their privileged lifestyle, as a result of the political changes in South Africa. High walls, electric fences, security gates and personal firearms are seen as confirmation of their intolerance towards other races and desperate attempts to keep them at arm’s length after the 1994 elections. Samarasinghe and Arvidsson (2002, pp. 296-297) found that discrimination led to immigrants feeling unwelcome, unwanted, isolated, disrespected and alienated by members of the host society. According to Abbott (1997, p. 256), ideological systems that disadvantage
certain groups in a society may lead to exploitation, hostility, discrimination, racism and marginalisation that increases the incidence of psychological disorders.

South Africans may be defensive about their political history because New Zealanders have a poor grasp or misguided perception of the racial complexities and political events in South Africa (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-7). According to Du Toit (cited in Bornman, 2005, p. 389), South African immigrants represent a wide spectrum of political standpoints. Spoonley and Trlin (2004, pp. 51-53) acknowledge that New Zealanders lack insight into the complexities of South African society (pp. 52-53) and that the media often reinforce existing stereotypes and prejudice (pp. v-vi). Participants reported that they encountered racial slurs, derogatory comments or outright rejection regarding their ethnicity. White South Africans are more at risk of being perceived as racists. The Coloured community may bear the brunt of racial comments, and sometimes the authenticity of their qualifications is questioned or they are criticised about their employment status. Afrikaans speakers are regarded by some as arrogant, rude, cruel and uncivilised, and Afrikaans women in particular may be subjected to workplace bullying owing to historical political issues. Ward (2008a, pp. 5, 21) found that immigrant youth, including South Africans, experienced more discrimination on the basis of their ethnic or cultural background than their national peers and that it did not decrease significantly over generations. Participants reported that they felt angry, humiliated and misunderstood when they were confronted with this behaviour. Some reported it to their employers or to the Human Rights Commissioner, but most remained quiet or pretended to laugh it off. However, the long-term effects were that people avoided becoming involved in any discussions about South Africa, and hence a considerable part of their cultural identity was either denied or suppressed. Participants reported that some Afrikaans-speaking immigrants insisted on speaking English because they claimed that they could no longer speak Afrikaans, or they spoke with an artificial Kiwi or British accent to disguise their
cultural background. Oboler (2006, pp. 120-123) cautions that where a person’s cultural history is regarded as invalid, illegitimate or shameful it results in a disrupted personal narrative.

South African immigrants realised that their acceptance in New Zealand remained tenuous as it was always open to scrutiny, and depended on the willingness of the Kiwis to grant a pardon for perceived past offences committed by the individual in South Africa. Immigrants from most other countries often proudly announced their cultural origins, for instance, stating that “people were either Welsh or wished that they were Welsh”. By contrast, South Africans were always wary of how people would respond to them. What was not in dispute were the atrocities committed under apartheid, but it was difficult to comprehend why South Africa was singled out for its ethnic transgressions and why individuals were held personally accountable for the actions of a political system. New Zealanders appeared to endorse a policy of selective condemnation to suit their economic interests and international alliances as they had a lucrative free-trade agreement with China, despite the country’s history of considerable human rights violations towards its own citizens as well as the Tibetan nation. Because South Africans were ostensibly expected to be ashamed of their cultural heritage, they were assigned to a marginal position in both the home and host countries, and hence became international outcasts.

During a recent visit to New Zealand’s Te Papa museum, the exhibition on New Zealand’s immigrant community was noted to display the rich, cultural heritage of other home countries. However, the South African display only contained themes of the apartheid era and a graphic video of public demonstrations during the 1981 Springbok tour. It was a source of indignation and great sadness that this was all New Zealand’s national museum chose to portray to the rest of society about the more than 50,000 South Africans who had made New Zealand their home. Oboler (2006, p. 125) concluded that immigrants unwittingly
get caught up in the drama of an unfolding societal history. Berry (2005, pp. 703-704) postulates that animosity, prejudice or rejection by the host community may hinder long-term adaptation because reciprocal negative perceptions create a self-perpetuating cycle (Berry, 2001, p. 628). Spoonley et al. (2007, p. 2) expressed their concern that New Zealand does not have a policy of multiculturalism, which acknowledges all ethnic groups and promotes social cohesion. Spoonley and Trlin (2004, pp. 7, 23) and Spoonley et al. (2007, p.29) speculate that despite New Zealanders’ firm belief that they are a culturally tolerant society, their so-called “realism” and “politically correct stance” could be attempts to conceal a more racist undercurrent. Coloured participants stated that even though New Zealanders did not say anything to them directly, derogatory comments about the “brown people” (Māori and Pacific Islanders) in New Zealand made them wonder what Kiwis really thought about them or said behind their backs. It could be argued that perhaps those who shout the loudest from their rooftops had the most skeletons under the floor boards.

A New Zealand-born participant in the current study said that watching documentaries about South Africa, for instance, the Boer War, increased his understanding of the historical basis of South African politics and white-black relationships. South African immigrants felt that establishing a South African High Commissioner in Wellington strengthened the post-apartheid diplomatic ties between the two countries. During the Rugby World Cup, the High Commissioner set up a hospitality centre where people from all over the world could drop in for refreshments. Participants said that people at the hospitality centre were welcoming and able to portray a different side of South Africans. For the South African immigrant community, the centre was Ikhaya, in other words, a home away from home. The report by Ward and Masgoret (2008, p. 235), which indicated that about 66% of respondents had a positive view of South Africans, was therefore encouraging.
Ecomodel for intervention with immigrants

One of the specific aims of this study was to develop an ecomodel for intervention, by conducting a qualitative study to identify strategies and resources that facilitated settlement and improved adaptation, well-being and resilience to determine which support systems and interventions were required to meet the needs of South African immigrants in New Zealand. An ecomodel for intervention with South African immigrants in New Zealand can be viewed in terms of preventive, supportive and therapeutic processes. Intervention processes should aim to address the needs of immigrants during the progressive phases of adaptation in various living contexts, such as residential, vocational and recreational. Components of intervention include individual coping strategies and social support structures, as well as systems to improve information and education, facilitate acculturation and provide healthcare. The pre- and post-migration needs of immigrants, and recommendations for intervention were based on the literature review in chapters 2 and 3, issues identified from the thematic network analysis of participant narratives, as well as specific hints and recommendations suggested by participants to assist other immigrants. An ecomodel for intervention with immigrants is depicted in figure 7 in this chapter. The layout of the phases of immigration and type of Clip Art used in figure 7 were based on the framework of Van Coller (2002, pp. 41, 73). As explained earlier in this chapter with regard to figure 6, the main focus of Van Coller’s research was to develop guidelines for the psychological preparation of immigration, based on a framework of factors that affected the psychological well-being of five recent immigrants from South Africa to Australia. Her brief overview of the demands and stressors of migration and adaptation, psychological effects, and coping strategies and resources were expanded in this research. The current study includes the pre-migration, post-migration, and return migration needs of immigrants, as well as recommendations for intervention across
Figure 7. Ecomodel for intervention with immigrants.
various ecological contexts during six phases of the immigration journey. This study also contains a comprehensive overview of the psychological impact of immigration, psychopathology and options for therapeutic intervention.

Pre-migration intervention

Prospective immigrants often focus on the practical aspects of immigration, such as finding information on potential host countries and their immigration legislation, looking for work opportunities, and reviewing the financial implications of relocation. Because New Zealand has many factors in common with South Africa, most immigrants expect to settle well after a period of reorganisation and adaptation to life in New Zealand. However, few are prepared for the complexity of problems they may encounter, that immigration stressors may accumulate and that they are going to experience confusing and intense emotions that may be difficult to process. According to Bennett et al. (1997, p. 160), the social, psychological and economic costs of immigration to New Zealand may be higher than South Africans expect. Careful consideration of how various push and pull factors inform their reasons for immigration and shape their expectations of New Zealand, as well as doing a cost-benefit analysis of relocation, could increase commitment to the immigration process. Having a pre-migration understanding of the challenges associated with each phase of the immigration process, as well as acculturation stressors, could help to normalise some of their experiences after arrival. The loss of social, professional and socioeconomic status, the sense of incompetence and isolation, as well as identity dissolution are probably the most difficult factors to overcome and could lead to long-term psychological difficulties. Van Coller (2002, p. 6) proposes that measures to inform and educate potential immigrants could help them to be better prepared for the psychological demands of migration. She nevertheless emphasises that the range and intensity of stress experienced by individuals and their particular set of
circumstances may be highly variable, and it is therefore important to differentiate between adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies. However, like any other journey a person undertakes, even the most comprehensive “travel insurance” and carefully packed “suitcase of necessities” can never fully meet one’s needs in all circumstances. Immigration is not an armchair exercise; only through lived experience can a person become a resilient and intrepid immigrant.

Information and education

Adequate and reliable pre-migration information enable prospective immigrants to consider all their options and make an informed decision, and hence reduce the risk of preconceptions and unrealistic expectations. Knowledge of the phases of immigration and acculturation processes may help to contextualise and normalise common symptoms experienced during the adjustment process. Participants in the current study advised that people should prepare themselves better before they immigrate, and obtain information from a variety of sources to familiarise themselves with the destination country. They should remember that they are leaving a wonderful country behind and that everything will not be moonshine and roses in New Zealand. Some participants felt that they “did not think further than their noses” or were extremely naive when they immigrated, which contributed to a lot of stress and heartache afterwards. Mirsky and Peretz (2006, p. 52) and Shin (1999, p. 608) confirmed that during this naive, anticipatory phase the person may devalue his or her home country in favour of the destination country that appears to offer a better future. Prospective immigrants should thus “do their homework” about New Zealand before immigrating in order to identify potential stumbling blocks, avoid pitfalls and understand all the available options. It is advisable to make a list of the pros and cons of immigration, and then weigh up the potential losses and benefits. Return migrants, who previously lived in New Zealand, or
people with Kiwi partners generally have a better idea of what to expect and may feel better prepared.

Those participants with family members, friends, colleagues or contacts in New Zealand had a valuable, first-hand source of information, advice and support via telephone, e-mail, Skype or Facebook. Prospective immigrants could utilise social networks sites, such as Facebook, to locate South African immigrants in New Zealand and ask for advice. Participants felt that no South African or Afrikaner would refuse to provide information to another South African immigrant. Word-of-mouth feedback could provide information about the suitability of settlement towns and work prospects. Maps were useful to establish New Zealand’s size and position on the globe, the distance from South Africa, and to locate cities and towns for work purposes. Participants sought information on a wide range of practical topics, such as immigration legislation, professional registration boards, employment, salary scales, banking, income tax, housing, schools, the weather, and details about the proposed settlement city. Immigration advisors sometimes provided extensive information, but it was advisable to do one’s own research via printed material and the internet, and to compare various sources of information in preparation for immigration. Immigration consultants who advertised in South Africa were mostly Kiwis, and although most were reliable there were also a few “charlatans”. Using an immigration advisor or consultant could be expensive, but some regarded it as money well spent. However, others collected curriculum vitae with promises of finding work for prospective immigrants, but after the fees had been paid some agents were never heard from again.

The participants found that attending seminars by recruitment and immigration agents in South Africa was informative and helpful, but the information provided was not always comprehensive enough or was inconsistent or contained inaccuracies. Some participants felt that the ease of finding employment in New Zealand was overemphasised, and some
alternative immigration opportunities were never mentioned. Some could have been spared a lot of stress if they had been informed by immigration consultants about all the options for immigration, including the business visa route to permanent residency. It would have enabled them to make the necessary arrangements prior to arriving in New Zealand. Recruitment agents and immigration consults were also inclined to highlight superficial similarities between their location in South Africa and the destination city in New Zealand. It was thus felt that agents portrayed New Zealand in an overly positive light without intentionally trying to mislead prospective immigrants. Recruitment agents, who were ex-South Africans, had better rapport with prospective immigrants, and female agents provided a woman’s perspective of immigration to the anxious wives of primary visa applicants.

Visiting New Zealand prior to immigration was also useful to become more familiar with the country and know what to expect. Attending family celebrations, such as a wedding, provided initial exposure to life in New Zealand. Return visits and more extensive travelling helped people to decide if New Zealand was a suitable immigration destination. Some visited New Zealand for an LSD (Look, See, and Decide) trip that allowed a personal evaluation of the country and its people, and to explore job opportunities. Members of the South African community were sometimes willing to pick people up from the airport and show them around the city during trips to New Zealand. Flying to New Zealand for a job interview also provided first-hand information about the country and destination city. Making video recordings during these visits and showing them to other family members in South Africa was useful to allay fears about immigration. Some Afrikaans speakers started using English at home to prepare themselves and their children to adapt better to school, work, social and religious environments in New Zealand. Preparing for immigration by acquiring additional language skills, obtaining information about occupational conditions in the new country and appropriate social interaction correlated positively with successful adaptation after
immigration (Antonovsky & Katz; Beijer; Krau; Scott & Scott, cited in Nevo & Chawarski, 1997, p. 90).

Practical assistance

Recruitment consultants and prospective employers were sometimes willing to provide assistance with immigration documentation, such as work visas and permanent residency applications. Having someone else managing all the paperwork made it easier for prospective immigrants. Utilising immigration consultants added to the cost of immigration and some participants felt that people could manage their own immigration process by obtaining advice from others, via the internet or by visiting New Zealand. However, they cautioned that it was hard work and could take up to three months for a skilled migrant to have everything in place to immigrate. Letters of reference from insurance companies, banks and landlords in South Africa could be helpful to obtain a “no-claim bonus” on insurance policies, obtain credit cards, or secure a rental home after arrival in New Zealand. As it had become more difficult for immigrants to enter New Zealand and work was scarcer because of the worldwide economic downturn, it was important that people had qualifications and skills that New Zealand needed. It was unwise for people to emigrate without legal immigration documentation, such as a work visa, business visa or permanent residency. It was therefore preferable to secure employment before packing up and leaving South Africa. Those who were unable to find employment, and wished to establish a business in New Zealand, were advised to obtain a business visa prior to entering the country as it would make things less stressful after immigration. Family sponsorship made immigration to New Zealand much faster and easier, particularly for older immigrants, as the points system, age and health problems were not limiting factors. It was necessary to ensure that all the necessary South African documentation required for future applications to the immigration department was
obtained prior to immigrating. For instance, having an abbreviated birth certificate and attempting to obtain a full birth certificate from South Africa afterwards could be problematic as family and friends might not be willing to stand for hours in a long queue at the Department of Home Affairs to collect the document on their behalf.

Prospective immigrants usually sold the family home or rented it to tenants if buyers did not meet their price, or if they wanted to keep the option open to return to South Africa. Renting a home to friends or using a rental agent who was a family friend was not recommended as it created complications when rental fees were in arrears or the property was neglected. It was therefore advisable to obtain the services of a trustworthy rental agent instead. Prior to departure, people relied on family and friends to provide temporary accommodation if the family home had been sold and their occupational rental agreement had expired. Relocation also involved the storage of household goods or obtaining quotes for containers to ship their belongings to New Zealand. Sometimes women and children stayed behind to face the herculean task of packing up their household goods, and older women and those with health problems, in particular, appreciated additional assistance. It was unwise to sell household items for next to nothing in South Africa and replace them at great cost in New Zealand, especially in the beginning when finances were limited. For those who placed some of their household goods in storage, it was advisable to bring frequently used items, such as food processors or bread-making machines, along to make life more comfortable. It was also necessary for people to take sentimental items and good quality clothing. According to Grinberg and Grinberg (1989, p. 129), familiar objects from a person’s country of origin can provide a sense of self-preservation.

Immigrants were advised to bring as much of their household goods to New Zealand as possible, particularly good quality wood furniture, hardware tools and “whiteware” (fridges and washing machines) because these are expensive and of lower quality in New
Zealand. However, for some brands, such as old Speed Queen machines, spare parts were not available in New Zealand to do repairs. Even bringing along smaller household items, such as brooms and buckets was a cost-saving measure for the cash-strapped newcomer. Participants felt that it was worthwhile paying extra money for the larger 40 foot container. For those with insufficient funds, a shared shipping container was a more affordable option. Specialised items could be bought in New Zealand via the internet, but they were expensive. Participants nevertheless advised against spending money on buying new goods in South Africa. It was better to wait until they were in New Zealand to see what additional items they needed. For instance, electronic equipment and cars could be acquired at good prices in New Zealand, and suitable clothing that protected against the elements was more readily available there.

**Medical care**

It was advisable for people on a visitor’s visa to take out travel insurance prior to departure as they were not eligible for government funded health care in New Zealand. If they developed a serious illness, such as a heart attack, after arrival they could be too unwell to fly back to South Africa. If they required urgent medical or surgical intervention, for instance, cardiac bypass surgery, they might not have sufficient funds to be treated at a private clinic in New Zealand. However, those with work visas or permanent residency visas would be eligible for government-funded healthcare. As dentistry is extremely expensive in New Zealand, going for a dental check-up and having essential work done prior to departure was recommended. Elective surgery close to the departure date was inadvisable as packing up a home can be physically demanding work. Ophthalmologic, gynaecological and general medical check-ups, as well as medical records and a letter from attending clinicians regarding any chronic conditions, is valuable for follow up in New Zealand.
Immigrants were advised to bring an adequate supply of chronic medication to tie them over for a while in New Zealand, and to keep them in their original pharmacy containers with a copy of their prescription in the event of their luggage being checked at customs. On this note, travellers to New Zealand should heed of the warning not to bring any plant or animal material, including foods, into New Zealand without declaring it to customs officials. Medications that contain pseudoephedrine, such as cold and flu or sinus remedies, are used by clandestine drug laboratories to manufacture methamphetamine and are therefore illegal in New Zealand. Zealous sniffer dogs at airports soon locate any undeclared, offending substance in a passenger's luggage and this may result in a stern warning, a hefty fine or legal action.

Psychological preparation

A resiliency approach to the challenges of immigration is important for developing strength-based interventions to prevent and manage mental disorders (Connor & Zhang, cited in Davydov et al., 2010, p. 481) and for promoting mental health in high-risk groups (Davydov et al., 2010, p. 491). In their research, Davydov et al. (2010, p. 484) focused on harm-reduction factors, such optimism and humour that can mitigate risk factors, as well as protective factors, such as stress inoculation, a repertoire of coping skills, hardiness and a sense of coherence (Antonovsky, cited in Krohne, 2001, p. 15166; Hawley & DeHaan, 1996, p. 3). Mental health promotion factors may actively enhance psychological well-being (Hoge et al.; Patel & Goodman, cited in Davydov et al., 2010, pp. 482, 484). Van Coller (2002, pp. 77-78) suggests that individuals do a self-reflection of personal qualities and traits, and that families discuss their collective strengths and weaknesses in terms of coping with immigration stressors.
During pre-migration preparation, people’s moods fluctuated from competent euphoria to feeling overwhelmed. Adequate psychological preparation, such as an awareness of immigration stressors, knowledge about the phases of immigration and acculturation strategies may help to contextualise and normalise the emotional upheaval they could experience during their immigration journey. Hettie cautioned that “you must know that the first six months will be a honeymoon period and then the reality of it all will hit you, and you must be prepared for it”. Learning to use a flexible repertoire of effective coping strategies, as well as external resources and support systems, could facilitate adaptation and reduce the incidence of psychological difficulties and impulsive decisions to return to South Africa. Van Coller (2002, p. 40) recommends stress inoculation training by improving coping skills, such as information gathering, decision making, problem solving, social, communication and emotion regulation skills, cognitive restructuring, stress management and relaxation training. Van Coller (2002, p. 76) suggests that the basic principles of cognitive behaviour therapy could be useful to explain how a person’s appraisal of a situation would affect the level of stress experienced as well as the ability to cope with it. It is also important to emphasise that people will eventually be able to look back on their struggles with a sense of humour, and that mastering the challenges of immigration could lead to growth and development, as well as an increase in resilience.

Marchetti-Mercer (2012, pp. 382, 385, 387-388) emphasised the importance of psychological preparation of all family members prior to emigration, including participation in the decision-making process, psycho-educational programs and farewell rituals. Leaving South Africa is a highly emotional experience for most emigrants because they do not know whether they will see their country and family again. Children are often close to their grandparents and extended family, and hence immigration is a sad event for all parties concerned. Hettie advised that “people should be more aware of what awaits them. I was so
innocent and naive, and I thought everything was going to be wonderful”. She added that people need to be prepared that they will miss their family, friends and country, and that loss, grief and mourning is a normal part of the adaptation process that cannot be circumvented. One participant in the current study found it useful to go for pre-migration counselling to work through personal issues, and to have the right mindset for immigration to prevent “coming with baggage”. A few years prior to immigrating to New Zealand, another participant went for trauma counselling after a highjack attempt at her family home to help her process the event. Leaving South Africa in a panic after a traumatic event is not recommended as people are still in a state of shock and often do not obtain sufficient information before departing for New Zealand. Hence they may be ill prepared for the challenges of adapting to a new country. Marital or family counselling may be indicated for families experiencing conflict, as a stable marriage and a cohesive family are important buffers against immigration stress.

Participants who were serious-minded and prone to melancholy had an increased tendency towards depression and suicidal thoughts after immigration. According to Ritsner et al. (1996, pp. 19-20), immigrants with pre-existing personality or mood disorders may experience the same post-migration symptoms of psychological distress as other immigrants, but their emotional distress is more severe. Van Coller (2002, p. 76) emphasised that people should be cognisant of signs of extreme stress before it progresses to psychological disorders. Family members that stay behind in South Africa also experience a sense of abandonment, loss and grief. Hence they could also benefit from psycho-education regarding the challenges of the immigration process, as well as psychological support to encourage their acceptance of emigration and their ability to support family members living abroad.
Religious beliefs

Religious beliefs influence various stages of the immigration process, including decision making, preparation, arrival and settlement (Hagan & Ebaugh, 2003, pp. 1145, 1159). Church attendance and religious practices, including prayer and reading sacred literature, could provide guidance and a sense of protection regarding the decision to immigrate (Hagan & Ebaugh, 2003, pp. 1150-1152). For most participants in the current study, their religious beliefs and faith in God were important factors during the decision-making process and preparation for immigration. Christians believed that each of their paths had been worked out for them, in other words it was pre-determined by God. Hence they looked towards God to show them if immigration was the right thing for them to do. They believed that if it was God’s will he would open doors that would permit immigration to New Zealand. When things started falling into place, despite numerous obstacles, they took it as a further indication that the Lord was with them. One Afrikaans participant was worried whether he would be able to practise his faith in English, and found it useful to buy an English bible and attend an English church prior to departure.

Post-migration intervention

Gonsalves (1992, p. 383) emphasises that immigration is a complex psychological, social and cultural process that occurs over an extended period of time (Ben-Sira et al., cited in Van Coller, 2002, p. 19). Each of the post-migration phases is characterised by distinct tasks, stressors and symptoms that require diverse coping strategies, and involve different practical, social and emotional needs that offer points for intervention. Immigration can be regarded as a critical life event that depletes a person’s internal and external resource pool (Krohne, 2001, p. 15166). This makes it more difficult to manage settlement-related stressors, resulting in maladaptive behaviour that could have a detrimental effect on health and well-
being. Immigrants may experience phases of adaptation, which correlate with Selye’s (cited in Krohne, 2001, p. 15164) General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS); a shock phase, a stage of resistance or apparent adaption, and a stage of exhaustion that could lead to stress-related illness. Physical, cognitive, emotional, social, spiritual and philosophical coping resources could buffer the impact of these stressors and facilitate adaptation (Kamya, 1997, p. 158). The personality characteristics of the individual, the specific coping strategies implemented and the perceived efficacy of these strategies may affect the outcome (Krohne, 2001, p. 15166). Coping behaviours involve a cognitive appraisal of the demands, and are influenced by the limitations and opportunities of a particular situation (Lazarus & Folkman, cited in Walsh, 1996, p. 6), individual coping resources, as well as social, cultural, political and historical conditions (Donnelly, 2002, p. 720). Interventions should therefore aim at reducing stress levels and maximise adaptation for a particular individual in his or her environment (Walsh, 1996, p. 6). In this study, intervention was viewed from an ecological perspective to provide an understanding of the complex interactions between South African immigrants and the various sociocultural, socioeconomic, sociopolitical and environmental contexts they encountered during their immigration journeys. Utilising an ecomodel for case formulation and intervention planning should therefore be based on relevant ecosystemic information collected via pre- and post-migration assessments as discussed earlier in this chapter and illustrated in figure 6.

Welcoming and orientation

Upon arrival, the new immigrants in this study often encountered a significantly different environment, and they were tired and bewildered after a long flight across multiple time zones. For those who had travelled alone and did not know anybody in New Zealand, it was a lonesome experience to arrive in New Zealand in the middle of the night. The climate
in New Zealand is colder and more unpredictable than in South Africa, which means that newcomers who arrived in winter, spring and early summer found the weather extremely cold. Upon arrival, people had to locate a taxi or hire a car, and find their way to a hotel or motel in a strange city. Participants thus emphasised the importance of being met by someone at the airport on arrival and welcomed to New Zealand. Sometimes a recruitment agent would meet newcomers at the airport or arrange for a taxi to pick them up. Participants expressed their appreciation for being introduced to the natural beauty of their destination city upon arrival. Spoonley et al. (2007, pp. 3-4) underscore the importance of a welcoming host community for adaptation to a new society.

The next day newcomers had to orientate themselves to their environment and familiarise themselves with shopping and banking hours. They had to locate shopping centres to buy food and warmer clothing, as well as essential services, such as post, internet and telephone, vehicle and driver’s licences. They needed to open a bank account, obtain an IRD (Internal Revenue Department) number, locate the immigration department, start employment, enrol their children in school, and find a suitable church. Kiwis would often nod at each other upon noticing these anxious, confused and slightly bedraggled strangers in their midst and would knowingly add: “Fresh off the boat!” Newcomers with an existing social structure of partners, family, friends, colleagues or other contacts in New Zealand had a definite advantage. These people assisted with the initial orientation process by helping newcomers to find temporary accommodation, showing them around for the first few days and providing essential information, such as suitable areas to buy or rent a house. Even though people were advised to bring warm clothes along, most found that their South African clothing was inadequate to protect themselves against the elements. Therefore, they appreciated assistance with buying thermal wear, as well as new coats, blankets and heaters.
A few settled South African immigrants extended an open invitation to newcomers in their area and were willing to be contacted for assistance, particularly if they knew beforehand that the person was arriving. Some had taken the initiative to contact prospective immigrants via e-mail or phone prior to departure to start building a trusting relationship. Being welcomed and befriended by Kiwis also helped newcomers to feel at home. Despite being grateful, some newcomers felt guilty that they were imposing on people. Others developed a dependence on their benefactors, who became less obliging as time progressed. Newcomers were therefore encouraged to walk or drive around their new town or city to familiarise themselves with their new surroundings and gain more independence. Women who enjoyed reading joined their local library as soon as possible, and one person said it was the most important place in town.

Owing to unfamiliarity with their new environment and the large amount of new information they had to process, newcomers often experienced sensory overload and felt overwhelmed and confused when they ventured into public areas. One participant could not understand why people at the supermarket kept bumping into her and attributed it to being unfamiliar with their social rules. For the first few weeks people frequently got lost, despite having a good sense of direction. When they became disoriented, participants found police officers and bus drivers friendly and helpful. Some settled immigrants compiled a welcome pack for new immigrants that included pamphlets from tourist information centres. Maps of the settlement city, with all the main shops and places of interest clearly indicated, proved to be valuable orientation aid for newcomers. Participants were surprised and amused by the New Zealand accent, vernacular and dress style, and were astonished at people’s apparent lack of manners and courtesy in public places. At this stage of heightened task orientation, immigrants had a tendency to view cultural differences as “quaint”, “amusing” or
“fascinating” (Gonsalves, 1992, p. 384) to manage the cross-cultural dissonance that could pose a threat to their identity and sense of reality (Sluzki, 1979, p. 3).

**Information and education**

Despite pre-migration preparation, new immigrants experienced a lack of familiarity with processes and systems in New Zealand, struggled with information overload and had to negotiate bureaucratic obstacles. Upon arrival, South African immigrants therefore required information and education about life in New Zealand. The early South African settlers, who came during the 1990s, did not have access to the internet when they immigrated, and information brochures were scarce. They arrived with little knowledge of New Zealand and no assistance was available to facilitate the settlement process. Hence, they often felt that they were naive about what awaited them after immigration. More recently, a number of services have been introduced for refugees in New Zealand, but immigrants are still expected to find their own way with minimal assistance. The information pack currently provided to immigrants by the Immigration Department has been a good starting point to remedy this situation. The internet, the South African community, Kiwis, Settlement Support Services and the Citizen Advice Bureau are also valuable sources of information for immigrants. Participants recommended that the contact details of settled South African immigrants, who would be willing to assist newcomers, should be included in the Immigration Department’s information pack. Prospective immigrants could also ask their immigration consultant for contact details of settled immigrants in New Zealand who could support them. Websites and online newsletters by the South African immigrant community, such as “Krummels”, could also be helpful in this regard. Participants stated that they valued the practice of the Immigration Department to follow up at a later stage with a letter to enquire how they were doing.
Telephone books, such as the Yellow Pages, are useful to locate churches, community organisations and service providers. Internet sites, such as Geonet, provide valuable information about earthquakes and volcanic activity in New Zealand, as well as important links for safety information to prepare for emergencies. Participants also used the internet to research the differences between various cultures and religions to facilitate understanding during cross-cultural contact. Kiwis can also facilitate acculturation of new arrivals by supplying information about the various cultural groups in New Zealand. They can explain the local vernacular and introduce them to basic Māori words and expressions. When an unfamiliar word, such as mana is encountered, printed or online Māori-English dictionaries can be consulted. Participants who were newcomers were appreciative of Kiwis teaching them about the landscape, as well as the native plants and animals of New Zealand.

According the participants, public events, such as business expos provided information about available business franchises, for instance “Hire a hubby”. Settled immigrant groups and church members also offered valuable advice and contact details about potential business opportunities for those who struggled to find work. Some, who were awaiting employment or visa approval, decided to tour the country before settling down. Newcomers sometimes rented campervans for temporary living or travel purposes. Using a campervan for a farm stay or living on someone’s property was sometimes problematic because of the lack of bathroom facilities. People were advised to obtain information on standards for campervans and only to deal with reputable companies. Some businesses offered cheap deals, but one customer ended up with a leaky old kombi with few utensils and no linen, despite these being stipulated in the contract. People were advised to ensure that there would be someone at the premises to hand over the vehicle when they arrived. They were told not to be misled by promises that another business at their destination, for instance Backpackers, would supply linen because this was often a ruse.
South Africans often found commuting between home and work or school via public transport cumbersome, particularly for those who lived in a rural area and worked in the city. However, most regarded the public system as efficient and safe, which meant that a person could travel by taxi, bus, or train any time of the day or night without fear. Parents therefore felt that it was safe for their children to travel independently on public transport. New immigrants initially experienced difficulties negotiating the bus system, for instance, they often waited on the wrong side of the road or boarded the wrong bus. However, as all buses returned to their departure point, it allowed commuters to change over and reach their destination. Some families explored various options for transport, such as one person dropping off other family members by car, parking the car at the closest train station and commuting by train to the central part of the city. Most, however, preferred to buy their own vehicles, and new immigrants required assistance and advice on buying a car. It was advisable to purchase a small, economical car in the beginning. Later on they could upgrade to a more expensive car or a 4x4 vehicle to explore the rugged terrain in New Zealand. Good, second-hand cars were available from about two thousand to five thousand dollars. Participants concluded that if people bought carefully, they could get good value for money. Instead of hiring a car, even tourists found it worthwhile to buy a car for travelling around the country, and to sell it again prior to departure. However, people were advised to take care when purchasing a car as most were imported as second-hand vehicles from countries such as Japan and needed to pass basic safety checks to obtain a Warrant of Fitness (WOF) and a licence in New Zealand. Some businesses sold cars at auctions, but customers could end up with a “lemon” as retailers often offloaded damaged vehicles that they were unable to sell to auctioneers. Participants also warned that there were many “car sharks” in New Zealand, including some South Africans, and that people should look around first before buying.
Flatting, or living in a house with others, to share the expenses of a rental property is common practice in New Zealand, and for participants it was a positive experience. People often advertised for a flatmate in newspapers or on the internet, such as Trade Me. Prospective flatmates usually arranged to meet each other and view the home. Compatibility between flatmates was an important factor to establish a successful flatting arrangement. However, people were warned that having a relationship with a flatmate could become complicated, and usually resulted in a termination of the flatting agreement.

Renting a home was a good option for new immigrants if they were not yet ready to buy a property. However, rental homes were scarce and expensive in urban areas, such as Wellington and Auckland. The quality of rental properties was often a concern for South African immigrants as most of the cheaper homes were small, cold, damp and musty, and built-in cupboards were inadequate or nonexistent. The level of cleanliness was also below the standards they had been accustomed to in South Africa. Most South African immigrants therefore preferred to look for neat or newly built homes. Friends, family and colleagues were often helpful to provide leads for suitable rental accommodation. Rental homes could be obtained by contacting rental agents directly, via advertisements in local newspapers or on New Zealand websites, such as Trade Me. An ex-South African rental agent in the Wellington region, who had a good reputation among the settled South African community, proved to be a valuable asset to newcomers.

Most unfurnished homes only had curtains and a stove. Participants advised that new immigrants could furnish their home adequately with second-hand furniture. Good second-hand furniture and other household items could be obtained at bargain prices from shops such as the “Salvation Army” and “Trash Palace”, as well as websites, such as “Trade Me”. The retail shops in New Zealand regularly had “specials” and sales, for instance, the Boxing Day sale, where a range of items could be bought at reduced prices. Another alternative for
people, who arrived in New Zealand without their belongings, was to look for a furnished property to rent as they were usually well stocked with new linen and other utensils for tenants to use. Some immigrants initially moved from one rental property to another before finding a suitable home in terms of price, size, location, and weather patterns. Younger people often wanted a home in the city that was close to work and other amenities, but older adults sometimes preferred to live in more restful and picturesque coastal areas, even though it meant commuting to work. A few immigrants started off in a rural town owing to initial employment opportunities, but relocated to a city at a later stage.

South Africans generally preferred to live in their own homes rather than renting a property, and most bought a house as soon as they had sufficient funds available. Some families bought a home soon after arrival as it facilitated school enrolment and settlement. Buying a house was also considered to be an investment for retirement. Immigrants were advised not to rent for an extended period as sometimes rental fees were on par with mortgage payments. The conclusion was that people were throwing their money away as rental fees could have been used as a deposit for their own home. However, those who had left the bulk of their money in South Africa were often unable to afford the 20% minimum deposit required by banks. Whilst renting, some decided to buy a section (residential stand) to get on to the property ladder, and planned to build a house when their financial situation improved. When they moved to a different area or returned to South Africa, they had the option to use the home as an investment property and rent it out to cover the mortgage payments. However, people were advised against buying a house that was too large and expensive because it could lead to a financial disaster.

Participants said it was problematic to find a home with rooms large enough for their furniture and most did not have enough storage space in their smaller New Zealand homes for all their belongings. A number of Wellington properties were double-storey homes on steep
hills, and steps leading to the house and internal staircases were problematic for older people. Owing to financial constraints, people were often unable to buy the house they liked or in the area they preferred. Making an offer on a house was subject to bank approval, pending a property valuation, a building inspection, and a Land Information Memoranda (LIM) report. New Zealand Home Loans was recommended for those who were unable to obtain a mortgage through the banks or wanted to pay off their mortgage more quickly. The process of buying a house in New Zealand was much faster than in South Africa. A solicitor was appointed to manage the paperwork, and no transfer fees were charged. Once the documents had been signed, the house keys were handed over and the new home owner could move in.

Some immigrants modernised their property by doing the work themselves, for instance, installing new light fittings or blinds, or building a parking area.

Some, who had bought a house shortly after arrival, had concerns that they did not take enough time to look around as people who rented first viewed numerous homes before buying. Because South African immigrants were unfamiliar with the quality and building materials used in New Zealand homes, they needed advice and recommendations as buildings in New Zealand had to be able to withstand earthquakes, and the wooden homes were prone to leaking in wet weather. Because of New Zealand’s cold and wet climate, it is vital to avoid buying a cold and damp home. Participants stressed the importance of ensuring that their homes got enough sun or had central heating. Some of the older homes still contain asbestos, which poses a health hazard if the surfaces are damaged. New Zealand was also experiencing a serious problem with unsuspecting buyers finding out too late that their new family home had previously been used as a clandestine “P-lab” to manufacture the illegal substance, Methamphetamine. This illicit practice in residential neighbourhoods left toxic residues in the home, which could cost thousands of dollars for decontamination. It was therefore recommended that prospective buyers ask pertinent questions about leaky homes, earthquake
compliance, asbestos and P-contamination. It was advisable to obtain legal counsel, as well as inspection reports, prior to signing any purchase documentation to safeguard against these costly hazards.

Prospective home buyers were often advised by Kiwis to find a house that was not on the “rough” side of town, and South Africans warned people to watch out for the “rotten spots” in certain neighbourhoods. Members of the South African community also attempted to alert newcomers about leaky homes and those built before 1978 as very few of them had adequate insulation against the cold, and retrofitting was extremely expensive. However, well-intended, unsolicited advice by settled South African immigrants was not always welcomed by newcomers, as they preferred to make their own decisions. A participant said that she could show people the shortest and the easiest road, but they were often not interested in her guidance. Hence, some settled immigrants changed their helpful attitude and refrained from offering advice unless “invited” to do so. A newcomer, who had been offended by suggestions from the settled community, however offered uncalled-for advice when an elderly couple were moving house. The conclusion was that new arrivals and older, settled migrants experienced a sense of vulnerability, and preferred making their own decisions as unwanted contributions from others added to feelings of incompetence.

It was important for immigrants to remain in contact with family and friends abroad, which was facilitated by modern, electronic communication media, such as direct-dialling on landline phones, cellular phones, texting (short message service), e-mail, Facebook and Skype. Telecom in New Zealand offers a telephone package, which allows people to phone other countries, including South Africa, at cheap rates for a certain number of hours a month. In the event of an emergency, people in South Africa can therefore call immigrants in New Zealand and ask them to call back. Immigrants were also advised to register via the internet for “My SA Number” to obtain their own unique number. This number allows people in
South Africa to phone New Zealand at the price of a local call in South Africa. A common problem with electronic communication between New Zealand and South Africa is the difference in time zones. New Zealand is nine or ten hours ahead of South Africa, depending on the phase of daylight saving. According to the participants, elderly family members and friends in South Africa in particular, had trouble working out what time it was in New Zealand, and receiving a phone call in the middle of the night was a common occurrence for immigrants. Another problem was that not all family members were comfortable with texting and e-mail, and some immigrants had to communicate with siblings and parents via their extended family.

*Practical support*

New migrants often utilised temporary accommodation on arrival. Owing to financial constraints, some initially stay at a Backpackers or lived in a caravan, which was not always suitable for women and older adults. Some employers provided accommodation in a shared house, an apartment or a motel room for the first month, which made things easier for the new immigrant. Family members or friends in New Zealand were often willing to provide temporary accommodation and support. Sometimes adult children who assisted elderly parents to immigrate, or parents whose young, adult children followed them to New Zealand provided longer-term housing if they had a big home or added a sleepout (flatlet) to their property. Some members of the South African community offered temporary accommodation to newcomers until they found their feet. One South Africa family was invited to share the family home of a Kiwi family until alternative accommodation could be arranged. House sitting the furnished homes of New Zealanders who were travelling, and working abroad or in another city, was another option for short-term accommodation. Sometimes fellow students
offered overnight accommodation for out-of-town immigrant students who were exploring alternative career options.

New immigrants who rented or bought a house anticipated the docking of the container ship with their household goods, which sometimes took up to three months. While “camping out” in empty homes, some bought a few essential items but often ended up sleeping on a mattress without realising that they could have rented a furnished home in the meantime. One family recalled moving into their house with nothing more than a laptop and two camping chairs. The settled South African community had over the years donated essential household goods to assist new immigrants. Hence, a stock of goods was available on loan to new arrivals, such as crockery, cutlery, fridges, freezers, mattresses and bedding. Some members of the South African community delivered these household goods to newcomers in their homes. Some church organisations also donated or loaned furniture to new arrivals in their congregation. This kind of practical assistance helped newcomers to settle in and feel at home.

Most people felt more settled when they were living in their own place, surrounded by their familiar belongings. When their shipping container finally arrived, some companies provided limited assistance to move furniture around and unpack boxes. Hence South Africans had to quickly become self-reliant and accustomed to doing their own domestic work. Immigrants were advised to pack a few boxes with essential goods, for instance, kitchen utensils, and to mark them clearly as it would come in handy during unpacking. One participant recalled opening several boxes, only to find nonessential items. They ended up boiling water and cooking food in an old iron pot, and eating their meals with little silver tea spoons she had inherited from her mother. Those who had stored most of their household goods in South Africa often bought a few extra items of furniture in New Zealand so that their homes did not look so empty. Some found it problematic to live with the bare essentials
for extended periods as they missed the belongings that had made their lives comfortable in South Africa, for instance electric kitchen equipment. However, those who had shipped most of their belongings to New Zealand often found that they did not have enough storage space in their smaller New Zealand homes.

Social support

Knowing people in New Zealand upon arrival assisted with adaptation and settlement. South Africans who had immigrated in the 1990s often did not know anybody in New Zealand when they arrived. One participant, whose plane had landed in middle of the night, said he knew there was nobody waiting to meet him, but still hopefully searched the crowd for someone to welcome him. New arrivals who were met at the airport and were oriented and supported in respect of their immediate survival needs had a much “softer” landing. Most participants vividly remembered the first day of their arrival, including their sensory experiences and emotions. They often formed their first impressions of New Zealand from the way people treated them during the first few days. One person asserted that spending the first week with someone to help you could prevent six months of stress. It was problematic that newcomers often did not know which members of the South African community were willing to provide assistance. When they eventually met people who were willing to lend a helping hand, they had spent a considerable time struggling on their own. This could have negative consequences for their settlement, and long-term physical and mental health.

Nevertheless, some of the early settlers felt that nowadays new immigrants had it much easier than when they had arrived. There was the perception that most immigrants were currently better informed and already knew a few people upon arrival. Hence they were expected to adapt more easily than the early settlers. It was believed that owing to the larger network of South African immigrants in New Zealand, newcomers did not feel so isolated
and it was easier for them to make friends and obtain contacts for employment. However, during the 1990s, when the South African settlement group was small, people had a sense of responsibility towards newcomers and were more spontaneous and caring towards them. For instance, women quickly got together to bake cake and bread, and visited new arrivals at home to welcome them. Most people did not know anybody in New Zealand, and if they heard a stranger speaking Afrikaans in a shop they felt compelled to greet the person and initiate a conversation. Whereas in the past they had been eager to reach out, some long-term immigrants had become reluctant to approach other South Africans in public. Recently, a Coloured woman in a shop confided in one of the participants that “nobody talks to her” in New Zealand. There was a perception that long-term immigrants could no longer be bothered with newcomers and preferred to leave the care giving to someone else.

It was apparent that having a larger South African settlement group in New Zealand has led to less concern for newcomers, instead of providing a more supportive settlement environment. Participants explained that helping newcomers was hard work, and that their support was sometimes taken for granted. In the absence of family and friends in New Zealand, immigrants viewed the settled South African community as “family”. Hence they believed that settled immigrants were obligated to assist them and did not consider it as people doing them a favour. Participants explained that new arrivals expected to be met at the airport at midnight, and to be hugged and welcomed. Some benefactors observed a sense of entitlement when they provided accommodation to new South African immigrants, and felt that they took advantage of their kindness. For instance, some newcomers expected elderly couples to act as grandparents and take care of their children when they went out. It was therefore prudent not to “mother” new arrivals too much as it could result in them becoming reliant on settled immigrants, instead of finding their feet and becoming independent.
Despite the perception of early settlers that immigration had become easier for newcomers, it was clear that some recent immigrants still did not know anybody in New Zealand, and were experiencing considerable adaptation problems. Settled immigrants who were still prepared to offer assistance to newcomers helped to make the transition process easier. Welcoming people and “teaching them the ropes” about life in New Zealand offered comfort and support, and paved the way towards successful settlement. For those who did not have family or friends in New Zealand, it was preferable to have the contact details of other South African immigrants who could provide support upon arrival. One participant obtained the e-mail address of a prospective South African immigrant who would be moving to her home town in New Zealand. The prospective immigrant was initially hesitant to reply to correspondence from a stranger in New Zealand, but was happy to accept her help after speaking to her on the phone. Another participant met a South African on the plane to New Zealand, who later assisted with her wedding after arrival. Participants recommended that the information pack provided by the New Zealand Immigration Department should contain the contact details of settled South African immigrants who would be willing to assist newcomers because this would enhance adaption. The Immigration Department should therefore approach the settled community to establish a list of suitable support persons for the area where newcomers would initially be living.

New immigrants often missed their close friends with whom they had lasting friendships and who knew them on a deeper level. Keeping in touch with long-term friends was challenging for adults as well as young people, and they had to make an effort to maintain these connections. A couple, who had celebrated their wedding without family members being present, appreciated their phone calls, cards and letters. However, some found that they wrote regularly to family and friends back home, but only received an occasional reply. After immigration, participants often did not have people who valued their friendship,
and with whom they could openly share their emotional difficulties. During periods of sadness and heartache, it was often difficult to find support as people did not want to upset their family. Participants warned that starting work immediately after arrival prevented some people from taking the time to establish new friendships that allowed them to feel less lonely. Immigrants needed friendships in New Zealand for social activities, as well as friends who shared the same interests and views. Newcomers had to familiarise themselves with appropriate times to invite people over and social customs, such as having “tea” and “bring a plate”. Participants described their sense of being “left out” during social interaction with Kiwis, and concluded that it was the lack of a shared history that created a sense of exclusion. Some also reported that they found Kiwis critical and judgemental, and said they preferred mixing with South Africans.

Participants confirmed that it was important for newcomers to become involved with an Afrikaans or South African community as it normalised immigration stressors, facilitated social connections and supported settlement. New immigrants found it helpful to mix with South Africans in the beginning to regain a semblance of normality and a sense of belonging. Jill said that, “it is useful if you know somebody here who can relate to you, somebody who understands you, and somebody who knows why you are here”. Where New Zealand companies recruited more than one South African at a time, these employees were able to support each other during the initial adaptation phase. For adolescents, making friends with another new arrival from South Africa was validating and helped them to feel at home. According to Akhtar (1999, p. 56), immigration poses a threat to a person’s identity, and the emotional and cognitive support provided by a supportive social environment could assist newcomers to achieve identity differentiation and consolidation in their new environment.

Some newcomers were unaware of South African groups in their region and only found out by chance from a colleague or after meeting another South African at a public
event. One participant expressed her concern that there was probably a large number of new South Africans living in New Zealand who the settled community did not know about. Once they became aware of newcomers who were struggling on their own, some members of the settled immigrant community encouraged others to make contact with these families and invite them to social events. Women, who had initially stayed at home to allow their families to settle, enjoyed being invited over for morning tea or lunch by a group of other South African immigrant women. In one group, a number of women had all arrived within a six-month period and they could discuss where they came from and what circumstances had led to their immigration. These groups provided a source of social mingling where women could share their burdens and express their feelings. Talking about their experiences provided a shared understanding and they became a core friendship group.

Over the years, various South African community groups, such as “Saamtrek” and “Afrikaners is plesierig”, had been formed to facilitate social get-togethers and weekend getaways on a regular basis. It usually involved a braai and “bringing a plate” for a shared meal at someone’s house or a picnic spot. Other groups met at a restaurant or went tramping during weekends. Some groups enjoyed listening and dancing to South African music and making traditional delicacies, such as boerewors, mieliepap, biltong, koeksisters and melktert. Ramanajum (cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 62) emphasises the importance of exposure to familiar food and customs to reinforce a person’s sense of identity and belonging. According to Grinberg and Grinberg (1989, p. 79), eating familiar foods with co-nationals is a type of memory rite and eases anxiety. These social events provided a useful forum for new arrivals to meet other people, and for old friends to catch up and stay connected. Some community groups grew larger over time and expanded to surrounding neighbourhoods and towns. Sharing their experiences with other people in the same situation helped to ease newcomers’ initial difficulties. It was important that people did not feel obliged to attend outings or to
remain with the group once they had settled down. Most believed that being part of an immigrant group was a “season that was needed and appreciated”. Eventually some people went their own way as they felt that ongoing contact was no longer needed.

Conversely, some newcomers found continued contact with other South African immigrants comforting, and established firm and lasting friendships in these social groups. Some formed core support groups, consisting of about eight families who functioned like an extended family. They celebrated birthdays and the festive season together, which reduced feelings of homesickness. However, in some instances, close affiliation between families led to marital infidelity, particularly where marital partners were experiencing conflict about their decision to immigrate. In one such group, the marriages of two couples ended in divorce when two people left their partners to marry each other. These marital break-ups had a ripple effect, and caused a rupture in the South African community because of divided loyalties. When the “guilty” partners attended social events, it created a sense of discomfort as people wanted to reprimand them for their actions, but refrained because they were adults. The group also tried to support the divorced mother who had to take care of her two children afterwards. In the long run, the deserted partners were apparently better off than the two had who remarried. However, the contentious marital breakup had a considerable impact on all the group members, and had a negative effect on the companionship and cohesion of the group. Some members wanted to create a South African migrant association with a more formal structure. Those who were against establishing a committee warned that it would inevitably lead to gossip and strife. They correctly predicted that internal politics would eventually lead to the demise of the association.

Whereas some South African immigrant families preferred to befriend fellow South Africans, others chose to avoid South African groups and befriended New Zealanders instead. Participants emphasised that friendships in the broader New Zealand society were also
necessary because they facilitated social acceptance and cultural integration. Participants felt it was also beneficial to befriend immigrants from other countries, such as Poland, Croatia or Bosnia, as they had a better understanding of the experiences and needs of South African immigrants. In the beginning, colleagues from work were sometimes the only acquaintances people had in New Zealand and they were invited to share important events, such as a wedding. The workplace also provided opportunities for socialisation such as regular “shouts” to celebrate important occasions. Positive comments and support by Kiwis in the workplace were meaningful and made a newcomer feel respected, accepted and acknowledged as a person instead of being an “outsider”. Flatting provided additional opportunities for meeting people and establishing new friendships, without having to make a long-term social commitment. If there was a synergy between flatmates and they started confiding in each other, closer relationships sometimes developed over time. Befriending Kiwis with similar values and interests helped to make people less dependent on the South African immigrant group. Some immigrants eventually established close friendships with Kiwis and were invited to their homes. Adolescents benefited from befriending New Zealand peers who had taken them under their wing and eased their transition to the school and social environments. In their research, Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2003) confirmed that friendships developed psychosocial and cultural competencies and promoted academic adaptation of immigrant youth by providing information, practical assistance, emotional support and a sense of belonging.

Participants emphasised that it was important for people to continue with their hobbies in New Zealand. Some immigrants did not join groups, clubs or organisations as they preferred to go out with friends or enjoyed solitary activities, such as kayaking, guitar playing or reading. For others, joining a group who shared the same interests or activities helped them to meet people and become involved in the community. Some joined a hobby group, such as
quilting, whilst others joined a political party to interact with like-minded people and take a more active political role in society. Joining a club or interest group also relieved marital stress where couples felt that they needed some space. Men were able to widen their social circle via work and by coaching sport at their child’s school. Some participants developed new interests and skills, such as starting an Afrikaans radio programme for the South African community.

*Medical care*

Most participants did not report significant health problems after immigration. A few experienced a worsening of pre-existing problems, such as hay fever, asthma or rheumatism owing to the cold, damp climate and mouldy homes. One participant found that a stable medical condition became uncontrolled after immigration, which required an array of tests and trialling various medications. Doctors could not identify an organic cause for the exacerbation, and it was concluded that immigration and work stress were important contributory factors. Some immigrants had to explore different work opportunities that involved a higher level of physical exertion than what they had been used to in South Africa. In some cases, this lead to weight loss, whereas others became exhausted and felt embarrassed that they were unable to cope with the physical demands of their new job.

Participants initially thought that the public health system in New Zealand was generally good, and some believed that it compared favourably with the private health system in South Africa. Government hospitals in New Zealand, however, were considerably better and cleaner than the public hospitals in South Africa. The response to emergency 111 calls was rapid and effective, and emergency treatment in hospitals was excellent. Those who needed treatment for acute medical conditions were transported free of charge via ambulance and treated in hospital. In New Zealand, some general practitioner visits and examinations, as
well as most medications were subsidised by the government. Patients could also be referred for specialist treatment under the public health system if deemed necessary. Diagnostic procedures, medical and surgical interventions, such as MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scans, chemotherapy or cardiac bypass surgery, were also provided by government-funded facilities. Some older participants had had several operations at no cost to themselves, and expressed their gratitude for being supported by the health system in New Zealand. Specialists who performed surgery, for instance, joint replacements, were extremely competent and held in high regard by patients. Immigrants appreciated that prescription medication in New Zealand was available at a nominal fee. Some felt that they would not have been able to afford their medication for chronic conditions if they were still living in South Africa. Participants commented that community health services, such as general practitioners, dentists, physiotherapy and ophthalmology were generally of good quality and well run.

For most people, their first port of call in the event of illness was their general practitioner. Some, however, found the general practitioners in New Zealand mediocre, and felt that they did not have the experience of South African doctors, particularly with trauma. General practitioners in New Zealand were also not familiar with well-known conditions among Afrikaners families, which could lead to misdiagnosis and a delay in treatment that could cost lives. The participants felt that medical staff should therefore be made aware of unique health conditions in the South African community, such as familial hypercholesterolaemia, and the risk of heart attacks at a relatively early age. A comprehensive medical examination, including HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) testing was compulsory for permanent residency applications. Medical professionals in New Zealand lacked sensitivity and an understanding about the fears of immigrants from HIV-endemic countries, such as South Africa, about the process and results of HIV testing. As pre-
and post-test counselling was not standard procedure in New Zealand as it was in South Africa, it meant that immigrants were not warned about the possibility of false-positive results, and no measures were in place to provide psychological support after the disclosure of results. When this matter was raised with laboratory personnel and medical officers, they vaguely commented that HIV-test counselling was no longer performed in New Zealand. They seemed unaware of the risk to both patient and clinician, and were unconcerned about the possible tragic repercussions if a vulnerable immigrant was not adequately informed and supported during compulsory HIV testing. Participants also found it disconcerting that New Zealand doctors were more focused on entering data in the computer system than interacting with their patients. Those who phoned for urgent repeat prescriptions were surprised that a fee was charged and that the script was only available the next day.

One participant commented that even his Kiwi friends said that “if you want to have a good doctor, go to a South African”. South Africans appreciated the more personal approach and sense of humour of South African doctors. The Afrikaans immigrants in particular preferred South African doctors as they built a closer relationship with them, and could to tell them exactly what ailed them without the added stress of a language barrier. According to Grinberg and Grinberg (1989, p. 112) even in countries that use the same language, a particular word or expression can have different meanings that may lead to misunderstandings. For instance, in New Zealand “see you later” does not mean “come back later today”, but instead refers to “until we see each other again” akin to the German auf wiedersehen. Some immigrants were fortunate enough to locate a South African doctor because they were a scarce commodity in New Zealand. An added problem was that as the services of a general practitioner were subsidised by the government, patients had to register with a practice in their neighbourhood before they could be treated. Upon enquiry, some practices stated that their “books were full” and that they were not taking new patients, which
immigrants found strange as in South Africa doctors usually welcomed new patients. Hence, people often did not have access to South African doctors recommended to them by the immigrant community. Sometimes patients had to enrol at a practice outside their immediate living area, but were ultimately satisfied with the services they received. In contrast to South Africa, where families consult with their doctor on all health matters, in New Zealand they tend to buy something over the counter at the pharmacy for minor ailments. The participants realised that their doctor would probably just prescribe Paracetamol anyway, and not “running to the doctor for everything” saved money because they had to pay cash for each consultation. Hence they only went to the doctor for serious illnesses, such as tonsillitis.

When parents presented after hours with a sick child at the Accident and Emergency unit of a government hospital, they were referred back to their own general practitioner. Hence, they concluded that you have to make your illness sound extremely serious before doctors at hospitals would consider assisting you.

Most South African women preferred to have a private obstetrician and gynaecologist as they were used to their medical aid in South Africa paying for visits. In contrast, most New Zealand women used midwives for pregnancy and childbirth. They were not allowed to make an appointment with a gynaecologist directly as they first had to consult with a nurse at their general practitioner’s practice. Women were only referred to a gynaecologist if an expert consultation was required. Free, government-funded dental care for children was available for children up to the age of 18. However, thereafter dental care became extremely expensive and people usually only visited the dentist if they experienced problems. Some preferred to have more extensive dental work, such as crowns or implants, done during visits to South Africa.

After living in New Zealand for a while, some participants came to the conclusion that the doctors and hospitals were good, but that they were not on the same level as in South Africa. Some immigrants become disillusioned with the way specialists managed chronic
conditions. They would see the patient only once and run battery of tests, followed by a prescription for painkillers and a lengthy course of ineffective physiotherapy. Participants concluded that some chronic conditions were inadequately treated in New Zealand. Out of desperation some immigrants considered going home to consult with a South African doctor, who would determine the cause, weigh up therapeutic alternatives and take decisive action to solve the problem. Some people became concerned about the medical system in New Zealand after the media portrayed certain hospitals as having Third World standards. The government healthcare system was unreliable for elective procedures owing to the customary 18-month wait listing list. As a consequence, patients’ health often deteriorated to the point that surgery at a later date was too risky. Some felt that the public health system placed people on a waiting list in the hope that they would die before they had to be treated. The consensus was that, in theory, the health system “did not drop you”, but in reality failed to provide timeous healthcare.

Participants concluded that they could not rely on the public health system to take care of chronic health problems. Owing to wait listing, doctors often advised patients to use their private medical insurance for elective surgery to treat their condition in time. Immigrants were urged to take out medical insurance while they were still young, or soon after arrival, as they would have less pre-existing conditions excluded from their insurance cover. Private health insurance was expensive, but some participants were adamant that medical insurance should be a priority. Older immigrants were frequently unable to obtain insurance for existing medical problems, and could not afford the premiums after retirement. Packages offered by insurance companies varied from policies that only provided cover for surgery and hospital aftercare to more comprehensive healthcare packages. Most people took out medical insurance plans to cover visits to specialists and expensive operations, but excluded services such as dentistry and optometry. If affordability was still problematic,
people could reduce their monthly premium by choosing a larger excess for claims. Certain employers subsidised private medical insurance for employees, and some insurance companies offered discounted premiums to employees of large organisations, such as Health Boards. Compared to New Zealand, participants felt that their medical aid in South Africa was much better. However, those who had medical insurance in New Zealand were happy with the service they received from large companies, such as Southern Cross Healthcare. Participants reported that they provided rapid “approval numbers” for medical interventions, and service providers were paid promptly.

In the event of ill health, South African immigrants without family and friends in New Zealand often lacked practical and emotional support. Hence hospital visits and assistance during convalescence at home were limited. Elderly spouses often had chronic conditions, such as rheumatism, which made it difficult to help their partners during post-surgery recovery. New Zealand superannuation provided an income after retirement due to health problems, dependent on certain criteria, which could assist with the financial burden. Owing to a lack of support and declining health, some elderly South African immigrants decided to sell their homes and moved to retirement villages, which offered more assistance and care giving. They valued being able to live independently in their “own little house”, with the option of additional help when they needed it. In the event of serious illness they could move to an area in the facility where they could be taken care of until the end.

Pschological care

Immigration involved changes in a person’s inner and outer ecological systems, and patterns of adaptation and psychological responses varied between individuals and changed over time. Adaptation relied on pre-migration developmental gains to cope with loss and separation, as well as an environment that encouraged exploration and integration (Grinberg
& Grinberg, 1989). From a developmental perspective, integration into a new cultural setting was a strenuous process that involved successive and complementary steps towards successful adaptation and settlement (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 97). In this study, an ecomodel was developed to examine the psychological difficulties and care needs of South African immigrants from a developmental and psycho-social perspective, consisting of the phases of immigration, cognitive, emotional and behavioural responses and their theoretical underpinnings, coping strategies and resilience, problem appraisal and problem-solving techniques, social and psychological support systems, and the outcome of these interactive processes on the immigrant’s sense of well-being. For ease and flow of the discussion, the following progressive and interactive themes have been used to explore the immigrant’s psychological journey: (1) dislocation and uprooting; (2) doubt and disillusionment; (3) loss and mourning; (4) loneliness and alienation; (5) despair and identity crisis; and (6) renewal and transmutation. Even though most people might experience these elements to some degree, immigration is a highly personal journey and responses may vary, depending on individual characteristics, experiences and circumstances. Furthermore, individuals could experience these themes during different phases of the immigration process, or may revisit some of these emotions until a satisfactory level of resolution is achieved.

The discussion that follows is based on findings of other researchers, incidental comments by participants about the experiences of other immigrants, and conclusions drawn by the researcher based on certain elements of participant narratives. The reason for this approach was that few participants were willing to openly discuss their psychological difficulties or consultations with their general practitioner or a psychotherapist. Their hesitation was probably because of the stigma of psychological problems and psychotherapy, and because most interviews were conducted with families. Some participants alluded to the fact that there were other pertinent issues that they wished to share in private, but when given
the opportunity at a later stage most declined to add information to their narratives.

Information that was shared with the researcher during social interaction with the South African community or in the course of her professional work was excluded for ethical reasons. Despite these constraints, a comprehensive discussion was nevertheless included to provide an account of the complex psychological processes experienced by immigrants, for clinicians who would be providing intervention for this client group.

Dislocation and uprooting

After the 1990s, South Africa experienced significant socio-political changes that elicited feelings of insecurity, anxiety and apprehension because of the threatened loss of societal structures, personal values and quality of life. This weakened people’s sociocultural identity and sense of belonging to the new Rainbow Nation, and they felt marginalised and isolated from the broader society. It can therefore be argued that, in terms of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, (Oosthuizen & Ehlers, 2007, p. 24) the building blocks for physiological safety, belonging, self-esteem and self-actualisation needs were systematically eroded. In an attempt to preserve that which was familiar and cherished, people were willing to relocate to a geographically distant country owing to perceived similarities, with the expectation that they could recreate their idealised lives on foreign soil (Grinberg & Grinberg 1989, p. 19).

The reactions of those who remained behind when others emigrated depended upon the quality and strength of their relationships (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 67). Some focused on the negative aspects of South Africa and encouraged them to leave to ensure their safety. Participants found it constructive if people were supportive and encouraged them to utilise opportunities and lead the life of their choice. Although some family and friends initially underestimated the impact of separation, there was an inevitable sense of anxiety, bewilderment, loss and abandonment (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 62, 67). A few
secretly contemplated leaving as well, while others were envious because they wanted to emigrate, but were unable to do so or lacked the courage. They were inclined to use the prospective emigrant as a scapegoat for their feelings of anger, fear and guilt (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 69). Some reacted with anger and blamed the prospective immigrant for deserting them, whilst others were overcome by a sense of grief and sorrow (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 67-68, 70).

Whereas immigration from other countries, such as the United Kingdom, the USA or Australia was viewed as expanding the homeland’s global influence or capitalising on career or financial opportunities, South African immigrants faced accusations of being unpatriotic cowards, deserters, or traitors who were betraying their fatherland. Friends, family, neighbours and colleagues often criticised and opposed the decision, and family members blamed the South African emigrant for breaking up the family and resorted to emotional blackmail to prevent them from leaving (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 62; Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-3). Where parents decided to emigrate first, their adult children felt abandoned and torn between their parents and their close friends as they felt they had been coerced into following their parents. When adult children emigrated, parents and older members of the family viewed themselves as the “orphans” who had been left behind (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-3). Conflict regarding the decision and timing of immigration, and the resulting separation, therefore led to a disruption of family bonds and a sense of disconnection in families.

Some emigrants felt emotionally numb as they focused on the practicalities of relocation (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-2), while others experienced anticipatory mourning (Akhtar, 1999, p. 7) as they wondered whether they would ever see their family and their country again. The South African emigrant usually left with a heavy emotional burden under a cloud of discontent, and tearful, heart-wrenching farewells at the airport were
commonplace. They feared for the health and safety of those who had been left behind, and were unsure whether they would be able to return if needed or would even be welcomed back. It could be argued that upon departure these South African emigrants effectively became refugees or exiles as South African society no longer wanted them and their families had expelled them (Grinberg & Grinberg (1989, p. 64). To counteract the anguish and guilt of separation, some resorted to emotional detachment or denial (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 64), while others adopted a stance of superiority and claimed that those who had stayed behind were ignorant of the dangers in South Africa or lacked the courage to leave. Despite the sadness and pain of leaving everything behind that was familiar, most had a sense of anticipation and were hoping to find greener grass on the other side of the world. Grinberg and Grinberg (1989, p. 70) warned that if those who remained behind developed psychosomatic symptoms shortly after departure, it could be an attempt at manipulation. If circumstances or finances prevented an immediate return trip, the separation was experienced as the death of a loved one and the person who remained behind could fear that his or her own death was imminent (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 68). Participants confirmed that some family members had severed ties with them altogether after they emigrated, or “put them in a box” and considered them deceased. Others experienced a death in the family shortly after their departure that led to feelings of guilt that the shock of their emigration had contributed to the tragedy.

Participants confirmed that moving to New Zealand was a massive undertaking, and it was a stressful and emotional experience. The assistance required by newcomers usually centred on physiological and safety needs, as well as an initial impression that they were welcome in New Zealand. Immigrants often experienced anxiety about the new and unknown (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 2). Upon arrival in a new country in the middle of the night, the exhausted traveller felt like a child who had been abandoned in a shopping mall. New
arrivals desperately searched for a friendly face and open arms to ease their anxiety, to provide a sense of familiarity, comfort and emotional containment, and to help them survive and recover from their sense of confusion and disorientation (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p.77). First impressions counted, and being picked up from the airport, being greeted by a friendly customs officer or finding a helpful taxi driver could set the stage for future adaptation. Those who were left to their own devices quickly experienced the onset of confusion, disorientation and the fear of being all alone in a foreign country where they did not know a soul (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-3). It was particularly difficult for people who had immigrated alone and did not know anybody in New Zealand, and for those who were separated from their family for the first time in their lives. One participant said he found it extremely hard in the beginning as he had to find a place to live and cope all on his own. Having a partner, family members, friends or other South African immigrants to share the experience with provided a safety net. However, newcomers often had limited sources of support and did not know members of the South African community who could assist them. When they eventually met people who were willing to help, they had often spent considerable time struggling on their own. Andries was motivated to participate in this research because he thought that “perhaps my experience as an immigrant could be useful to others starting on the same road, especially in the beginning when life can sometimes be lonely and hard”.

Immigration can be regarded as a developmental crisis (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 13), during which the person becomes dis-located from the familiarity of his or her home country, uprooted from his or her sociocultural grounding and summarily transplanted into foreign soil. New arrivals initially experienced a sense of disorientation in their new surroundings. Many newcomers had the disconcerting experience of waking up in the morning and not knowing where they were, or getting lost while trying to find their way around town. For adults, temporarily losing their independence by having to rely on others
for accommodation and transport resulted in feelings of guilt and shame for burdening others, which affected their self-esteem. Newcomers nostalgically sought out South African foods (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 79), and it was not uncommon to shed a few tears in the international section of a supermarket at the sight of Ouma rusks. Despite New Zealand having a much lower crime rate than South Africa, new arrivals felt vulnerable and remained hypervigilant for some time. One woman recalled how anxious and panicky she had felt while waiting outside on a misty night for a family member to pick her up. In particular, children who had experienced trauma because of violence in South Africa were nervous about going to bed in a house without burglar bars. New Zealanders, who were not aware of the constant level of threat in South Africa, found this behaviour amusing, perplexing and somewhat paranoid. Being burgled in New Zealand reawakened doubts about personal safety, and fears that petty thieves could become dangerous criminals as they did in South Africa. Disruptive and disorderly behaviour by the youth, as well as gang activity and an escalating substance abuse problem added to their concerns.

Participants stated that it was stressful and traumatic to leave everything behind that was familiar and to tackle the unknown. Upon arrival, they realised that certain things were very different in New Zealand and found it unsettling. South African immigrants had different values, world-views, and belief systems and they attempted to transplant these into the New Zealand environment (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-7) to recapture the life they had lost as a result of the sociopolitical changes in South Africa. According to Nikelly (2004, p. 190), a stable environment and a sense of social connectedness are required to maintain personal integration. The changes encountered after immigration evoked “culture shock”, and the resulting confusion and anxiety challenged the newcomer’s psychological stability (Akhtar, 1999, p. 77). Their “inner template” (Boesch, cited in Tannenbaum, 2007, p. 148), based on personal and cultural experiences in the homeland, was no longer valid in the
unfamiliar host environment and they struggled to make sense of their world. Communication and social cues became ambiguous and contradictory, and the person felt as if he or she was not “tuned in” to the same wavelength as the rest of the population. Some participants found that people kept bumping into them in shopping malls, while others felt that they were completely invisible. Even though most South African immigrants were fluent in English, the pronunciation and vernacular of New Zealanders resulted in frequent requests to repeat what they were saying, and immigrants feared that they were going deaf.

Feeling perplexed and overwhelmed by these “jumbled” messages, the person may employ defense mechanisms, such as denial, projection, idealising aspects of the self, or paranoid-schizoid behaviour, depending on his or her individual attachment style (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 78). However, a novel environment can also evoke a sense of excitement, and a willingness to explore and seek out new social encounters (Boesch, cited in Tannenbaum, 2007, p. 148). Most participants reported going through an initial “honeymoon phase” while exploring their new environment, as everything was still new and exciting. Lysgaard (cited in Sussman, 2002, p. 6), and Rumbaut and Sluzki (cited in Ritsner & Ponizovsky, 1999, pp. 125-126) also reported an initial period of elation among migrants. Mirsky and Peretz (2006, p 52) and Brink and Saunders (cited in Ritsner & Ponizovsky, 1999, p.126) explained that temporarily sustaining a psychological balance enabled newcomers to master the initial challenges of orientating, exploring and gaining knowledge about their new environment. According to Hulewat (1996, p. 130), Mirsky and Peretz (2006, p. 52) and van Coller (2002, p. 22), this task-oriented period could last from a few weeks to a year, which enabled newcomers to establish a new infrastructure for their lives in New Zealand. Selective memories of life back home provided a thread of continuity, consistence and coherence that reaffirmed personal identity, preserved self-worth and provided a buffer against loss and the strength to cope with challenges (Howland; Wyatt, cited in Nikelly,
For new immigrants, who were unable to acknowledge the full extent of their loss, avoidance of nostalgia initially protected them from being overwhelmed (Klein, cited in Henry et al., 2005, p. 111).

During the immediate post-migration period, “splitting” could be adaptive when attempts to integrate conflicting internal and external information became too challenging (Walsh & Shulman, 2007, pp. 367-368) and it provided temporary protection from overwhelming losses (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 9). In other words, people idealised New Zealand and devalued South Africa, or vice versa. However, if this defensive strategy continued for extended periods it could indicate a lack of coping skills and result in symptoms of psychopathology (Walsh & Shulman, 2007, p. 367). Splitting also affected the immigrants’ self-presentation, and what had once been idealised sometimes became devalued or shameful, and vice-versa (Akhtar, 1999, p. 81). South Africans observed that sometimes newcomers attempted to assimilate to New Zealand culture by getting a tattoo and a facial piercing. However, early attempts at assimilation to avoid the pain of mourning could lead to lower mental health outcomes in the long term (Walsh & Shulman, 2007, pp. 367-368). Pre-migration vulnerabilities, coupled with underlying guilt about emigrating and discontent with the new environment, could lead to a person rejecting the home and the host country (Akhtar, 1999, pp. 81-82).

Doubt and disillusionment

The absence of a “honeymoon” or initial distress-free period was reported by Pernice and Brook (cited in Pernice et al., 2000, p. 24) and Ritsner and Ponizovsky (1999, p.126). A possible explanation was that those whose initial survival needs had not been met, felt socially isolated or faced multiple stressors could not achieve an initial sense of security and competence that permitted further exploration. Finding employment and managing
immigration matters were particularly stressful because they determined whether people could stay in New Zealand. Participants cautioned that being on a post-immigration “holiday” while trying to find employment and sorting out immigration visas was extremely challenging. New immigrants with visitor’s visas who could not find employment, and those with business visas who were awaiting permanent residency, found the prolonged period of uncertainty and financial hardship highly stressful. Being subjected to a psychological assessment for a residency application to determine the impact of separation from family members was disconcerting for a person who was ambivalent about immigrating. Those who had immigrated after suffering trauma in South Africa found it upsetting to be told by a parliamentary representative that they had to pack their belongings and return to South Africa. Dealing with immigration officials, restrictive government regulations, a long wait for permanent residency visas and an unsupportive, invalidating, rejecting or hostile reception by the host society were detrimental to physical and mental health (Beiser & Edwards, 1994, p. 80; Cheng & Chang, 1999, para. 7; Samarasinghe & Arvidsson, 2002, pp. 298-299).

Some participants found that despite years of work experience, because their professions were not on the Skilled Shortage list, they were regarded as superfluous to New Zealand society and felt like unwanted visitors. A number of immigrants could not resume the vocation they had practised in South Africa. Others could not find employment at a similar status or remuneration level as what they had had in South Africa, and had been compelled to start at the bottom of their career ladder again. This had implications for their personal and professional identities, as well as their financial security and socioeconomic position in society. In other words, their physiological, belonging, self-esteem and self-actualisation needs were under threat. A lack of validation and respect for their academic qualifications, work experience and abilities caused anger, disappointment, self-doubt and cynicism. Reyneke (2004, p. 209), however, warned that because of nostalgia and cultural
pride, South Africans were inclined to overestimate their own moral fibre, skills and work ethic. They eventually recognised their shortcomings and failures in the new environment, and experienced a sense of disillusionment about their own abilities and worthiness in society. Men who were unable to find work in New Zealand felt that they “made a mess of things” and had let their families down. Their mental state sometimes deteriorated to the point that their spouses became concerned about what they might do in a state of desperation if they were left alone at home.

Harrison and Nortje (2000, p. 13-7) attributed this dire emotional state to the erosion of pre-migration expectations, as well as fears of “not making it” in New Zealand. Some families felt that they had made the biggest mistake of their lives because they had used up all their life savings to immigrate. During this “disenchantment” phase (Hener et al., 1997, p. 247), the immigrant experienced disappointment, anxiety and helplessness, which evoked frustration and criticism towards the new country, as well as a longing for the homeland and the “old” self (Mirsy & Peretz, 2006, p.53). In an attempt to recapture what had been lost, the immigrant made efforts to maintain ties with the homeland via frequent phone calls, and some preferred to interact only with co-nationals and withdrew from the host society (Hener et al., 1997, p. 248). Bennett et al. (1997, p. 162) reported that recent South African immigrants attempted to change an undesirable situation, or accommodated it by adjusting their expectations to fit the reality of their situation. These strategies promoted short-term psychological adaptation and superficial integration to survive financially and fit in socially (Bennett et al., 1997, p. 163).

The immigrant who turned to friends and family at home for solace and support sometimes found that attempts at ongoing contact were ignored or rebuffed, or practical support was suddenly withdrawn. Hence immigrants felt that they had died in the eyes of those with whom they had close and longstanding bonds (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 67).
When letters and e-mails remained unanswered, this created feelings of abandonment, betrayal and humiliation, and they started to doubt the quality of their longstanding relationships. If trusted bonds with family and valued friends in South Africa proved to be so fragile, new immigrants could become distrustful and reluctant to make the effort to build new relationships in New Zealand. According to Akhtar, (1999, p. 90), the excommunicated emigrant became an outcast who was renounced and forsaken by the last source of comfort, and realised how utterly dispensable he or she was in the world.

Some immigrants arranged a visit to their country of origin to repair social bonds (Mirsky & Peretz, 2006, p.53), taking gifts and returning with sentimental items to “tether” (Akhtar, 1999, p. 86) them to their homeland. Sometimes returning home was necessitated by the sudden illness or death of a family member, which added to the distress and guilt the immigrant was experiencing. Those who had the financial resources for a return-migration were often tempted to pack up their belongings and book a return ticket. According to Grinberg and Grinberg (1989, pp. 178, 180-181), even though the idea of returning home to reconnect with one’s roots and renew social connections may be enticing, starting over can be a huge hurdle to overcome, and family and friends may not provide a warm homecoming. The reasons that served as the impetus for emigration could still be present and they might not be aware how much they and their loved ones had changed during their absence. Hence they could feel like strangers in their homeland as well. The end result would be a sense of not belonging anywhere and thus remaining suspended between two countries as perpetual immigrants.

*Loss and mourning*

When people were compelled to emigrate and return visits were not feasible, coupled with insufficient support in the new country, the mourning necessary for adaptation and
psychological development was sometimes not possible (Akhtar, 1999, p. 103). South African immigrants often felt angry about being “forced” to leave their father land. They experienced “separation guilt” (Akhtar, 1999, p. 83) about leaving friends and loved ones behind to face a situation of fear and insecurity (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-2). Many participants stated that they were worried about the safety of family and friends in South Africa, and were startled by phone calls in the middle of the night as it could mean bad news. Those who had left in a panic after a traumatic event were deprived of the “rite of farewell” (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 157) that prevented anticipatory mourning (Akhtar, 1999, p. 7). Some viewed themselves as exiles that had been pushed out by the rest of their nation and became cynical about South Africa, or experienced feelings of guilt, anger or shame (Akhtar, 1999, p. 91). This lack of retrospective idealisation of the homeland deprived the person of a buffer against the frustrations of life in the new country (Akhtar, 1999, p. 92). Some participants exhibited uncharacteristic behaviour, such as uttering profanities, making crude remarks about disabled people or having angry outbursts as a form of protest against their circumstances. As reluctant immigrants, some experienced “poisoned nostalgia” (Akhtar, 1999, p. 92), where South Africa was devalued and remained unmourned in the mind (Akhtar, 1999, p. 9). Emigrating under a cloud of fear and discontent, coupled with a critical stance towards South Africa, abrupt severing of social ties and a premature assimilation into New Zealand society made immigrants vulnerable to depression at a later stage.

Initially, cognitive distortions or denial protected the immigrant from being overwhelmed by unbearable emotions (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 97-98). After the excitement and novelty of the new environment had worn off, temporary measures to contain stressors crumbled because of cross-cultural differences (Oberg, cited in Hener et al., 1997, p. 247), daily hassles (Hener et al., 1997, p. 252) the realities of living in a new country and the lack of familiar sources of support (Mirsky & Peretz, 2006, p. 53). It suddenly dawned on
people that they were strangers living in a strange land, and that their environment seemed completely alien. A profound sense of loss and disbelief set in that elicited a shock wave of emotions (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-2), resulting in an extended period of distress. Participants reported having recurrent “emotional breakdowns”, which involved intense sadness and sudden crying spells that came out of the blue and left them inconsolable.

Johnston et al. (2006, p. 1243) found that 77% of recent South African immigrants had experienced significant homesickness. Some participants regarded it as the worst part of immigration, and said it started about one to four months after arrival. They missed and longed to be with family and friends back home, and vice versa. The disruption of their regular social routine, for instance, going for coffee with a sister on a Saturday morning, became a source of considerable distress. Immigration also altered people’s psychosocial relationship with animals, for instance, having to leave a beloved pet behind (Akhtar, 1999, p. 38). Participants also missed the “small things”, such as the buildings of the city they lived in, as well as the smell of rain, the rugged landscape, the wildlife and the trees of South Africa. One participant talked about missing the chameleons in her back yard at home. Searles and Spizform (cited in Ward & Styles, 2007, p. 321) explained that an ecological sense of self developed during childhood by imprinting on the environment, and it provided a sense of comfort and emotional security. When this link with a familiar environment was severed during immigration, it was experienced as a part of the self that had been left behind and acute grief reactions ensued (Ward & Styles, 2007, pp. 319, 328). Van Ecke et al. (2005, p. 658) explained that as immigration involved separation from significant people and places, attachment styles formed during childhood were triggered and caused psychological distress. South African immigrants found that incidental stimuli that reminded them of home, say, the sound of a turtle dove during a television broadcast, was experienced as a nonverbal,
“visceral” or “primal” sensation that elicited strong emotional reactions, even in long-term residents.

The inherent losses of immigration, coupled with culture shock caused a disruption in the individual’s identity (Akhtar, 1999, p. 77). All childhood experiences, memories and feelings were embedded in the sociocultural relationships, language, and physical environment of the home country (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 90). Hence it shaped the sense of self and formed a fundamental part of a person’s identity and symbolic universe (Daschke, cited in Nikelly, 2004, p. 194). As a person’s identity was constructed and grounded within the human and natural environment in South Africa, the loss of these connections meant that certain relationships, experiences and ways of being were no longer possible (Denford, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 83). The immigrant was triangled between the idealised country of origin and the devalued host society, and an amorphous identity of “immigrant” was assigned to him or her. Discontinuity of identity or a loss of self-sameness and coherence arose as the newcomer could no longer rely on the affirmation and validation of the home environment to sustain it (Akhtar, 1999, pp. 48, 77; Grinberg, & Grinberg, 1989, p. 14; Rogler, 1994, p. 701).

Some ruminated about the negative aspects of New Zealand and began to wonder if South Africa was really as bad as it had seemed when they had left (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-2). Nostalgic longing for South Africa provided temporary solace, and served as an adaptive strategy against loss (Nikelly, 2004, p. 185; Volkan, cited in Walsh & Shulman, 2007, p. 357). Walsh and Shulman (2007, p. 362) found that attempts to resolve these fractures in the self within the first year after migration resulted in more symptomatic behaviour. They concluded that splitting allowed the person to experience pain and disappointment, and to mourn the lost parts of the self, which allowed better reflection and integration (Walsh & Shulman, 2007, pp. 362, 367). Initially, this person might experience
relatively high levels of psychological symptoms, but because these symptoms usually decrease significantly after one year, this could be more beneficial for the individual in the long run (Walsh & Shulman, 2007, pp.367-368).

However, clinging to nostalgic memories of the past to deny losses and avoid the pain of grieving, while fantasising about returning to a better South Africa one day, could cause the person to become “frozen in time”. This could result in a superficial resolution of loss and an artificial adjustment to the host country (Marlin, cited Henry et al., 2005, p. 111) where a “false self” (p. 364) developed to cover up the internal fractures (Walsh & Shulman, 2007, p. 369). Participants reported a sense of having to “tread carefully” in New Zealand, and thus either kept quiet or used humour to deflect negative comments made by Kiwis about South Africa, despite feeling angry or hurt. This ingratiating stance during social interaction left them with a sense of dishonesty and incongruency. Others used avoidance tactics to escape from reality, such as comfort eating or excessive sleeping so that their “brains could switch off”. On the surface these individuals appeared to function adequately, but as the cognitive and emotional aspects of mourning became disconnected from their causative losses, they were prone to experience interpersonal difficulties, as well as psychological and physiological symptoms (Bowlby, cited in Walsh & Shulman, 2007, p. 369).

For most immigrants, the pain and distress over losses, coupled with the anxiety and confusion of culture shock eventually gave rise to sorrow, anguish, grief, mourning and bereavement (Akhtar, 1999, p. 6; Baskauskas; Furnham & Bochner, cited in Rogler, 1994, p. 704). Immigrants mourned for the people, places and belongings they had lost, as well as aspects of the self that had been left behind (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 96; Walsh & Shulman, 2007, p. 367). This included separation from lifelong friends and having to sell precious belongings that could not fit into the shipping container. Some reported leaving the assertive and exuberant parts of themselves in South Africa to facilitate integration.
Mourning was a complex, dynamic process that involved overcoming defensive mechanisms to experience the pain of loss and confront the challenges of the new environment, while maintaining contact with reality (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 67-68, 96.). It provided opportunities for growth, but imbalances in personality structures resulting from these significant losses also increased the risk for mental illness (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 15, 96).

People went through a grief process and experienced emotional turmoil, including denial, anger and sadness with periods of uncontrollable crying. Grinberg and Grinberg (1989, p. 97) found that in the beginning, the predominant feelings were intense pain for all that had been left behind or lost, deep-rooted loneliness, fear of the unknown and helplessness. On reflection, most participants concluded that the first year in New Zealand had been emotionally tough. The trauma associated with migration, realising that they were unable to recoup what was lost, as well as the mourning process sometimes led to symptoms of anxiety and depression (Arlow; Ulman & Brothers, cited in Walsh & Shulman, 2007, p. 357; Walsh & Shulman, 2007, pp. 362, 368). The extent to which the person was able to accept and mourn these internal and external losses was determined by the degree of adjustment to life in New Zealand over time (Volkan, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 6). Bowlby (cited in Walsh & Shulman, 2007, p. 369) identified chronic mourning, which involved an intense and prolonged emotional response to loss and an inability to reorganise one’s life.

Loneliness and alienation

Leaving the country of one’s birth involved profound losses, including social networks, cultural roots and historical continuity (Akhtar, 1999, pp. 5, 8; Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989). The newcomer had been displaced from the familiar world that had been left behind and was still regarded as a foreigner by the host society (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989,
Members of the new community had bonds with each other, such as a shared history and knowledge of daily life from which the newcomer was excluded (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 23). Participants described their sense of being “left out” during conversations between Kiwis, and eventually realised that their sense of exclusion arose from the absence of a shared history. In an unfamiliar environment with different values and social customs, immigrants could no longer rely on their culturally based assumptions, which interfered with their ability to make decisions and solve problems (Murray, cited in Henry et al., 2005, p. 110). One participant, who had followed her parents to New Zealand, was ambivalent about her own immigration and said she felt confused and fearful of making the wrong decision. Hence she was always second-guessing herself when faced with decisions that had significant repercussions.

A number of South African immigrant families reported that they felt lonely and isolated living in New Zealand. The person who could tolerate being alone was better able to deal with being distanced from loved ones, and being regarded as an outsider during the early stages of acculturation (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 23). However, as the migratory experience accentuated feelings of estrangement and isolation, those with a predisposition for loneliness could have an exacerbation of these feelings (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 23). Participants who had experienced loss during early childhood or during the early phases of immigration had a tendency to cling to what was familiar. Those who had come from close-knit families found being separated from family members extremely traumatic. Loneliness and alienation were intensified if newcomers had no contacts in New Zealand, and were unable to make meaningful connections in the South African immigrant community. Men who had divorced prior to immigration and did not have friends in New Zealand experienced intense loneliness. Women found the psychological effects of immigration particularly problematic, especially in the beginning. Those who were alone at home, while their
husbands were at work and the children were at school, were particularly vulnerable. Loneliness also resulted where husbands had to work long hours to provide adequate financial support as their wives felt that they had nobody to talk to. If they were resentful about immigrating, pined for their friends and family and made little effort to integrate, the “immigration blues” were harder to endure than for their husbands (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-6).

Those who had remained behind in South Africa lacked an understanding of the heartache and sorrow, financial worries and workplace demands experienced by newcomers. When the letters and e-mails they sent home to family and friends remained unanswered, it deepened their sense of abandonment, loneliness and isolation. Participants came to the conclusion that once people had left South Africa, some family members “put them inside in a box” or considered them dead. Marchetti-Mercer (2012, pp. 376, 384) confirmed that the emigration of loved ones can be likened to a “death” that leads to marked changes in relationships, and consequent estrangement. She highlighted resentment about emigrants’ apparent lack of acknowledgement and empathy about the impact of their emigration on those who stay behind (Marchetti-Mercer, 2012, p. 383). Participants in her study felt that emigrants wanted support from those back home, but did not reciprocate to help those who remained in South Africa to cope with their own loss (Marchetti-Mercer, 2012, p. 384). She concluded that from a systemic perspective, loss due to emigration should be regarded as a “mutually shared experience” (Marchetti-Mercer, 2012, p. 387). As newcomers gradually became more accustomed to their new lifestyle those who had stayed behind also moved on with their lives (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 79). Even those in frequent contact with loved ones at home found that the lengthy and frequent phone calls and e-mails slowed to a trickle, which signified mutual distancing (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 79). As a result, friends
and family in South Africa, as well as the person who had emigrated felt neglected, forgotten and discarded.

Children depended on a protective family structure and often took cues from their parents on how to adapt to their new country. If they observed that their parents were struggling, they often attempted to hide their feelings when they missed their friends and extended family or found things difficult in New Zealand. They often responded to their distress by being quiet or becoming tearful. Harrison and Nortje (2000, p. 13-10) confirmed that anxious South African children tended to avoid communication and cried more than usual. Instead of seeking help for emotional problems, some immigrants preferred to stay busy by welcoming and taking care of the immediate needs of newcomers and their children. Even though it was also stressful in a sense, most found that helping others to cope was effective therapy for themselves. Having other adults available because of temporary, shared accommodation provided someone outside the family whom children could confide in. Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2003) emphasised that supportive relationships with other adults in the community could promote the social adaptation of immigrant youth who were undergoing profound shifts in their sense of self and were struggling to negotiate the changes in their relationships with parents and peers.

Migration demanded extensive psychological reconstruction, and the processing of loss, recovery and reinvention was associated with periods of frustration, disorganisation and distress (Grinberg, 1989, pp. 70, 96-97). Immigrants often experienced a sense of incompleteness or having something missing inside owing to a lack of personal integration (Klein, cited in Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 23). Similar to adolescence, immigrants needed a “transitional space” (Grinberg, & Grinberg, 1989, p. 136) to gain cultural awareness, master the rules and negotiate new roles within the host society. Failing to do so, the person could become trapped in a system of paradoxes (p. 137), and continuity between
the self and the social environment could crumble (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 14, 141). For example, a participant reported that because he had been told off for his customary direct, frank and outspoken manner, he concluded that he either spoke too hastily or said “the wrong thing at the wrong time”. Since open communication with colleagues was an essential element of his job description, he was stuck between a rock and a hard place. People who faced such an untenable situation sometimes experienced physical symptoms of stress, while others resorted to more regressed defense mechanisms, such as rebelliousness or passive-aggressive behaviour.

Developing a sense of belonging was vital for becoming integrated into a new country and maintaining a sense of identity (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 23). Immigrants had to carve out a new social and occupational position for themselves in the host community. Hence the attitude and reactions of members of the new community towards immigrants had an important effect on their adaptation and settlement (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 81). However, immigrants were often regarded as unwelcome opportunists or intruders who deprived citizens of job opportunities, depleted financial resources and threatened existing social structures and norms. Newcomers were scrutinised to evaluate their potential threat in an effort to neutralise or expel the perceived hazard (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 81). This hostile attitude contributed to prejudice, discrimination and xenophobia (Akhtar, 1999, p. 23) that left the newcomer feeling intimidated, fearful, isolated and alienated (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 62). Hostility to immigrants manifested in subtle ways, such as ignoring them or discounting their opinion, interrupting or hurrying them up when they spoke, or pretending not to understand what they were saying. The habit of a senior colleague to peer at his watch, as soon as it was the immigrant’s turn to speak, made workplace meetings a disconcerting and humiliating experience.
The immigrant’s attitude, personality and behaviour could confirm or modify the expectations and first impressions of the host society (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 83). South Africans arrived in New Zealand with a lot of emotional baggage owing to personal or vicarious exposure to trauma in South Africa (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-7). Some had lost friends or family members under tragic circumstances. They resented being “driven” (p. 13-7) from the land of their birth and felt that that their immigration-related risks and sacrifices were substantial (Harrison & Nortje, 2000). New Zealanders were either not interested in their plight or had no comprehension of the vigilance and fear and that pervaded daily life in South Africa (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-7). A number of participants reported being the target of racial or disparaging remarks, or overhearing offensive conversations in public areas about South Africans, or Afrikaans-speaking immigrants. Most workplaces had written policies and disciplinary procedures to protect employees against workplace bullying and prejudice, but in practice these measures were less robust. South African immigrants thus experienced a sense of being the target of persecution and some reacted with anger, cynicism and bitterness. Many had emigrated to escape from threats to their physical safety, but ironically they now faced equally damaging forms of interpersonal violence. In terms of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, their desire for safety and security was not being met in New Zealand either, despite the country’s lower level of reported crime.

Occupying a marginal position in society and not fitting in anywhere or with anyone could lead to a state of perpetual homelessness (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 23). Some participants became discouraged, concluded that immigration was a mistake and that their endeavour to leave South Africa and settle successfully in New Zealand had failed. They ruminated about the past and worried about their future prospects, which led to impulsive thoughts of returning to South Africa. For those who remained in New Zealand, this sense of being lost or adrift sometimes lasted five years or longer (Lerner et al., 2005, p. 1811).
Bennett et al. (1997, p. 162) reported that over time, South African immigrants’ perceived sense of control over settlement difficulties decreased owing to ongoing financial hardship, inability to re-establish new friendships, loss of reputation, lifestyle, country and roots, isolation from family and friends, and anti-South African sentiment in New Zealand. In other words, their needs for psychological sustenance, social belonging and self-esteem were not being met. Some attempted to avoid an untenable situation by distracting themselves and keeping busy, while others reduced their emotional distress by crying or complaining (Bennett et al., 1997, pp. 163).

Those who were unable to return if things did not work out in New Zealand felt trapped in an unhappy situation. They tried to improve their lives by accommodating or changing the situation, for instance, working longer hours, changing jobs, looking at the pros and cons of immigration and keeping in contact with friends and family in South Africa (Bennett et al., 1997, p. 163). Others who were bound by employment contracts or could not find alternative employment, decided to focus less on their careers and placed the needs of their families first. Some participants used solitary activities, such as reading or playing the guitar, while others relied on physical activities, such as kayaking or weekend outings to escape from their daily struggles. Some attempted to keep busy by exploring other talents, such as writing, but often lacked confidence and compared their work unfavourably to that of others. Some used internet dating to establish a relationship with someone in another country to escape their emotional difficulties in New Zealand.

However, when certain problems remained unresolved after five years in New Zealand, immigrants lost confidence in their ability to change the outcome. Many tried to avoid, ignore or minimise the impact of the problem by adjusting or devaluing their aspirations (Bennett et al., 1997, p. 163). Minimising and reframing experiences and using distraction techniques to avoid thinking about difficulties can be adaptive during
uncontrollable situations (Krohne, 2001, p. 15167). Cognitive avoidance lowered the level of psychological distress, but in the long term had the potential to result in physical symptoms that masked an underlying affective component (Krohne, 2001, p. 15168). To fill the void of what had been lost, some participants engaged in comfort eating that exacerbated disordered eating patterns and led to weight gain. South African men were more prone to alcohol abuse or developing stress-related physical illnesses, such as heart disease, as they often lacked the emotional skills to manage the challenges of acculturation conflict in the family, and cultural norms made it difficult for them to mobilise psychological support (Reyneke, 2004, p. 2). By the time the South African community became aware of immigrants who were struggling on their own and started contacting them, they often found a person on the other end of the phone who was in acute distress and a state of desolation.

It was clear that immigrants experienced a loss of control, competence, self-respect and social status (Akhtar, 1999; Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989) as well as feelings of confusion, insecurity, inadequacy, inferiority, vulnerability, loneliness and alienation (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 59). Maintaining one’s professional identity, when other aspects of the self were challenged, could provide a sense of “inner continuity” (Lichtenstein, cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. 25). Even though employment created new opportunities for social interaction and support, it was also a source of additional stress. Some people who started working immediately were prevented from finding their feet first and exploring their social environment, which contributed to their loneliness and isolation. Others faced a long daily commute or had to spend extended periods away from their families because of work obligations. One participant, who had been used to an office job, could not cope with the physical demands of a new business venture. She started doubting her own abilities and felt incompetent, useless and pushed aside when others had to take over relatively easy tasks to get the job done. Most offices in New Zealand were open plan with multiple-user
workstations, which made the working environment noisy, distracting and unpredictable. Having to move from one desk to another and facing a chronic shortage of available computers made it hard to manage a high workload. In the workplace, people faced the paradox of having to prove themselves to a new employer, but their diligent work ethic was often interpreted as arrogance. Others experienced a lack of validation, acknowledgement and remuneration for their expertise and hard work. Where this was coupled with criticism, lack of career advancement and increasing demands, employees felt disrespected and deceived regarding the terms of their employment contracts. Akhtar (1999, p. 25) asserted that feeling competent and valuable were essential elements for a meaningful life, but the person who became vocationally disabled would perish psychologically.

As an “outsider” or a “stranger”, who was regarded as a subordinate member of society, the immigrant became insignificant and powerless (Nikelly, 2004, p. 185). He or she felt victimised and suspicious of others, which could lead to the person becoming socially reclusive (Akhtar, 1999, p. 89). Becoming anonymous or a nonentity in society exacerbated feelings of insecurity, loneliness and isolation, and without the supportive environment of the homeland, feelings of depression often resulted (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 90). Winnicott (cited in Tannenbaum, 2007, p. 148) believed that the transitions of immigration, coupled with the loss of containment provided by the homeland, caused immigrants to lose their familiar patterns of being and relating to people (Marlin, cited in Henry et al., 2005, p. 110). This loss of an “inner compass”, and having to surrender parts of the self to achieve integration in the host society led to feelings of anxiety, anger and bitterness, as well as losing a sense of purpose and direction in life (Berry; Ritsner & Ponizovsky, cited in Tannenbaum, 2007, p. 148). The accumulated traumatic events of immigration could therefore threaten the integrity of the personality (Freud, cited in Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 11-12). To prevent being overwhelmed by anxiety, the person could start experiencing somatic
complaints, phobic symptoms or nightmares of being lost in a strange city and being unable to find their way home.

Despair and identity crisis

Grinberg and Grinberg (1989, p. 15) regarded immigration as one of life’s emergencies that exposed the individual to a state of disorganisation, and the person’s capacity to reorganise over time predicted whether the immigration journey would be a success or failure. It was important to distinguish between a self-limiting sense of uneasiness due to culture shock, and an unresolved identity crisis that could result in psychopathology. During the process of mourning for what had been lost or left behind, the immigrant relied heavily on his or her coping and problem-solving skills to accommodate new cultural norms and learn new behaviour (Hener et al., 1997, p. 247). However, if the person was unable to skilfully manage cumulative stressors and identity dissonance, it could result in an extended period of crisis or a “disintegration” phase (Gonsalves, 1992, p. 385; Herz, cited in Hener et al., 1997, p. 248; Sluzki, 1979, p. 4). In response to immigration-related losses, some could experience chronic grief reactions, without a reduction in the intensity and range of emotions (Rando, cited in Henry et al., 2005, p. 111). One participant found that instead of overcoming her loss, her sadness only increased over time. This prolonged grief could result in feelings of helplessness, defeat and despair that could trigger clinical depression and prevent adjustment to the new country (Henry et al., 2005, pp. 111). This person could develop medical or psychiatric disorders that could trigger addictive behaviours, family conflict and marital breakup (Berry, 1997, p. 13). Children and adolescents could develop behavioural and identity problems, or could engage in criminal behaviour (Berry, 1997, p. 13). Participants recalled how a spontaneous young girl had undergone a complete personality change and become introverted because of considerable adaptation difficulties.
According to Gonsalves (1992, pp. 387-388), psychological problems occurred from a few weeks up to many years after arrival, and could be triggered by pre-migration problems, adaptation difficulties, family disintegration, social isolation, and an identity or existential crisis. During the second year after arrival, participants realised that immigration was not as easy as they thought it would be, and they reached an emotional low point. After the excitement of coming to New Zealand had worn off, people started feeling depressed when they realised what they had left behind and that they would never be able to recoup their losses. They had to relinquish their personal history and their dreams of having a future in the New South Africa (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 13-7). The social and career roles, as well as the status and reputation they had had in South Africa became inconsequential. The implication was that the person they used to be was no longer viable. Grinberg and Grinberg (1989, p. 89) explained that the person experienced a sense of being “emptied out” of the ego content and abilities that embodied who they had been prior to immigration. According to Wu (cited in Yeh et al., 2008, p. 43), their accents or lack of language fluency often resulted in the “perpetual foreigner syndrome”, which made them vulnerable to “microagressions”, such as everyday slights or insults (Sue et al., cited in Yeh et al., 2008). Even though South Africans visually blended in with New Zealand society, their distinctive accents make them a target for persecutory and bullying behaviour. Feelings of invisibility were also common where a person’s qualities, talents, abilities and self-worth were ignored or negated as a result of prejudice. In an effort to neutralise and eliminate the presence that posed a threat to their way of life, local inhabitants dehumanised the immigrant by reducing the person to “something” rather than being “someone” (Kafka, cited in Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 84). Over time, the newcomer’s identity was eroded, and eventually the person’s selfhood disintegrated and dissolved into a state of “no-nidentity” or being “nobody”. This annulment permitted the local inhabitants to react to strangers as if they were “nothing”, to the point of
ignoring or negating their existence (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 83-84). This annihilation of the newcomer's identity left the person defenceless and in a state of “emptiness” or an existential vacuum, termed the “dark night of the self” (Hale, 1992, p. 66). This self-estrangement or disconnection from one’s inner self resulted in a sense of profound loneliness and social isolation, even in the presence of support systems, owing to distrust and rejection of others (Ponizovsky & Ritsner, 2004, p. 412). This person could experience a variety of psychological symptoms, such as anxiety, paranoia, depression and suicidality.

Realising that life continued as if they were obsolete and superfluous, the immigrant felt dead in the eyes of everyone, including their family and close friends (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 61). The person felt like a wandering ghost who was aware of others, but felt disregarded or invisible to the broader society (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 61). A quick glance in the mirror or checking that they were still casting a shadow served as reassurance that they were still physically alive. However, the immigrant had become redundant, extinct and forgotten by society, and was now exiled to a position of being a faceless castaway who remained adrift on a flimsy life raft on the turbulent oceans of life. The perception that nobody was able to understand the intensity of their pain or that people were indifferent to their suffering could drive people to despair or suicide (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 61). These individuals felt “suspended in time” while they were “treading water” to stay alive, stuck in a paradoxical “no man’s land” where they were unable to return home and did not have the strength or ability to move forward (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 61-62). Themes around identity conflict and identity loss often surfaced in dreams and could take the form of experiencing one’s own death and visiting the grave afterwards.

Community surveys of migrant populations found that depressive and anxiety disorders were the most common conditions (Jayasuriya; London; Nguyen, cited in Abbott, 1997, p. 253). Symptoms of depression could appear during the first year as part of the
mourning process, after about two years as a result of unmet expectations, lack of perceived social support or family conflict, or could occur years later when the person realised that their loss and separation were permanent (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 145). According to Nguyen, Sluzki, and Tyhurst (cited in Ritsner & Ponizovsky, 1999, pp. 126, 135) and Pernice et al. (2000, p. 24), psychological difficulties peaked from six months to two-and-a-half years after arrival, and could last up to six years. Lerner et al. (2005, p. 1805) reported that psychological adjustment took longer than other processes of adaptation and that the psychological distress of immigrants remained high after five years. One participant said that her memories were still upsetting after nine years. Davidson et al. (cited in Te Pou, 2008, p. 24) confirmed that symptoms of depression can continue for ten to 12 years after resettlement. One respondent stated that for him the first 20 years in New Zealand had been the most difficult. A participant warned that even though the emotional difficulties of the crisis phase were largely overcome with time, they had a tendency to make an unexpected comeback. It would seem that after a number of years in New Zealand, psychosocial factors played a more important role in the well-being of participants than their financial status (Lerner et al., 2005, p. 1805). Timotijevic and Breakwell (2000, p. 370) confirmed that threats to a person’s identity were not completely eliminated during the identity reconstruction process, and this could have chronic repercussions.

Study participants knew of a significant number of South African immigrant women who developed symptoms of a clinical depression. This was in line with Segel’s (1996) conclusions that South African immigrant women reported significantly higher levels of depression than men. Some people became socially isolative and one woman said that she lay in a dark room for hours. Others stopped writing to friends in South Africa with the excuse that they were “too busy”. As a result, some friends broke off contact with participants, even after their depression had improved and they had started writing again. One person became so
depressed that she needed help from family members with her daily self-care. Feeling useless and pushed aside at work led to immigrants losing their sense of identity and purpose in life, which gave rise to thoughts that they would rather be dead. Two women reported experiencing suicidal thoughts, and one woman said she felt hesitant to leave her husband alone at home because she was concerned about his mental state. Despite reports of suicidal thoughts, none of the participants knew of a South African immigrant who attempted or completed suicide.

Khawaja and Mason (2008) reported that among South African immigrants in Australia, symptoms of anxiety and depression did not meet the criteria for a clinical disorder (p. 238), but added that respondents may have been treated with medication or psychotherapy during their study (p. 242). South African immigrants in New Zealand were inclined to first seek help from their general practitioner for psychological problems, such as depression. However, some did not find the consultation helpful and others found it difficult to express their emotions in English. One participant reported that about 80% of South African women who developed depression used anti-depressants for a period of time, and some continued taking it for years. Some children, who had more severe or ongoing immigration-related difficulties required medical or psychological treatment. Psychological assessment and intervention could be useful to address immigration issues and difficulties, to process loss and grieving, and to promote acculturation, adaptation and personal growth. One participant, who presented with a medical problem for which an organic cause could not be found, was referred to a clinical psychologist for a neuropsychological assessment. Some participants sought psychotherapy for an exacerbation of overeating, depression and suicidal thoughts. When South African immigrants considered psychotherapy, they were more inclined to look for a South African psychologist or counsellor. Consulting a South African psychotherapist removed the usual fearfulness and stigma of psychotherapy owing to the shared experience of
being immigrants in New Zealand. Some participants utilised their Employee Assisted Programme (EAP) or employer-funded redundancy counselling to discuss their feelings about immigration. One participant said she found it interesting and beneficial when the counsellor asked her whether it was not time for her to bring the parts of herself that she had left behind in South Africa to New Zealand. EAP could also be useful to address other difficulties at work, such as office politics and workplace bullying. Another participant attended individual therapy because it was a requirement of her academic curriculum. She found that, instead of discussing her study assignments, she ended up crying about her additional loss of being unable to have children after settling down and marrying in New Zealand.

People did not always want to go to a counsellor with their emotional problems as they sometimes simply needed a friend who was prepared to listen. For Afrikaans-speaking participants, it was beneficial to have someone whom they could contact to let off steam in their own language. For men, who had immigrated alone, being in regular contact with South African male friends in New Zealand provided an emotional release. Some settled immigrants were willing to go to people’s homes to provide confidential support. As immigrants talked about their problems, their moods fluctuated and some became tearful. It was useful for newcomers to have people who listened to their immigration experience and provided a more positive outlook for the future. Women groups encouraged newcomers by telling them that they had been through the same experience, and that they would eventually laugh about the difficulties they endured. Contact with the settled immigrant community could thus provide a source of support, validation and emotional expression. Akhtar (1999, p. 9) concurred that “emotional refuelling” via family members or cultural networks in the destination country provided a sense of belonging and emotional support. Occasionally, the workplace became a source of emotional support. One woman recalled the empathy and
compassion of her colleagues during a period when she had felt particularly lonely and melancholic. In addition, validation for the immigrant employee’s hard work and expertise, as well as appropriate compensation and recognition for services rendered could scaffold a person’s professional identity and ease financial difficulties.

During this process of self-reconstruction, if individuals worked successfully through the period of mourning to repair the splits in the self and the external world (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 97), it encouraged the progressive re-establishment of a remodelled identity that transcended both cultures (Henry et al., 2005, p. 113). According to the continuing bonds model of mourning, immigrants transformed internalised representations of their homeland and incorporated elements of their native culture into the structure of their new lives (Henry et al., 2005, pp. 109, 111).

Renewal and transmutation

It slowly dawned on South African immigrants that they were regarded as “not one of them” by New Zealanders, and it took time getting used to being “an outsider”. The sage advice of participants was that South Africans should not get so upset about comments made by Kiwis because they did not really mean it, and that one just had to learn to tolerate it. People had to work though their experiences until they reached a point where they had processed being an “immigrant” and had come to terms with it. Eybers (1973) confirmed that “step by step” you become an immigrant. If immigrants had the capacity to process the challenges and losses of immigration, the crisis could be overcome and the person could experience further development, enrichment and regeneration (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 15). Processing loss was an active, conscious, restoration process (Jacobson, cited in Walsh & Shulman, 2007, p. 369), known as “selving” (Edelman, cited in Ward & Styles, 2007, p. 322). It was based on a dialectical movement between regression and progression (Grinberg
Grinberg, 1989, p. 96) to achieve a synthesis of the two self-representations. A tolerance for ambivalence allowed a “hyphenated identity” to emerge, which lacked the depth of historical grounding, but was endowed with a greater breadth of experience (Akhtar, 1999, p. 83). This growth process resulted in a more mature, integrated and balanced self that permitted a reorganisation of a person’s life in a new culture (Walsh & Shulman, 2007, p. 369). This person did not merely have an intellectual knowledge of immigration, but knew how to “be” an immigrant who lived the experience and prevailed. According to Berry (1997, p. 14), successful adaptation implied a clear sense of personal and cultural identity, good mental health and well-being, and achieving personal satisfaction in the host country. This developmental path does not have a clear end-point because the identity changes of immigration continue to evolve throughout the life span (Akhtar, 1999, p. 102). The process of adaptation and renewal was more likely for those who were able to tolerate separation before immigration, who had some level of choice to emigrate, and where the host country was relatively welcoming (Akhtar, 1999, pp. 102-103).

The immigrant could find that old attachment-separation-individuation conflicts had to be reprocessed and losses had to be reconciled to develop a more balanced view of the home and host countries (Mirsky & Peretz, 2006, p.53). Allowing themselves to mourn enabled immigrants to slowly start incorporating elements of the new culture, and the boundaries between their inner and outer worlds faded (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 98). The person entered a period of intra-psychic reorganisation to integrate elements from the host country, developed a more mature self-concept and underwent lasting personality changes (Gonsalves, 1992, p. 385; Mirsky & Peretz, 2006, pp. 53-54). Linguistic identity change occurred when a second language, such as Māori, spontaneously started to appear in humour, and some developed a hybrid language to express different parts of the self (Akhtar, 1999, pp. 100-101).
Eventually, the immigrant rediscovered the pleasures of setting new goals and made plans for a realistic future, instead of yearning for a “lost paradise” (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 98). The past no longer interfered with living fully in the present, even though mourning for one’s native country is never altogether completed (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 98). By accepting both cultures, without having to renounce either, consolidation of an enriched, “remodelled” identity was achieved (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 98). Those who had lived in several countries often developed a multiplicity of partial identities, similar to tourists who fill their luggage with treasured mementos of their travels. These modern-day nomads felt at home in multiple places, without truly belonging to any of them (Akhtar, 1999, p. 104). Even though they lived fully in whatever context they encountered, they exhibited a perpetual nostalgia and yearning for what had been left behind in their trail. This illustrates the dialectical forces that constantly drive human evolution, namely the need to belong versus the desire to explore.

According to Murphy (cited in Berry, 2005, p. 703) societies that endorsed multiculturalism offered a more culturally sensitive settlement context via service provision and social support. Integration acculturation strategies endorsed by the New Zealand government supported multiculturalism with the intention of enriching the nation. For instance, during citizenship ceremonies, immigrants were advised to adapt to the mainstream culture of New Zealand society, but also to retain their own culture. Those taking their citizenship oath were invited to bring along members of their own communities and to wear their traditional clothing. Participants encouraged people to embrace other cultures and languages by focusing on the commonalities rather than the differences, and finding new ways of communication. In the company of people who spoke a different language, focusing on nonverbal information could provide information on how people related to each other, as well as the emotions behind what was being communicated.
Participants reported that homesickness and missing and longing for those back home lessened after about six years in New Zealand, but briefly reoccurred during family celebrations and the festive season. Ritsner and Ponizovsky (1999, p.126) also found that distress followed a fluctuating temporal pattern that gradually decreased over five years. Spending time with other South African immigrants during these times helped to relieve feelings of homesickness. Saving up enough money to return to South Africa also provided peace of mind and eased homesickness because people felt that they had a choice. Akhtar (1999, p. 9) confirmed that trips to the home country provided “emotional refuelling” that facilitated adjustment to the destination society. It also assisted separation from the homeland as immigrants were faced with the reality in South Africa instead of their idealised memories. As they realised that the past could not be recreated and what had been lost could not be recouped (Mirsky & Peretz, 2006, p.53), they could surrender the dream of “going home” again one day (Shin, 1999, pp. 613-614).

According to Gonsalves (1992, p. 385) the restabilisation or reintegration phase occurred from the third (Mirsky & Kaushinsky, cited in Hener et al., 1997, p. 253) to the fifth year (Koranyi, cited in Hener et al., 1997, p. 253) after arrival. Immigrants’ lives were likely to return to normality after five to seven years, which allowed them to function more effectively and independently (Hener et al., 1997, p. 247). They became more accepting and tolerant of cultural differences, their self-esteem and confidence grew, they felt more in control of their lives, and their productivity and involvement in New Zealand society increased. The person began to feel like an integrated member of New Zealand society and lived among others with his or her own particularities of language, customs and culture (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p. 97). The immigrant became more comfortable to associate with individuals from other cultures (Akhtar, 1999, p. 83) and developed mutual interests with the residents of the new country. The person was grateful for the opportunities offered
by New Zealand, and their capacity for meaningful, reciprocal relationships returned (Akhtar, 1999, p. 89). They maintained positive and stable ties with South Africa, but some found that with time they became less reliant on contact with their family back home as they started to build a new life in New Zealand. They also enjoyed their freedom of movement and independence in New Zealand without the burden of constantly worrying about their personal safety. People resolved the push and pull ambivalence of immigration by concluding that it was impossible to sever their roots with South Africa, but were eventually able to look back in fond memory instead of being grief stricken. Garza-Guerrero (cited in Ward & Styles, 2007, p. 320) confirmed that emotional ties to the human and nonhuman elements of the homeland were never completely severed.

Upon reflection, settled immigrants believed that coming to New Zealand had been an interesting life experience and that they had learnt many life lessons. Some thought of themselves as global citizens and said that they considered travelling or relocating to other destinations. Nagel (cited in Howard, 2000, p. 375) endorsed a dynamic, multilayered sense of self that contained a Diaspora of identities (p. 386) that was responsive to varying social contexts. Since personal identity in New Zealand was not based on genetics or skin colour, South Africans could choose to retain or change their ethnicity over time, such as being an “Afrikaner”, “European”, “Coloured”, “African”, “Indian”, “South African New Zealander” or “New Zealander”. After immigration-related differentiation and individuation, old age and retirement provided additional opportunities for a broadening and deepening of the self-concept, which promoted self-acceptance and emotional maturity (Akhtar, 1999, pp. 60-61). The majority of participants agreed with the findings of Johnston et al. (2005, p. 418) that they had eventually settled successfully and that they had made the right decision to immigrate to New Zealand.
Spiritual care

Spiritual beliefs could provide the psychological resilience to endure and find meaning in the hardships of immigration (Aranda, 2008, p. 18; Hagan & Ebaugh, 2003, pp. 1146, 1150, 1159). Religious affiliation assisted settlement of new immigrants by providing the opportunities for religious practice and social interaction, which established a supportive network that offered guidance, practical assistance and emotional comfort (Aranda, 2008, pp. 11, 19). Religious involvement could therefore improve life satisfaction by lowering psychological distress and decreasing symptoms of anxiety and depression (Aranda, 2008, p. 11).

Whereas New Zealand was considered to be a secular society, Greeff and Holtzkamp (2007, pp. 195, 198) reported that nearly 60% of South African immigrant parents viewed religious beliefs and activities as a valuable family resource to counteract migration-related stressors. They concluded that for South African families, an active religious faith could provide a stable identity, which contributed to a meaningful and successful adaptation to their new environment.

Religion and spirituality were important to most South African participants, and churches were an additional source of support and social connectedness that facilitated settlement. Newcomers often felt that they had nobody to rely on in New Zealand. Hence they often turned to God for guidance, support and assistance by doing bible study, praying and attending church services. Finding a church where they felt comfortable provided a sense of “family”. Jo asserted that “churches are a good thing for South African immigrants. It is something they have in common with other South Africans, and it provides a network, an infrastructure and a support mechanism”. Churches often took the initiative to visit people at their homes or camping grounds to help them feel welcome. Some newcomers said that a member from their congregation was the first person in New Zealand who had invited them over for “tea” at their home. Rural, Catholic communities were friendly and supportive
towards South African immigrants, particularly church members who had travelled abroad and were more tolerant of other cultures. This confirmed the views of Ward and Masgoret (2008) and Berry (2001, p. 623) that exposure to other cultures increased tolerance for diversity. New Zealand society was usually generous during a crisis, for instance, church members organised fund raising to cover the medical costs for urgent coronary bypass surgery for the son of a South African immigrant family.

People who had been committed church members prior to immigration usually made enquiries upon arrival to locate a suitable church in New Zealand. Some joined local Afrikaans, Christian churches, while others looked around until they found a church where they fitted in, for instance, the Reformed Church of New Zealand or a Presbyterian church. Some were attracted by the multicultural nature of particular church congregations or the religious convictions of the minister. Catholic families sometimes attended church less frequently in New Zealand owing to a decreased influence by their parents back home, but made an effort to attend mass. Becoming active members of a congregation and the church board, or playing the church organ helped people to feel useful in the service of God. In New Zealand, there was no religious or moral instruction in schools, unless the school was affiliated to a particular church or religion (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. 10-9). Some South Africans preferred to do business with other Christians or chose a school for their children where the principal was a Christian. The children of Catholic families often attended Catholic schools in South Africa and New Zealand. For Jewish participants, it was important to join a synagogue to maintain their Jewish identity, and to celebrate important events, such as a Bat Mitzvah and Yom Kippur. They also enjoyed doing volunteer work and the synagogue provided a place of rest and reflection after a busy work week. Compared to South Africa, New Zealand had a small Jewish community, and hence the choice of synagogues was limited. As Wellington had only one reformist synagogue and one orthodox synagogue, there
was more interaction between the orthodox and reformed communities than in South Africa. New Zealand synagogues also consisted of various socioeconomic groups, which meant that some members did not have a lot in common with other families at their synagogue.

Even though churches were a vital source of social and spiritual support for South African immigrants, at times questions and comments by church members were perceived as intrusive and critical. One participant made it clear that he did not appreciate members of his church prying into his personal affairs or criticising him for his personal circumstances. Some participants did not endorse mainstream religious beliefs and found it problematic when other South African immigrants assumed that they were churchgoers. Church affiliation was particularly problematic for South Africans who were more “spiritual” rather than religious and were thus not interested in joining a congregation. Others were hesitant to tell Afrikaans immigrants that, even though they had been brought up in a Christian home, they were now leaning towards a more eclectic belief system that included Eastern religious concepts. For settled immigrants, questions by newcomers about their religious affiliation felt more like harassment and an invasion of their privacy, rather than an enquiry to locate suitable churches or searching for points of connection with the settled community. Therefore newcomers could not assume that all members of the South African immigrant community belonged to a church congregation and would therefore be willing to discuss their spiritual or religious affiliation.

Aletta cautioned that “immigration is not for the faint hearted and takes much more courage and faith than anticipated”. Hence Christian participants found that they lived much closer to the Lord in New Zealand than ever before. Some warned that a “worldly person would struggle very hard to make it in New Zealand”. Being religious and attending church should, however, not be the primary focus because it is important to have a close, personal relationship with God. Participants accepted that “everything works together for the good”
for those who love God. Religious South African immigrants trusted that God would guide them along the course of their immigration journey, which meant that if one door closed, God would open another. They believed that God had paved the way for them to come to New Zealand as they had feared for their own safety in South Africa, and that He would not disappoint them once they had relocated. One couple attributed the timely arrival of their business visa just prior to the expiry of their visitor’s visa to an intervention by God, just as He had allowed Moses to walk through the Red Sea. Even those who considered returning to South Africa thought that if it was God’s will, He would open the doors for a return-migration.

The overarching concept was that there was “Somebody” looking after them on their life journey. South African immigrants, however, were not inclined to wait passively for divine intervention, as they had an attitude that “God helps those who help themselves”. They believed that God would never put them in a position that they could not manage. Their connection with the church, their own in-depth bible study and the acknowledgement of their dependence on God helped them to cope with the challenges of immigration. Religious publications, such as books and compact discs by Joyce Meyer, were also helpful. As religion was not so much part of society in New Zealand as in South Africa, some felt that they had to “justify” for themselves why they were Christian. Revisiting the basis of their religious beliefs was an effective process for immigrants as it ultimately strengthened their faith. Those who married people from other cultures and religions had to accept that the faith of their partners was something they had grown up with and that it was an integral part of them. Partners therefore had to make allowances for each other’s beliefs, for instance, in which church to marry and attending church services separately.

In chapter 7, the major findings of this study are summarised and interpreted by relating them back to the original research questions that were the focus of this study (see
chapters 1 and 4), as well as their theoretical underpinnings (see chapters 2 and 3). Recommendations are made to facilitate adaptation and settlement of South African immigrants in New Zealand. Limitations of this study are discussed and recommendations are made for future research.
CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In chapter 1 it was mentioned that Freud advises that in order to understand the demands of immigration one should refer to one’s “own experiences of life, or turn to the poets” (cited in Akhtar, 1999, p. xiii). Firstly, we return to the sacred wisdom of the poets regarding the challenges of migration:

The sands are wide, the oases few. It is always safest to remain where you are. But if you cannot remain where you are, then it is safest to go with a caravan. But if there is no caravan, then it is safest to go with a trusted band of companions. But if there are no trusted companions, then it is safest to go with one who knows the sands. But if there is no one who knows the sands, then you must cross the sands alone.

There are two things to remember. First, take nothing with you but what sustains you ... Second ... you must wait until nightfall, then it will be safe to travel. Moonlight and darkness will be light enough. There are two things you must do. Stay alive and keep moving. If you can do just those two things, you will come to another oasis.

This is the lesson on crossing the sands.

Remember it.

(St Gregory Nyssen)

Introduction

In 2013, the number of South African immigrants living in New Zealand was 54,279 (Statistics New Zealand, 2013) and this number was expected to grow with continued crime, unemployment and political instability in South Africa. In 2013, nearly a quarter of all the
people living in New Zealand were immigrants, which meant that in the future, immigrant-origin children would constitute a considerable segment of the population. With an influx of migrants, New Zealand society faces its own challenges owing to the worldwide economic downturn, as well as rebuilding Christchurch after two major earthquakes. New Zealand psychologists and other mental health clinicians are increasingly required to provide assessment and intervention for clients from a variety of cultural backgrounds, who often have a history of trauma and present with complex symptomatology. Some of those who have entered the country as skilled immigrants have been exposed to violence and political upheaval in their countries of origin, for instance, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia, Syria, Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe and South Africa. Whereas considerable assistance has been provided to United Nations-mandated refugees in New Zealand, immigrants are expected to settle with minimal input because it is assumed that they have made an informed choice to come to New Zealand.

International immigration literature indicates that so-called “semi-voluntary migrants” (Pernice et al., 2000, p. 27), “reluctant immigrants” or “anticipatory refugees” (Khawaja & Mason, 2008, p. 240), in other words, those emigrating from countries of origin marred by escalating conflict or political instability, often felt compelled to leave before economic sanctions or government decrees would prohibit emigration. Hence they frequently experienced more settlement difficulties than other immigrant groups and were at risk of developing psychological problems. Since a large number of South Africans emigrated owing to fears for their personal safety as a result of the high level of crime and violence in South Africa, their immigration process, psychological stress patterns and integration into New Zealand society were more complex than for other immigrants (Harrison & Nortje, 2000, p. Introduction-4; Khawaja & Mason, 2008, p. 227). Hence despite the apparent cultural similarities between South Africa and New Zealand, South African immigrants were at risk of experiencing poor mental health after immigration (Pernice et al., 2000, p. 27). As South
Africans living in New Zealand were classified as voluntary immigrants, they were not eligible for the state-funded economic and psychological support offered to refugees to facilitate settlement. Owing to financial constraints, a sense of self-sufficiency or fears of compromising their residency applications, South African immigrants were often reluctant to seek psychological support, particularly during the early phases of settlement. This could result in a progressive deterioration of their mental health, or an impulsive decision to prematurely return to South Africa, which could have major financial implications.

Meares (2007, p. 49) highlighted the paucity of research studies involving the South African immigrant population in New Zealand because they were expected to integrate with the same ease as skilled immigrants from other English-speaking countries. The existing research studies were mostly conducted by non-South African researchers and focused on narrowly defined aspects of the immigration process. As a result, participants in these studies were possibly less forthcoming about sensitive material, and researchers were probably not fully cognisant of the complex sociocultural phenomena in South Africa. The identified gap in immigration literature was the absence of comprehensive models for the assessment of pre- and post-migration risk and protective factors that had an impact on the well-being of South African immigrants in New Zealand, as well as preventive, supportive and therapeutic interventions, based on their specific needs during various phases of the immigration process.

As a South African immigrant researcher, the purpose of this study was to conduct qualitative research to gain a deeper understanding of the immigration experience of South African immigrant families in New Zealand. The general aim of this study was to explore the various factors that had an impact during the respective phases of immigration, acculturation and adaptation of South African immigrant families in New Zealand. A further objective was to examine the coping strategies and support systems utilised by South African families in New Zealand to serve as a buffer to immigration stressors, and to determine the efficacy
thereof in terms of well-being, resilience and settlement outcomes. The practical goal of this study was utilising the themes obtained from participant narratives to develop ecomodels of assessment and intervention with South African immigrant families in New Zealand.

The specific aims and objectives to be achieved were as follows:

(1) Reviewing migration literature to establish a theoretical framework of the phases and factors that influenced the immigration process, acculturation stressors, coping strategies and the well-being of immigrants

(2) Reviewing migration literature to establish a theoretical framework of settlement needs, support systems and service provision to immigrants during the various phases of the immigration process

(3) Developing an ecomodel of assessment, by conducting a qualitative study of the factors, processes and contexts that had an impact on the immigration journeys of South African immigrant families in New Zealand

(4) Developing an ecomodel for intervention, by conducting a qualitative study to identify strategies and resources that facilitated settlement and improved adaptation, well-being and resilience to determine which support systems and interventions were required to meet the needs of South African immigrants in New Zealand

(5) Increasing the level of awareness and understanding of the challenges faced by South Africans as a group of “reluctant immigrants” in New Zealand, and make recommendations to the South African immigrant community, family and friends in South Africa, New Zealand society, employers, service providers and policy makers to promote successful settlement

This study was approached from a socio-ecological (Al-Baldawi, 2002; American Psychological Association, 2012; Bronfenbrenner, 1994, 1999; Deaux, cited in Awad, 2007;
Johnson, 2007; Meares, 2007; Roer-Strier, 1996; Yakushko & Chronister, 2005) and resiliency perspective to provide a framework for the various challenges, as well as risk and protective factors during the phases of acculturation. An ecomodel of assessment (figure 6) was developed to explore the reciprocal interactions between South African immigrants and the various contexts they encountered during their immigration journeys. This ecomodel consisted of individual elements in a series of proximal to distant, nested societal systems. The microsystem comprised settings with which the individual came into direct contact, namely family and friends. A mesosystem reflected the relationships between the various Microsystems that directly affected the individual, such as intergroup attitudes and immigration consultants. The megasystem included the sociocultural and physical environment, whereas economic factors formed part of the macrosystem. Political factors and government policies, such as immigration legislation, settlement support, healthcare and education systems formed part of the exosystem. Preventive measures, information and education, individual problem-solving strategies, and external sources of practical and psychosocial support that mediated the challenges and risks during the immigration process and fostered resilience were included in an ecomodel for intervention (figure 7).

The research was approached from a post-modernist paradigm, where grounded theory informed the purpose and aims of the study, the research methodology, and the interpretation of results. This approach was chosen because it supported an ecosystemic exploration of the multiple realities of South African immigrants in New Zealand across various sociocultural, socioeconomic, sociopolitical, environmental and historical contexts during the immigration process, as well as the interactive processes with changing environments that shaped their lives and identities. An autobiographical narrative interview methodology was utilised for data collection because it was particularly suited to provide rich descriptions of the tapestry of meaning in the lives of these families (Meares, 2007, p. 55).
Purposeful, convenience, snowball and theoretical sampling were used to select nine South African families, who had immigrated to New Zealand between three and 19 years before, and were living in the Wellington region. A single narrative-seeking question (Meares, 2007, p. 80) was utilised to elicit rich descriptions of their immigration journeys. Transcriptions of recorded narratives were coded and subjected to thematic network analysis to extract common themes across participant narratives. The themes obtained from participant narratives were used to construct ecomodels of assessment and intervention with South African immigrant families in New Zealand. Interpretations, recommendations and conclusions were grounded in the themes extracted from participant narratives and were integrated with existing immigration theories.

Summary of major research findings

This study aimed to explore the unique experiences of the various members of the South African “Rainbow Nation” after immigrating to New Zealand. The questions that were the focus of this research were as follows:

1. What was the experience of South African immigrant families in New Zealand and what factors had an important impact on their immigration journeys?
2. What coping strategies, resources and support systems did South African immigrant families in New Zealand utilise to manage immigration and acculturation stressors during the various phases of the immigration process?
3. How did family and friends who remained in South Africa respond when people decided to immigrate to New Zealand, and did they continue to support the emigrants after their arrival in New Zealand?
(4) Did South African immigrant families in New Zealand experience prejudice, intolerance or discrimination by the broader public, employers, immigration officials or government agencies?

(5) Did South African immigrant families in New Zealand experience a change in their personal, professional or cultural identity, and how did it affect their behaviour and sense of self?

(6) Did South African immigrant families in New Zealand experience physical, psychological or spiritual difficulties during their immigration journeys, and how did it affect their adaptation and settlement?

(7) What were the support needs of South African immigrant families in New Zealand?

(8) What recommendations could the settled community make to facilitate adaptation and settlement of South African immigrants in New Zealand?

The ecomodel of pre- and post-migration assessment (figure 6) indicated that because South Africans were semi-voluntary or reluctant immigrants who were predominantly motivated by sociopolitical “push” factors, they were at higher risk of post-migration psychological difficulties. Those who had been exposed to violence and trauma just prior to immigration often departed without adequate preparation. Some only had a visitor’s visa, and lacked tertiary qualifications and scarce skills required by New Zealand. Frequently they were unable to find employment after arrival and experienced financial hardship. In some instances, an unstable marriage prior to immigration, or adaptation difficulties of a spouse who was reluctant to emigrate, led to marital infidelity and divorce. Those who were unable to return to South Africa because of a lack of financial resources, and those who refused to return owing to fears for their personal safety, experienced a considerable level of distress. A lack of consensus in the nuclear family regarding emigration, coupled with conflict and
accusations of betrayal and desertion by loved ones who had remained in South Africa, led to ambivalence and feelings of guilt. However, emigrants thought that their family back home were in denial about the rising level of threat in South Africa and were accused of emotional blackmail when they attempted to convince their loved ones to follow them to New Zealand. Hence some emigrants were not fully committed to the immigration process and decided to keep the back door open to return to South Africa if things did not work out in New Zealand. Others had unrealistic expectations that they could recapture their idealised South African lifestyle in a safer New Zealand, and they were thus resistant to make the necessary changes to adapt to a new society. Those who had never travelled abroad lacked an understanding of the vicissitudes of being immersed in another culture and were ill prepared for the challenges of acculturation.

Immigration disrupted people’s sociocultural support networks, and women, adolescents, and the middle-aged and elderly were particularly vulnerable to loneliness and homesickness after arrival. For women, the loss of close friendships they had had since childhood or as young women resulted in a disrupted narrative because their identity had been dislodged from its sociohistorical context that provided a sense of continuity. Even though young children appeared to settle without significant adaptation difficulties, they relied heavily on the problem-solving skills of their parents to maintain a sense of equilibrium in the family home. In families where children observed that their parents were struggling, they were hesitant to open up to their parents about their own difficulties as they did not want to add to their burden. Separation of families during immigration, as well as those who had immigrated alone and did not have any family or friends in New Zealand, found it difficult to cope alone in a strange environment. When aggrieved family and friends who had been left behind in South Africa decided to ignore the efforts of emigrants to remain in contact, their sense of loneliness and isolation was exacerbated. Participants felt shocked, hurt and betrayed
when family members back home decided to sever contact with them altogether or considered them to be “deceased” after immigration. Owing to the challenges and risk factors associated with immigration, participants reported a sense of dislocation, and underwent a period of grief and mourning to come to terms with their loss. The Afrikaner was regarded by some as the only “white tribe” of Africa, and many of them considered the Afrikaans language, as well as the landscape, fauna and flora of South Africa, to be a part of their soul. Hence to leave the country forged by their forefathers was for most a heart-wrenching experience that came at a high cost. Newcomers and settled immigrants alike recalled the visceral sense of grief they had experienced after being uprooted from their physical environment, such as familiar buildings, the natural landscape and the sound of birdsong.

The extent and nature of discrimination and prejudice in New Zealand towards South Africans from different racial and ethnic groups were brought to light. Despite New Zealand society taking pride in their racial tolerance, Coloured participants reported that they had been the target of racist remarks in the workplace, at school and in public areas. Even though most immigrant groups in New Zealand had to endure derogatory comments from time to time, South Africans were generally viewed in an extremely negative light by New Zealanders because of the significant division in New Zealand society during the 1981 rugby tour. South Africans were therefore more exposed to insidious prejudice, as well as more direct forms of harassment and intimidation. Most New Zealanders had little interest and understanding of the sociocultural complexities of pre- and post-apartheid South African society, and were ignorant of the level of vicarious or personal violence and trauma that formed part of everyday life in South Africa. For instance, during the murder trial of Oscar Pistorius, news reports that he had slept with a firearm next to his bed led Kiwis to conclude that he was “obsessed with guns”, without understanding that this was a familiar safety measure in South Africa because of the threat of armed intruders. Owing to their distinctive
accents and surnames, Afrikaners often bore the brunt of prejudice and discrimination against South African immigrants. Because they were regarded by New Zealanders as the main perpetrators of apartheid, being an Afrikaner was considered to be an illegitimate culture. Whereas most immigrants could openly express pride in their cultural heritage, the implicit message was that South Africans should be ashamed of their cultural identity and preferably conceal it. Afrikaans-speaking immigrants found it difficult to express complex emotions in English, and their direct and outspoken manner was misinterpreted by New Zealanders as arrogance. They experienced more job selection bias and underemployment, as well as lack of career advancement and workplace bullying. South African immigrants with a high level of education and extensive workplace experience often found that the “employment glove” did not fit in New Zealand and they struggled to find employment and remuneration packages that matched their successful careers in South Africa.

Making contact with other South African immigrants in New Zealand and forging new relationships in New Zealand society was an important buffer against acculturation stress, and to combat loneliness and establish a new “home away from home”. Coloured participants recalled their experiences of growing up under the apartheid system, and how their optimistic attitude about being successful, despite the odds, had helped them to move ahead with their lives in New Zealand. In the South African immigrant community, racial lines seemed to have faded as many friendships and social events included people from a variety of racial and ethnic groups. However, a painful resurgence of historical Boer War conflicts between Afrikaans and English immigrants occurred in New Zealand, which caused rifts in the settled immigrant group. Despite social interaction, feelings of loneliness and isolation were common among South African families on account of a disruption of valued social support structures. Perceived rejection by New Zealand society resulted in them feeling alienated and disappointed with their new lives. This eroded their sense of self and created
doubt and regret about their decision to immigrate. Workplace difficulties, particularly those experienced by Afrikaans-speaking employees, contributed to skilled professionals experiencing a loss of competence and professional identity. Disillusionment with corporate culture, coupled with lack of career opportunities and socioeconomic advancement were cited as the main reasons why highly skilled immigrants were returning to South Africa. However, the important role of a person’s attitude and commitment towards the immigration process, and the detrimental effect on settlement of “keeping the back door open” were emphasised by participants. Where serious settlement difficulties occurred, those with adequate financial means returned to South Africa, while those who had no choice but to remain in New Zealand often experienced identity loss and feelings of despair, which in some instances led to an exacerbation of medical conditions, chronic depression and suicidal thoughts.

The ecomodel for intervention (figure 7) highlighted the importance of pre-migration preparation for successful acculturation and settlement of South African immigrants in New Zealand. Prospective immigrants were warned to carefully consider their reasons for immigration, as it was essential to have the right mindset and to be committed to the immigration journey. Thorough pre-migration planning in terms of gathering reliable and comprehensive information, grasping the complexities of New Zealand’s immigration legislation, and doing adequate financial planning were vital to prevent post-migration hardship. Participants emphasised that a well-organised, partially funded immigration process, coupled with secure employment prior to departure made things much easier. It was vital for prospective immigrants and their loved ones in South Africa to have an understanding of the phases of the immigration process and acculturation challenges to counteract the perception that emigrants were cowards who were part of the “chicken run”. Participants were unanimous that immigration was “not for cissies”, and that it required courage, fortitude and endurance to succeed in New Zealand. They highly recommended that
people continued with their hobbies in New Zealand to take their mind off day-to-day struggles, and women in particular made a beeline for their local library within the first few weeks after arrival. Taking time out from work to socialise and explore the natural beauty of New Zealand could combat loneliness and increase their commitment to settle in New Zealand. For those who had been exposed to trauma and violence in South Africa or had unresolved psychological issues, pre-migration counselling prevented them coming to New Zealand with “emotional baggage”.

Participants felt strongly that it was important for new arrivals to be met at the airport, and to be welcomed and oriented to their new environment, particularly those without family or friends in New Zealand. The South African community was fulfilling a valuable role by providing practical assistance during the first few weeks, as well as emotional and social support to validate and normalise the immigration experiences of newcomers. Adaptation and settlement were facilitated by equitable employment, financial security and a supportive workplace. The custom of the mayor of Wellington to invite new immigrants to her chambers for afternoon tea, and the Porirua mayor sending a letter to invite new citizens to major events in the city, served as an initiation into New Zealand society. The vital role of religious beliefs and religious affiliation during all steps of the immigration journey was underscored by all participants. Despite experiencing considerable heartache and facing seemingly insurmountable obstacles, participants steadfastly believed that God would open doors for them. A Jewish family drew attention to the relatively small number of Jewish people in New Zealand, compared to South Africa, and how it affected their involvement with a synagogue as well as their social interaction in the Jewish community. Falling in love and marrying a person from another culture and with a different religion was challenging, but focusing on similarities and appreciating the qualities of each other resulted in a mutually supportive marital relationship.
Immigrants with stable marriages, who were supported by close-knit, cohesive families with flexibility and an open communication style, were better able to negotiate role changes and offer emotional support to each other. Resilient immigrants, who were achievement oriented and had developed a sense of self-efficacy and self-reliance prior to immigration, were more inclined to view difficulties as challenges. They had better problem-solving strategies and methods for mobilising sources of support. They were therefore more optimistic and confident that they would eventually succeed. To counteract homesickness, and maintain cultural connections and language proficiency, it was important for immigrants to form social connections with other South African immigrants. However, to adapt to mainstream society it was vital to also befriend immigrants from other countries, as well as Kiwis. Some participants emphasised that it was essential for Afrikaans families to continue speaking their mother tongue at home with their children to maintain their cultural heritage. Afrikaners in New Zealand revisited their ancestry and stated that, in contrast with most Kiwis who came from Britain, they identified strongly with being of European descent, but considered themselves to be of African origin.

Managing the stressors of the various phases of the immigration process and the challenges of acculturation required immigrants to utilise a repertoire of skilful coping strategies and stress management techniques. Those who experienced depression and suicidality found that obtaining antidepressants from their general practitioner and consulting with a skilled counsellor or a South African psychologist were beneficial to process their emotional difficulties. However, the high incidence of chronic depression among female South African immigrants, requiring the long-term use of antidepressants, was underscored. Some children underwent a drastic personality change because of adaptation difficulties, while some adults felt that they had left a part of themselves behind in South Africa or had to conceal aspects of their identity to fit in with New Zealand society. When long-term settlers
reflected on their immigration journeys, they concluded that immigration and settlement were a “step-by-step” process. Most immigrants eventually regained their sense of humour and were able to joke about their heartache and the stumbling blocks they had encountered. A number of participants endorsed the philosophy: “If you’re falling off a cliff, you may as well try to fly; you’ve got nothing to lose” (Straczynski, 1996). Hence, they embraced adversity and ventured into new terrain, such as becoming published authors, running their own businesses or starting a radio programme to support the South African community.

The reflexive validity of this study lay in the dialectic view of data and the impact observations had on the researcher and her theoretical understanding of immigration (Stiles, 1993, p. 612). During the research process the researcher had to adjust her theoretical preconceptions that most South Africans had left the country of their birth under duress, and would seek out co-nationals in New Zealand for support, that the South African community in New Zealand was a cohesive group, and that family and friends back home would continue to support emigrants. To enhance permeability in response to new information, the researcher had to accommodate observations that some South Africans had left in search of a new adventure overseas, some did not wish to interact with South Africans in New Zealand, some English-speaking South Africans still viewed Afrikaners as low-class citizens, and loved ones back home were inclined to view emigrants as deceased. Immigration theory had to be adjusted to acknowledge that not all South Africans had left because of crime and violence, and for some, being denigrated or rejected by co-nationals in New Zealand and those who remained in South Africa had been a bigger hurdle to overcome than adapting to a new country and its people.
Recommendations to facilitate settlement

Spoonley et al. (2007, p. 30) pointed out that to date, three of the six immigrant Settlement Strategy goals of the Department of Labour had not been achieved: (1) forming supportive social networks and establishing a sustainable community identity; (2) feeling safe to express their ethnic identity and be respected and accepted, and become part of the wider community; and (3) participation in civic, community and social activities. Achieving these goals was hampered by substantial resistance from New Zealanders regarding the perceived negative impact immigrants have on New Zealand society and culture, discrimination against immigrants, as well as opposition towards multiculturalism and government funding for more comprehensive settlement programmes (Spoonley et al., 2007, p. 30). Recommendations resulting from the thematic analysis of the immigration narratives of research participants could thus be a step in the right direction to facilitate the adaptation and settlement of South African immigrants in New Zealand.

The information pack provided by the Department of Immigration and follow-up on the progress of new immigrants were valued by participants. Including the contact details of members of the settled community who were willing to support newcomers was highly recommended to reduce the stress of adaptation and settlement. A number of South African immigrants had been exposed to crime and violence before immigrating and might be in need of support after arrival for PTSD, anxiety and depression. It was problematic that ACC did not provide care for traumatic incidents that occurred outside the borders of New Zealand. In future, information packs provided by the Department of Immigration or by immigration consultants and recruitment agents should therefore include the contact details of primary healthcare facilities or nongovernment organisations that could provide medical or psychological assistance to newcomers. South African immigrants may require trauma
counselling, as well as individual, marital and family therapy to process pre-migration experiences and manage post-migration difficulties.

Immigrants were advised to bring along their medical records as New Zealand doctors might not be knowledgeable about familial conditions or tropical diseases in the South African population. South African immigrants expressed a preference for South African qualified general practitioners and psychotherapists. Afrikaans speakers often preferred consulting with clinicians who were fluent in Afrikaans because they found it easier to express their emotions in their mother tongue. Both the Medical Council of New Zealand and the New Zealand Psychologists Board had an alphabetical list of qualified clinicians on their respective websites. Refining the search criteria to include the country where qualifications were obtained, as well as the languages spoken by professionals, would make it easier for immigrants to locate a suitable clinician. Training in cultural competency skills for healthcare personnel was highly recommended because of the increasingly multicultural nature of New Zealand society. At the time of study, cultural competency was also a requirement for most professional bodies, but the focus had mostly been on Māori and Pacific Island populations. Clinicians who have strong prejudicial views against South Africans or Afrikaners should refrain from working with them as clients, in the interest of professional ethics and cultural safety.

Immigrant employees would benefit from earlier and more comprehensive workplace orientation programmes to familiarise them with systems in their immediate working environment. Leaving newcomers to their own devices and “telling them off” when they make a mistake or are being “inappropriate” by speaking out of turn, could damage the confidence of immigrant employees and hinder their adaptation. Workplace bullying is a significant and unresolved problem in New Zealand, and immigrants are particularly vulnerable. New Zealanders are strongly advised to refrain from making derogatory
comments about South Africans at work, or to interrogate or reprimand co-workers about South Africa’s political past. If New Zealanders do not wish to befriend South Africans or invite them to their homes it is their prerogative, but confronting South African immigrants in the workplace about historical, political matters is deemed inappropriate and violates workplace policies relating to harassment. Kiwis have also been urged to avoid making scathing comments about South Africans intended as jokes because these comments are hurtful, even though South Africans are inclined to keep quiet or to laugh it off to hide their feelings. Because most New Zealanders have never visited South Africa, their impressions of the country are largely based on the dominant narrative in media reports and educational material in New Zealand schools. South Africans should take care not to confuse an accusation with a sincere enquiry about life in South Africa, and the participants advised immigrants not to engage in discussions about South Africa as this could quickly escalate to an interrogation. As the prejudice of New Zealanders was often based on a lack of insight into the complexities of South African society, immigrants were advised not to take their criticism to heart as it could cause considerable distress and damage relationships.

Participants reminded South African immigrants that New Zealand did not ask them to come to their country, but was willing to offer them the opportunity to live in a safe, First World country. It was therefore advisable to make the best of what was offered by their host society, and to refrain from continuously comparing New Zealand unfavourably to South Africa.

The New Zealand government plays a vital role in building a society that endorses multiculturalism and cultural sensitivity in public areas, neighbourhoods, schools and workplaces, which could provide a more welcoming and supportive context for newcomers. More comprehensive historical and current information about the rich diversity of South Africa in educational material and public exhibits, as well as knowledge about the factors that caused South Africans to immigrate, could provide insight and a more holistic view of South
African society. Voluntary and sustained contact between South African immigrants and the broader New Zealand society would hopefully reduce prejudice and build constructive relationships as Kiwis start to realise that South Africans pose no threat to the culture, norms and political system of New Zealand. It was encouraging that young Kiwis, who had grown up after the apartheid era and had South African friends at school, were more curious and accepting of cultural, ethnic and political differences than the previous generation.

According to Te Pou (2008, p. 53), dissemination of research findings and service provider and community engagement are crucial for improved service delivery and the mental well-being of migrant communities in New Zealand. The results of this study could raise the awareness of the South African immigrant community in New Zealand about the support needs of newcomers, which could lead to a more proactive approach to facilitate the settlement of their co-nationals. The ecomodels that were developed could also provide useful guidelines to the general public, employers, service providers and policy makers about the experiences, and support structures required by South African immigrants to settle successfully in New Zealand. As a starting point, the findings of this study could be disseminated by providing relevant information to the New Zealand Departments of Immigration, Labour, Education, and Health, primary healthcare providers, the Medical Council of New Zealand, the New Zealand Psychologists Board, the New Zealand College of Clinical Psychologists, and South African community organisations. Submitting extracts of this study for publication in peer reviewed journals, and presenting the findings at workshops and congresses could raise awareness of the settlement challenges and support needs of South Africans as a semi-voluntary or reluctant immigrant group in New Zealand.
Limitations of the study and recommendations for future research

Whereas the aim of quantitative research is causal determination, prediction and generalisation of results, qualitative researchers seek to uncover, understand and extrapolate findings to similar contexts (Hoepfl, cited in Golafshani, 2003, p. 600). The ecomodels developed for assessment and intervention with South African immigrants in New Zealand may be relevant to “reluctant immigrants” from other countries, but the results would not be transferable in the general sense to other migrant groups. However, thick descriptive data obtained from South African immigrants in the New Zealand context should enable readers to determine the transferability and applicability of these research findings to their own settings (Lincoln & Guba, cited in Petty et al., p. 383). The results of this research were based on a small sample of white and Coloured South African immigrants in the Wellington region, which was not representative of all the age, ethnic, language and religious subgroups of the Rainbow Nation living in New Zealand. More research would be required on the experience of black, Indian and Chinese South African immigrants in New Zealand, as well those with religious beliefs other than Christianity and Judaism. Since the participants in this study had immigrated to New Zealand between three and 19 years previously, most had achieved some level of emotional distancing from the difficulties experienced shortly after arrival. Therefore, research with newcomers during the early stages of adaptation could provide more insight into their experiences during the “honeymoon” and “crisis” phases. Additional research would be required to explore the long-term adaptation, cultural changes, language attrition and trans-generational effects of South African immigrants.

Because interviews were conducted with families, it is feasible that some participants may have been reluctant to discuss certain sensitive or contentious issues. Conducting individual interviews with members of a family could reveal more in-depth information. In this study, children and adolescents often declined to participate, and thus more research was
required on the experiences of this age group. All study participants had intact marriages, and further research needs to be conducted into the reasons and experience of couples who may have encountered serious marital difficulties, including infidelity and marital disintegration. Families who had been the victims of trauma and violence in South Africa, such as the Saint James Church massacre on 25 July 1993, should be included in future research endeavours. One family who had decided to return to South Africa was included in this study, but more research is required into the experience of return immigrants to explore their adaptation difficulties in South Africa. Research should also be conducted on the experiences of South African immigrant families in New Zealand who have immigrated onwards to another country, or whose children have returned to South Africa or relocated to another country.

A consideration that has been the focus of very few studies is the experience and psychological responses of loved ones who have remained in South Africa after their friends and family have emigrated. It would also be worthwhile to conduct further research into the adaptation difficulties and coping strategies of skilled immigrants who have worked in the medical or mental health field. Because these professionals are subject to ongoing supervision and competency reviews by registration boards to renew their annual practising certificates, they would be unlikely to seek assistance for mental health difficulties because it could compromise their careers. In addition, disclosing personal difficulties to the South African immigrant group during social interaction could lead to a “loss of face” as these professionals would be expected to have the expertise to help others, as well as helping themselves. Unless these immigrants have close friends and family members whom they could turn to in confidence, they have no avenue for emotional support and this could contribute to return migration or long-term settlement difficulties.

Because the participants were reluctant to discuss details of psychopathology among the South African immigrant group, more research is needed on the incidence of psychiatric
disorders, such as major depression, bipolar disorder and psychosis, as well as substance abuse, deliberate self-harm and suicidality. Reports of workplace bullying, racist remarks and prejudice against South Africans are a cause for concern, and further research into the effect of this phenomenon on adaptation, settlement and well-being is required. Most South Africans have immigrated to New Zealand in search of a better life, but some families have suffered additional trauma after arrival, such as a tragic death in the family, experiencing the Christchurch earthquakes, or being charged with a criminal offence. Further research with this re-traumatised group of South Africans could provide valuable insights into their immigration experiences. Further research is recommended to ascertain which psychotherapeutic strategies and service providers have been found to be the most useful and effective for intervention with South African immigrants in New Zealand.

Conclusions

I decided to undertake this research as a result of the perplexing experiences associated with my immigration journey, and wondering whether the pioneering spirit of our forefathers would be sufficient to help a new generation of settlers prevail in New Zealand. The immigration narratives of my study participants spanned many genres that included adventures, dramas, tragedies and comedies, but also two unique love stories. Informal discussions with South African immigrants over coffee and buttermilk rusks offered a mosaic of impressions about the exodus from South Africa and settling in New Zealand. As a newcomer, I was assured that if I just persevered, things would improve after two years. However, a research respondent wryly commented that the first 20 years after immigration were the hardest. I came to realise that the immigration process was a never-ending journey, during which one’s sense of identity and perceptions of “home” became more fluid and
abstract. Immigrants commented that they had adjusted their names and surnames to suit
different countries and contexts of living, which represented various aspects of the self.

In a nutshell, the immigration stories of the South African community in New Zealand
pointed to the following core principles of the journey: (1) there are things that you must do;
(2) there are things that you must understand; (3) there are things that you must endure; and
(4) there are things that will help you through. The first principle emphasises the importance
of reliable information and thorough pre-migration planning and preparation, as well as
establishing a basic infrastructure after arrival. The second principle indicates that an
understanding of the phases of the immigration process and the stressors of acculturation, as
well as common cognitive, emotional and behavioural responses to these challenges help to
normalise these experiences for new immigrants. An awareness of individual risk and
protective factors is useful for preventive or early intervention strategies to avert a
psychological crisis, or serious medical consequences at a later stage because of
unmanageable or accumulated stressors. The third principle underscores the reality that
despite doing thorough pre-migration homework and having a theoretical understanding of
the immigration process, some aspects of the journey cannot be predicted or avoided. These
experiences simply have to be “lived” as part of the individual growth and developmental
process. It is perhaps fortuitous that prospective emigrants do not know beforehand how hard
it would be to leave all that they loved behind, how hurtful it would be when family and
friends write them off, or how deep their sense of loneliness, grief, alienation and despair
could become. If they fully comprehended that immigration would involve the loss and death
of so many things they held dear, they would perhaps not have the courage to embark on this
journey. Lastly, principle number four reminds intrepid travellers that they would be able to
rely on their bank of acquired skills and resources, their religious faith or spiritual beliefs, as
well as the South African immigrant community and the kindness of strangers to implant
themselves in New Zealand soil, and become resilient seedlings of the South African Diaspora.

Study participants reminded me how strongly we imprinted on the natural environment where we spent our childhood, and how embedded our sense of identity was in the sociocultural systems that framed our daily lives. With trepidation, I wondered that if we experienced such grief when we were ripped away from the country of our birth, what it would be like for our descendants if one day they might be forced to leave our planet behind. Imagine their anguish when turning around to take one last glance at the tiny blue orb, framed against the blackness of space that once was their home. Therefore, we should tread gently upon the earth for it is an integral part of who we are. Finally, I wish to leave those who accompanied me on this arduous voyage to Aotearoa, the “country of the long, white cloud”, with this ancient Egyptian blessing for their own life journey into the mists of the unknown:

“God be between you and harm in all the empty places where you must walk”

(Straczynski, 1994).
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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Advertisement

Research Participants Required

My name is Cecilia Small and I am a Clinical Psychology Doctorate student at the University of South Africa (Unisa). I emigrated from South Africa to New Zealand six years ago. I am looking for South African immigrant families in the Wellington region, representative of the Rainbow Nation, who have been living in New Zealand for at least five years, and who would be willing to share their unique immigration stories. The purpose of this study is to increase the understanding of South African immigrants in New Zealand as a distinct migrant group, to explore the various factors that had an impact on their migration and adaptation in New Zealand, and to increase awareness of their settlement needs.

Families who are interested are welcome to contact me at:

Tel: 918 2268 (w)
    235 5035 (h)
    02102262733 (mobile)

E-mail: cecilia.small@gmail.com
Appendix B

INFORMATION LEAFLET

South African immigrants in New Zealand: Towards an ecomodel of assessment and intervention

Dear ........................................................

My name is Cecilia Small and I am a doctoral student in psychology, working under the supervision of Prof. F. J. A. Snyders, Department of Psychology at the University of South Africa (Unisa). I am a clinical psychologist who emigrated from Pretoria, South Africa to Wellington, New Zealand in September 2005, and since then I have been interested in the experiences of South Africans as a distinct migrant group.

Purpose and benefits

This letter is to invite you to consider participating in a DLitt et Phil in psychology research project I am conducting on the experience of South African immigrants in New Zealand. New Zealand is a land of migrants and nearly a quarter of people were born in other countries. Although a number of research studies have been undertaken on migrants in New Zealand, little research has been done on the real-life experiences of South African immigrants. Large research studies in which South Africans have been included mostly focused on the employment of different migrant groups. The focus of this research will be on the experience of a variety of South African families, based on their unique immigration “stories”, and the various factors that had an impact on their migration and adaptation in New Zealand. The immigration story spans the period from the first time the family thought of the possibility of emigrating from South Africa up to where they are now in their immigration journey.
These research findings will form the basis of my doctoral thesis, as well as an article in a peer-reviewed psychological journal. Some elements of the research may form part of other academic papers and presentations to professional groups, universities, immigration research groups or service providers, as well as at local or international workshops, seminars and conferences. It will contribute to the knowledge base of the experience of South African immigrants in New Zealand, raise the awareness of policy makers and service providers regarding the settlement needs of South African immigrants, and may assist other South Africans with their journey. Please note that you will receive no payment or compensation for your participation in this study. However, I trust that the experience of telling your migration story will be meaningful to you and that the insights you may gain in the process will be helpful. You may be invited to take part in this research if you emigrated as a family from South Africa to New Zealand, you have been living in New Zealand for five years or longer and your family members are willing to share their experience of immigration. Your name has been given to me by a fellow member of the South African migrant community or another person living in New Zealand who thought you may be suitable for the study. Your participation in this research will be valued and greatly appreciated.

Procedures

Your involvement in this research will consist of three interviews, and each interview may last up to two hours. The doctoral thesis and article will be written in English, but you may choose to do the interviews in English or Afrikaans. A preliminary interview will be held to determine your family’s suitability for the study, to answer any questions you may have, to obtain your written informed consent, to complete a brief demographics questionnaire and to draw a family genogram or family tree. The purpose of the second interview is to allow you as a family to tell the story of your immigration to New Zealand, as well as some follow-up questions after you have finished telling your story. The interview
will be audio taped and the tape recordings will be transcribed afterwards. The third interview will be for additional questions that may arise during transcription and analysis of the audio tapes to clarify, expand and enrich your migration story. The interviews will be held at a time and place convenient to you, for instance, in your home or another location of your choice. It is advisable that you set aside a quiet time during the day or evening when family members are available and to ensure no interruptions. During the study you may discuss any issues you are concerned about or ask additional questions about the research.

Potential risk, discomfort or inconvenience

The experience of immigration differs from person to person because it can offer exciting new opportunities, but may also involve significant losses and adjustment difficulties. The process of telling your family story of immigration may bring back memories of difficult or painful circumstances. People usually enjoy talking about their migration journey, but occasionally some may experience discomfort or distress. I will endeavour to provide a supportive environment during the interviews and to end the interview on a positive note. If you experience ongoing distress at the end of the interview, a short debriefing session can be held if you choose. In the event of you requiring more intensive or ongoing psychotherapeutic input to process your thoughts and feelings, I will be happy to provide contact details for suitable mental health professionals. Please note that should you disclose current suicidal or homicidal intent, I am obligated by law to ensure your safety and the safety of others and this would include sharing this information with appropriate professionals and authorities. I am also mandated to report abuse or neglect of children or vulnerable adults.

Your rights, ethical principles and confidentiality

The interviews will be conducted in accordance with the ethical principles of academic research and psychology practice. Your participation in this study is strictly
voluntary. You have the right to decline to take part in this research without any negative consequences to you. As a participant you have the right to request a break during the interview, to refuse to answer a particular question, to ask for the tape recorder to be turned off at any point during the interview, to end the interview, to withdraw from the study, or to withdraw information prior to approving the transcript of the interview, without providing a reason. All information you provide is confidential and your anonymity would be protected.

Demographic data and genograms will be collected to assist the researcher, and will not be included in the research results and publications. I will conduct the interview, transcribe the audio tapes and analyse the transcripts. The audio tapes, transcripts, field notes and other study data will be locked in a filing cabinet in my home. The immigration stories from all the families will be combined and analysed to determine general themes and patterns. If a specific statement of yours is used to illustrate a particular point, a pseudonym or fictitious name of your choice will be used and any demographic data that may identify you will be excluded. After three years, the audio tapes will be destroyed/erased or you may ask for the audio tape to be returned to you. You may keep a copy of the information leaflet and the signed informed consent form. You will receive a copy of the published article on completion of the doctoral thesis.

If you have any concerns regarding the ethical conduct of this research, please contact my supervisor at Unisa, Prof. F. J. A. Snyders. Should you have any questions or require additional information at this stage or during the research process, you are welcome to contact me or my supervisor at Unisa. Our contact details are as follows:
Cecilia Small (M.A. Clinical Psychology, Unisa)
P.O. Box 50314
Porirua
5240
Tel: (04) 918 2268 (w) or (04) 235 5035 (h) or 02102262733 (mobile)
cecilia.small@gmail.com

Prof. F J. A. Snyders (M.A. Clinical Psychology, DLitt et Phil, SA).
Tel. 0027129935311 (h)
snydefja@mweb.co.za

Thank you for your interest and taking the time to read this information. If you think you are eligible and interested in participating in this research study, please contact me via telephone or e-mail. If you are not eligible or able to participate, but know of other South African immigrants in the Wellington region who may be interested I would appreciate it if you could let me know. I look forward to hearing from you, and thank you for your assistance in telling the stories of South African immigrants in New Zealand.

Yours sincerely

Cecilia Small
Appendix C

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Project title: South African immigrants in New Zealand: Towards an ecomodel of assessment and intervention

Researcher: Cecilia Small, DLitt et Phil student, Department of Psychology, University of South Africa (Unisa)

Project Supervisor: Prof. F. J. A. Snyders, Department of Psychology, University of South Africa (Unisa)

I have read and understood the information leaflet and have had the details of the research project explained to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand that I may choose not to answer a particular question, ask for the tape recorder to be turned off at any point during the interview, end the interview, withdraw from the study, or withdraw information prior to approving the written transcript of the interview, without giving a reason.

1. I voluntarily agree to take part in this research under the conditions stipulated in the information leaflet and informed consent form.

2. I agree to provide information to the researcher, based on the understanding that it is confidential and that my family and I will not be identified in any study reports, publications or presentations arising from this research.

3. I agree for the interview to be audio taped and to be transcribed.

4. I wish/do not wish for the audio tapes to be returned to me after three years.

5. I may keep a copy of the information leaflet and the signed informed consent form for my records.
6. I will not receive any payment or compensation for my participation in this research.

Signed: _________________________________
(Study participant)
Name: ___________________________________
(please print full name clearly)

Pseudonym: _______________________________

Date: ____________________________________

I, Cecilia Small, agree to adhere to the conditions stipulated in the information leaflet and the informed consent form to conduct this study. This informed consent form will be archived for a minimum period of three (3) years.

Signed: _________________________________
(Researcher)
Name: ___________________________________
(please print full name clearly)

Date: ____________________________________
Appendix D

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: _____________________________________________________________

Chosen pseudonym: ________________________________________________

Street address: ____________________________________________________

Postal address: ____________________________________________________

Telephone number: ________________________________________________

Date of birth: _____________________________________________________

Age (years): ______________________________________________________

Gender (M/F): _____________________________________________________

Marital status: ____________________________________________________

Nationality of partner/spouse: ______________________________________

If divorced, where does your previous partner/spouse live? ______________

Home (original) language: __________________________________________

Ethnicity or cultural group: _________________________________________

Religion: __________________________________________________________

Country and place of birth: _________________________________________

Country of residence prior to migration to New Zealand: ________________

Date of arrival in New Zealand: _____________________________________

Number of years living New Zealand: _________________________________

Did you transit through another country before coming to New Zealand? Yes/No

If so, which country/countries and for how long? ______________________

Residency status in NZ: _____________________________________________

(e.g. work visa, permanent residency).
Citizenship (e.g. SA, NZ, dual citizenship): _________________________________

Highest academic qualification: _________________________________
(school, trade, college, university, etc.)

Profession/occupation prior to emigration: _________________________________

Current employment status: _________________________________

Current profession/occupation: _________________________________

Current academic studies: _________________________________

Academic institution (e.g. school, college, university): _________________________________

Did you emigrate alone or with a friend/partner/family? _________________________________

Do you still have family living in South Africa? _________________________________

Do you have other family living in New Zealand? _________________________________

Do you have family living in other countries?: _________________________________

Do you have any health condition that could put you at risk if you participate in this study?
________________________________________

If so, have you discussed it with your health professional (Yes/No)? _____________

In the boxes below, please indicate how many children you have, their ages, their country of
birth, whether they emigrated with the family, whether they currently live with you, and if
not, where they currently live.

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What do you hope to contribute or gain from participation in this research?
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Additional information you would like to add:
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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION
PUBLISH ABSTRACT ONLY AGREEMENT

PERSONAL DATA
1. Last Name
   SMALL

2. First Name
   CECILIA

3. Middle Name
   SANET

4. Year of Birth (Optional)
   11 MARCH 1957

5. Country of Citizenship
   SOUTH AFRICA

4. Present Mailing Address Street address:
   23 CLET STREET, WHITBY

City
PORIRUA

State/Province
5024

Postal code
NEW ZEALAND

Country

Future Mailing Address Street address:

City

State/Province

Postal code

Country

Effective date for future mailing address (mm dd yy)

E-mail address: cecilia.small@gmail.com

DOCTORAL DEGREE DATA
5. Full name of university conferring degree, and college or division if appropriate

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA, DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

6. Abbreviation for degree awarded
   DLitt et Phil (Psychology)

7. Year degree awarded
   2015

TITLE/SUBJECT AREA
8. Enter the title of dissertation. If dissertation is written in a language other than English, please specify which language and translate title into English.

Language of text: ENGLISH

Title: SOUTH AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS IN NEW ZEALAND: TOWARDS AN ECOMODEL OF ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION

9. Subject category of dissertation. Please enter four-digit code from "Subject Categories" on following page.
   0622

10. Please append an abstract of no more than 350 words describing the contents of your dissertation. Your completion and submission of this form through your graduate school indicates your assent to UMI publication of your abstract. Formulas, diagrams and other illustrative materials are not recommended for abstracts appearing in Dissertation Abstracts International.

Author Signature: ___________________________ Date: 27/11/2014