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# **BUILDING ETHNIC, REFUGEE AND GENDER RELATIONS**

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*Ethnic Refugee women in the Waikato: Improving their  
socio-economic status through community organisations?*

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by

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Being a Thesis  
submitted to the University of Waikato  
in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Social Sciences  
in Geography



The  
University  
of Waikato  
Te Whare Wānanga  
o Waikato

2003

*“Refugees come from all over the World and from all walks of life. They are: doctors, teachers, truck drivers, mothers, children and fishermen. Refugees can never go home. We used to watch stories of the Somali refugees on television and think to ourselves, “It’s so far away” and we turned the channel to another station. Then one day we looked behind us and found soldiers with guns at our backs. And then we were refugees, just like the Somalis” (a Bosnian Refugee, 1993).*

## Abstract

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The purpose of this thesis is to analyse the role of community organisations in the resettlement of refugee<sup>1</sup> ethnic women in the Waikato. Do community organisations (women organisations, ethnic organisations, religious groups and other organisations) support refugee women to improve their socio-economic status by getting them into paid jobs? As it is demonstrated through quantitative data obtained from census statistics and from WINZ<sup>2</sup> clients data and from qualitative information obtained from focus groups discussions, individual interviews, questionnaires, and participant observation, community organisations are supporting refugee women in their resettlement process by improving their life skills, such as giving them English lessons, organising cooking classes, driving skills, counselling and life orientation programmes. They are not employment agencies; they limit their support to women who come to seek services. They are patriarchal and hierarchical; they are limited to their mission statement and by funding.

As refugee women are the principal caregivers of the family, they are facing different burdens due to their refugee status, their cultural background and their family tasks while they lack skills, have little education, are confronted by racism and discrimination and have big family size. Thus in order to study the integration of the ethnic women into New Zealand society, I have approached this task by looking at different theories of integration, Post-Colonialism, Critical Realism, Gender Inequalities and Justice. Women's empowerment is limited by assuming their family task and motherhood function. Refugee women who have various skills will fight to enter the labour force to pursue their career or to further their education, but the cost of loans and the uncertainty of getting a job keep these women at home.

Ethnic refugee women need an ethnic approach for their integration into the community and their integration still depends on their socio-economic status. Community organisations need to meet these women in their principal areas of gathering, such as Mosques, Temples, churches, ethnic community meetings, community centres or during special ceremonies (party, wedding ...). Refugee women have various skills that can be developed for their empowerment and their participation in the development of Waikato to recover their past life prior to becoming refugees, and plan a new future life by improving their socio-economic status.

**Keywords:** Refugees, burdens, ethnic policy, Post Colonial theory, Critical Realism, Gender Inequalities and Justice, community organisations, women's socio-economic status, empowerment, gender and refugee relations.

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<sup>1</sup> A refugee in this thesis is taken to mean "a person who escapes to a foreign country from religious or political persecution (Concise Oxford Dictionary). For further detail see chapter two, page 13...

<sup>2</sup> WINZ : Work and Income New Zealand

## A c k n o w l e d g e m e n t s

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The realisation of this thesis was possible thanks to the contribution of many people. Being a full time mother, full time wife, full time student and a full time community worker, this research was realised with support received from my husband, children, parents, relatives and friends. I thank very much my husband *Raphael Nkoy Biladi* for taking over the care of our lovely daughters *Glodie, Lormie and Anna-Gloria Omoyi* during my study time. This task was not easy as I have had to study during the weekend without having much time to spend with my family. They have missed me a lot during my work on this thesis. I wish to express my sincere gratitude, compassion and love to my family for their immediate support and accepting my absence from the family. My children were always asking, “Mum have you finished your study? When is your graduation?” These questions have always reminded me that I have to finalise this study. I cannot withdraw from it.

My friends also provided support for my husband by caring for my children. I would like to thank Marina Zanga, Bilkisu, Zodwa, Esther Gwengo, Ellenata Kaneka, Wendy Williamson and Guillaume Sumali for their attachment to my family. My fellow Africans were also a support by helping to run the community during my study.

Many organisations have suffered from my absence during my studies, as I was not able to support the community. I thank Refugee and Migrants Services (RMS), Hamilton Ethnic Women, African Community in the Waikato, and the Hamilton Women’s Centre as I could not support them during my study. I will support them when I have finished my study.

Many thanks to Trust Waikato Community Research Grants, Waikato Social Services Trust, Work and Income New Zealand, Waikato Regional Commissioner for their financial assistance which covered the cost of this study, especially the

field work, courses fees and the purchase of data from Statistics New Zealand. Their contributions have improved the quality of this thesis.

This thesis derives in part from research carried out on a contract made to the Population Studies Centre (PSC) by WINZ (Waikato Region). Grateful acknowledgment is made to WINZ for this contract on which is based the quantitative analysis of this thesis. The report produced from this contract had two components: an analysis of public record census data that is referred and a section using WINZ management data from which only aggregates are drawn on here [see chapter six for more details]. For ethical reasons other components of this report are not discussed here.

During work on this thesis, I received support from the Department of Geography. Staff members were always interested to know about the progress of my thesis. The motivation received from them has helped me to progress and to complete this thesis. I thank all the staff in the Geography Department, University of Waikato, graduate students and colleagues for their friendly environment. Many thanks go also to all the University of Waikato Staff, particularly the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and the Population Studies staff for their moral support that enabled the completion of this thesis.

Work on this thesis was not easy as it required much concentration on my part to translate my French into English. It consumed much of my time and also that of my supervisor Dr Anne-Marie d’Hauteserre who sometimes found it difficult to understand my paragraphs, and needed to meet me face to face so that I could explain to her the exact meaning of my writing. I am grateful to Dr Anne-Marie d’Hauteserre for her wonderful contribution that has made this thesis a complete work in English. I would like to thank also Professor Ian Pool whose advice and ideas helped me to further my study to complete this thesis.

This thesis could not be completed without the assistance of Margaret and David Begg, who accepted from all their heart the task of proof-reading my work. I also like to express my sincere gratitude to them.

**May God bless everyone who has contributed in anyway in the realisation of this thesis.**

**Marie- Claire Mwabiére LEPINA**

## Abbreviations

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- ACOSS:** Australian Conference on Social Services
- ACW:** African Community in the Waikato
- AIDS:** Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
- CEG:** Community Employment Group
- DRC:** Democratic Republic of Congo
- ESOL:** English as Second Language
- FAO:** Food and Agriculture Organisation
- GAD:** Gender and Development
- HAIP:** Hamilton Abuse Intervention Project
- HCC:** Hamilton City Council
- HIV:** Human Immunodeficiency Virus
- IDPs:** Internally Displaced Persons
- ILO:** International Labour Organisation
- INSEA:** Institute for Statistics and Applied Economic
- ISDR:** Institute Superior for Rural Development
- ITS:** Information Technology System
- NZ:** New Zealand
- NZIS:** New Zealand Immigration Service
- OUA:** Organisation for African Unity
- RMS:** Refugees and Migrants Services
- STD:** Sexual Transmissible Diseases
- UN:** United Nations
- UNCHR:** United Nations High Commission for Refugees
- UNFPA:** United Nations Funds for Population Activities
- UNICEF:** United Nations Funds for Children
- UNESCO:** United Nations Education and Science Commission
- USA:** United States of America
- WEC:** Waikato Ethnic Council
- WID:** Women Integration in Development
- WINTEC:** Waikato Institute of Technology
- WINZ:** Work and Income New Zealand

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## **Part One:**

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# **Towards Research Backgrounds**

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Some society permit, even encourage, female genital mutilation. For certain women and girls, this custom may amount to persecution. 'If they refuse to submit to the custom and, by doing so, 'transgress the social mores,' will the state step on to protect them? In absence of state protection, their only way to avoid serious harm is to flee their country and become refugees (UNHCR 2000: 163).

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# Chapter one

## Introduction

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### Introduction

Since the Second World War, refugee numbers had been growing around the world especially in the developed countries. With the establishment of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees “UNHCR” in 1950-51, refugee problems have been a preoccupation of this agency, yet refugee numbers continue to increase all around the world due to political instability, insecurity, corruption, poverty, economic structural adjustment and interethnic wars in different developing countries as documented by different sources (UNHCR 2000).

Although, many strategies have been adopted to reduce the number of refugees and to redress the situation in the refugees’ country of origin, neither development projects, nor peace programmes have reduced the number of refugees whose numbers increase daily (UN 1995; UNHCR 2000). This thesis is focused on the integration of the refugees after resettlement, a strategy used as a durable solution for less than 2% of refugee populations (UNHCR 2000).

Each year, countries who have signed the convention on the resettlement of refugees take in refugees according to the quota adopted (750 refugees for New Zealand) (UNHCR 2001). How will these resettled refugees start a new life in their adopting country, such as New Zealand? Who is conducting their resettlement? Are refugee women receiving a particular type of support to help them integrate easily in the new country and to find a job (Suhrke 1994)?

This research focuses on the community and ethnic organisations in the Waikato (New Zealand) that are helping refugee women to integrate in the new society

and to become economically independent. Women are the principal caregivers of the family. In a new country such as New Zealand, they will need to get more support in order to sustain their families in the integration process, as women are more receptive than men (Waring 1988; Ware 1992).

As this research demonstrates, some refugee women face different burdens due to their refugee status, their cultural background, and their family tasks. Where they lack skills, or have little education, their empowerment will be limited and so they take on family tasks and a motherhood function. Other refugee women with more skills will fight to enter the labour force to pursue their career or to further their education. In order to do that, they have to counterbalance their cultural beliefs and their family tasks (Geddes 2000; Domosh 2000; Ekejuba 1995).

Women and men are both agents of development in different societies. However, men show up in the statistics more than women despite the fact that women participate more than men in socio-economic development. Therefore, socio-economic indicators that measure gender equality, reveal inequalities between men and women. In some societies, statistics do not measure women's contribution. For example, women as heads of households are not considered as workers (Waring 1988). This research investigates the women's situation in the Waikato, specifically the ethnic minority refugee women. What do the statistics tell us about the roles ethnic refugee women play in this region?

Different ethnic backgrounds, immigration status, length of resettlement, education levels and employment status and experiences affect in different ways women's local integration, their financial autonomy and the improvement of their socio-economic status. This research investigates the effects of the socio-economic transformation in the life of ethnic women and their families. It will show how difficult it is for refugee women to be in paid jobs. This research also examines what approach can be used to empower the ethnic refugee women (Body-Gendrot 1991; Böhning 1994; Brinker-Gabler 1997).

This research further argues that if women have many children their participation in the labour force will be lower than for those women who have fewer children. When women participate actively in the labour force and experience stress, there will be effects on their family's life, on the lives of their children and husbands. The study shows that ethnic women need an ethnic approach to their integration into community life even if their integration still depends on their socio-economic status (UN 1995; Horsfield 1988; Horsfield and Evans 1988).

Women's participation in the labour force impacts differently on the family and on the ethnic communities. How can these different ethnic and community organisations sustain the culture of the refugee ethnic women and their families in the Waikato while at the same time supporting their social, cultural and economic integration? Are these different organisations helping the ethnic women refugee to achieve economic autonomy by improving their socio-economic status? Do these organisations participate in the process of integration of the ethnic women in the Waikato? These are questions this thesis seeks to answer.

## **Theories**

Resettlement of refugee women in the Waikato needs to be a continuing process. Accepting refugee quota is one issue but supporting them to become full citizens and well integrated in the new society is another issue. For the purposes of this thesis, different theories of integration concerning refugee women are discussed. They are social integration, post-colonialism, critical realism and gender inequalities and social justice. Through social integration, this thesis discusses the issue of ethnic refugee integration versus assimilation or multiculturalism. As Berry (1977) mentions, multiculturalism as applied in different countries such as Canada or New Zealand has produced unequal societies, where one ethnic group dominates—the European ethnic group. Other minorities have kept their culture and participate in its development.

The assimilation model applied in Australia and America has imposed the abandonment of different cultures and the use of the English language, as well as the requirement to become an American or Australian. However, minority ethnic groups have also kept their culture contrary to the government policy and the society has remained unequal with the European ethnic group dominating (Geddes 2000; Mitchell 2000). Another model practised in South Africa and in Zimbabwe, was segregation which, as Mitchell (2000) has demonstrated, also created an unequal society, with the European ethnic group dominating. There is no ideal model of integration as Childs and Williams (1997) or Ferro (1997) mention.

Post-colonial theory supports the need for deconstruction of ethnic relations, by imposing a fair society in which there is no racism and where everyone has the right to participate in the entire dimension of development. There remain inequalities that limit women's full participation in economic activities. There are some inequalities that are perpetuated by women themselves, as Sen (1995) illustrated in discussing the gender inequalities and social justice theory. There is a need for social justice to redress the situation in a natural way (it means in a way that best suited the women), by improving women's education or allowing them to accomplish their motherhood activities as Bhaskar (1994) argues, without fighting against men for their rights.

## **Methodology**

This research will use two methodological approaches. Firstly, using a quantitative methodology, it will analyse census statistics obtained from Statistics New Zealand to determine the socio-economic profile of the five ethnic groups: European, Maori, Pacific Islands, Asian and African (Bailey 1994).

Secondly, this research will use a qualitative approach to determine the role of different agencies dealing with ethnic women through interviews, focus groups discussions and participant observation with those agencies. This thesis has

combined different qualitative tools in the field work with ethnic groups and community organisations to discuss the issue of women's participation in the development of Waikato. Focus groups are necessary to obtain information on specific groups, because participants will feel supported by other members of their community when discussing sensitive issues concerning their integration and acceptance by the wider Waikato communities (Bryman 1988).

Because of the large number of people involved, focus groups are the best way to obtain the perspectives from as large a number of women as possible. In-depth interviews with some participants were used to confirm or transform the perspectives obtained during the work with focus groups (Hay 2000). By combining different methods this research has gathered a lot of information that can be used for future studies, where it is ethically feasible (Sil 2000).

This research is a community based study. It combines the views of all different ethnic groups about how they expect each other to integrate into Waikato society and to build strong and safe communities. Different policies that assume social equity and social justice for these communities need to be integrated into a social and cultural approach. The community organisations who participated in this research are beneficiaries of the findings. The researcher is also a community worker.

## **Objectives**

This study will help policy makers, governmental and non-governmental organisations, and development community authorities to understand the different disruptions that affect ethnic women, children and families through women's participation in the development of the Waikato region. The results of the research will help the agencies to carry out their activities more efficiently by following up the recommendations made by the study's participants.

This research will provide information on diverse problems affecting the ethnic refugee women living in the Waikato region such as:

- A better integration into the labour force. Ethnic women need jobs and have found it difficult obtaining them. They also may have other needs and face obstacles that prevent them from joining the labour force. This research will uncover these needs and obstacles.
- A better integration into the social fabric of the Waikato region. This study will try to discover what obstacles ethnic women face when they try to integrate socially.
- This research will also underline the diversity of situations covered by the label 'ethnic refugee women' and untangle the needs and requirements (as well as obstacles faced) by each specific subgroup, especially the African ethnic groups.
- Research until now has focused on a specific ethnic group and drawn conclusions for all others on this single basis. There have been no cross-cultural or comparative studies of these various ethnic sub-groups. This research will be of great benefit because it will explain the circumstances specific to the refugee women instead of providing blanket statements.
- Policy-makers can better understand and make more useful decisions and policies regarding the integration and full participation into New Zealand society of ethnic women and their families. This thesis will help to formulate sustainable gender ethnic and cultural policies for New Zealand.

## **Disciplinary background**

Many disciplines have inspired the writing of this thesis. Rural Development studies taken as courses at the Institute for Rural development (ISDR- Mbeo-DRC) in 1986 revealed that women accomplish more than 80% of the jobs in the rural area. Community building capacity is the life style in African rural areas. Women need to have a voice in decision making in different rural development projects.

Demography and Population studies accomplished at the University of Kinshasa in 1994 and at Waikato University in 2001, have contributed in the construction of the indicators measuring the integration of women in development and gender equality. Socio-economic indicators must be adapted to the place and its culture.

Population and Sustainable Development studies undertaken at post-university level in Morocco (Global Programme for Population and Sustainable development, INSEA, Morocco, 1997, with UNFPA), have guided my understanding of gender and women development in a global and sustainable perspective. This training emphasised the synergy between social, economic and environmental factors. That synergy means that one needs to establish the impact of a project on the social life, the economy and the environment of the area before it can proceed. The interaction between these three components must be examined.

My experience as a former refugee woman, a volunteer in RMS, the African Community in Waikato, and in the Hamilton Ethnic Women Centre, has helped me to understand the complexity of empowering women in community organisations.

## **Research limitations**

The timing of the research did not allow me to conduct enough focus group discussions and to analyse all the information collected. Family constraints and the fact that English is not my first language are the greatest limitations in this thesis. However, I have managed to challenge those limitations to accomplish this study and to pursue my local integration in the Waikato social fabric of refugee and ethnic women. This research has taken more the views of married people as they were the majority among the participants. My position as a former refugee has an impact in this study.

This research could have been more successful if different organisations such as government ministries had participated, especially those who have declined to

be interviewed. The views of different political parties in this research would have given more diverse opinions on the integration of refugee women and their participation in the labour force. However, because funding obtained was limited to the community organisations, this research concentrates on the role of community organisations.

## **Thesis structure**

This thesis is divided into three parts. The first part (chapters one and two) gives a general research background. The first chapter introduces the thesis, while the second chapter describes refugee resettlement in New Zealand and in the Waikato. The second part (chapters three and four) gives the theoretical and methodological frameworks. The third chapter focuses on research theories, while the fourth chapter presents the framework of the study, the research methodology and the field work. The third part (Chapters five, six and seven) is devoted to the analysis of the findings. The fifth chapter presents the burdens faced by the ethnic refugee women. Chapter six analyses the problems faced by the ethnic women refugees through quantitative and qualitative data, while chapter seventh focuses on the role of the community organisations. Chapter eight concludes the thesis and gives recommendations for future action.

## **Conclusion**

As long as social, economic and political problems remain unresolved in developing countries, refugees will continue to be resettled in developed countries particularly in New Zealand. Who are refugee women in the Waikato region and how are they integrating, is the question this thesis seeks to resolve. Most refugee women in the Waikato live in Hamilton. Theories of integration are challenged since no model is successful. The theories proposed focus on ethnic relations and seek to build a society where social justice is celebrated and racism is abolished.

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## **Chapter two**

# **Refugee resettlement in New Zealand and in the Waikato**

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### **Introduction**

Refugee resettlement in New Zealand and in the Waikato is the responsibility of the New Zealand Government which is signatory to the United Nations Convention 1951 on the declaration of refugee status and to the protocol 1967 for refugee resettlement. Under this protocol, New Zealand accepts 750 refugees each year (NZIS 2001). These refugees come from different parts of the world. They bring with them their culture, experience, qualifications and beliefs and are resettled permanently in New Zealand as their new home. Three years later these refugees can choose to become New Zealand citizens. But refugees always applied quickly to obtain their citizenship as Reinsch (2001) indicates. This thesis focuses on the role of the organisations that support refugee women resettled in the Waikato. Are these organisations helping these women to improve their socio-economic status by getting them into paid jobs? That is the main research question. As this thesis wants to empower all refugee ethnic women, naming a particular refugee ethnic group's country of origin reduces its contribution and its values. All refugees as Cernea and McDowell 2001) underline, are affected by the different problems discussed in the thesis during their resettlement

As a refugee woman who has passed through this experience, this study reawakened feelings of grief for the loss of my family members. However, at the same time, it also strengthened the relevance and validity of my research and provided a deepened personal resolve to further the study so that the lives of other refugees can be improved and new ethnic refugee relations can be built within the society. As Smith (1999) suggests, when an indigenous person carries out

research on indigenous people, the results can be interpreted with accuracy. It is the same for refugee issues. A former refugee woman studying refugee women can reveal a better understanding of the reality, while still maintaining objectivity and theoretical rigour, to describe what refugees have suffered (Rose 1993). As a reflexive insider, I am mindful of the variety of contexts these women come from.

## **Concept definitions**

Without defining a concept or a material phenomenon, we would be unable to discuss it, much less systematically refer to it. Definitions are thus a vital part of the research process. The concepts (migrants, internally displaced persons, immigrants and refugees) are defined here to avoid confusion over concepts and the reality they refer to.

### ***Migrants:***

Are any persons who have left their habitual residence for at least six months with or without the intention to return. Many reasons justify that displacement. The direction can vary (rural-urban, urban-urban, rural...). The causes that produce this displacement, its duration, the destination etc.... are other criteria to consider while studying migration typologies (Adepoju 1988).

### ***Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs):***

This concept refers to: “people or groups of people who have been forced to leave their homes or places of habitual residence in particular as a result of, or in order to avoid, the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights and their welfare or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised state border” (Hampton 1998: 4). For example, the volcanic eruptions in Goma produced a new wave of IDPs in The Democratic Republic of Congo in 2001.

### ***International migrants:***

Are “people who have left voluntarily their habitual residence to another residence located in a different country. These people are considered “immigrants” in the

receiving countries and “*emigrants*” in the sending countries” (Papademetrio 1982; Adepoju 1982). These immigrants can stay in the same region, for example in the Africa region (Malawians in Zimbabwe, Congolese in South Africa...) or in a different region, for example from Africa to Asia, or to Europe, to North or South America, to Oceania and the Pacific region, etc... Each region and country has immigration policies that affect the immigrants’ lives and their integration process. Sometimes when an immigration department refuses to legalise the immigrants’ status, immigrants are likely to ask for refugee status. That causes difficulties in the statistics to distinguish refugees from immigrants (United Nations 1984).

### ***Refugees:***

According to the article 1(A) of the 1951 convention related to the status of refugees, a refugee is any person who:

owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside of the country of his (sic!) nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself (sic!) of the protection of that country; or who not having a nationality and being outside the country of his (sic!) former habitual residence..., is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (UNHCR 2000: 55, NZIS 2001: 2).

The convention in 1951 was completed by the 1967 protocol to give “protection to refugees without reference to time and to geographical limitations” (UNHCR, 2000: 53). In Africa, the Organisation for African Unity (OAU) adopted the AU refugee convention in 1969. That convention governs the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. The 1969 convention acknowledges the UN 1951 convention and the protocol 1967 as basic and universal instruments for the status of refugees. This convention honours that definition and contains important provisions relating to non-rejection at the borders, asylum, the location of refugee settlements, the prohibition of subversive activities by refugees and voluntary repatriation (UNHCR 2000:55).

The United Nations International Conference on Population, states that:

“... Mobility is essential to the effectiveness of an intellectual worker, and freedom of movement is included in the United Nations Charter on Human Rights and recognised in various resolutions and recommendations of the United

Nations. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, for example, states in article 13: (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State, (2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and return to his country any time (sic)” (UN 1984: 427).

These declarations of human rights justify the flows of international migrants and refugees (UNHCR 2000). Research in the refugee field needs data that can describe clearly refugee status as different to that of international migrants. Among refugee categories which include men, women and children, those data need to distinguish:

- **Asylum seekers**, who are people who leave their country for fear of persecution. Many reasons exist as to why people seek asylum (racial, religious, political...) (UNHCR 2000).
  
- **Mandated Refugees** are the asylum seekers who are guaranteed refugee status. Members of this refugee’s family gain protection and are given the same rights. In the circumstance that the conditions in the home country have changed those mandated refugees are qualified for voluntary repatriation from the first country of asylum to their homeland. In some cases, hostilities against these refugees are revealed in the asylum country. In such cases a solution is resettlement in a third country (UNHCR 2000)
  
- When resettled, **refugees** will become permanent residents and later citizens and can sponsor their family members through family reunification. Those members, who can go under the family reunion category, will be called Family Associated Migrants (UNHCR 2000). Ascribing refugees to those different categories does not reduce the complexity of the study of the refugee situation. This thesis will deal with “*quota refugees*” qualified for resettlement in a third country, especially in the Waikato region in New Zealand.

Among quota refugees who can be accepted in New Zealand are the following categories as described by the New Zealand Immigration Service (NZIS) (NZIS 1994):

- ***Women at risk;*** women who are not eligible for resettlement under normal criteria but who are alone, or with children, and are at risk in a country of first asylum.
- ***Medically disabled;*** refugees who have medical, physical or social disabilities which would normally preclude them from resettlement selection.
- ***Emergency;*** refugees who are in need of urgent resettlement. Such cases are generally faced with an immediate risk to their safety, for example imminent deportation to their country of persecution.
- ***Protection;*** refugees who need to be moved from their present location for safety reasons, for example if they are in physical danger in the country of asylum. This category covers refugees who may not meet the specific criteria of other categories but who, nevertheless, require resettlement.
- ***Family reunion;*** whereby refugees who have already been resettled in New Zealand nominate family members to be selected for resettlement here. Actually the selection for this category is done through the ballot system.

## **Refugee resettlement in New Zealand**

Since 1944, New Zealand has resettled around 25000 refugees (NZIS 2001). From 1980, New Zealand has responded to the global needs of the refugee population. The main issue is where the refugees should live: “isolated” in their special settlements or “integrated” in the community. Many countries have adopted integration, but they must study the consequences, through, for example, comparative studies of the refugee situation between New Zealand and Australia (Jayasuriya 1996; Lamont 2000; Mitchell 2000).

**Table 2.1:**

**Refugees resettled in New Zealand from 1944 to 2000 by major nationalities.**

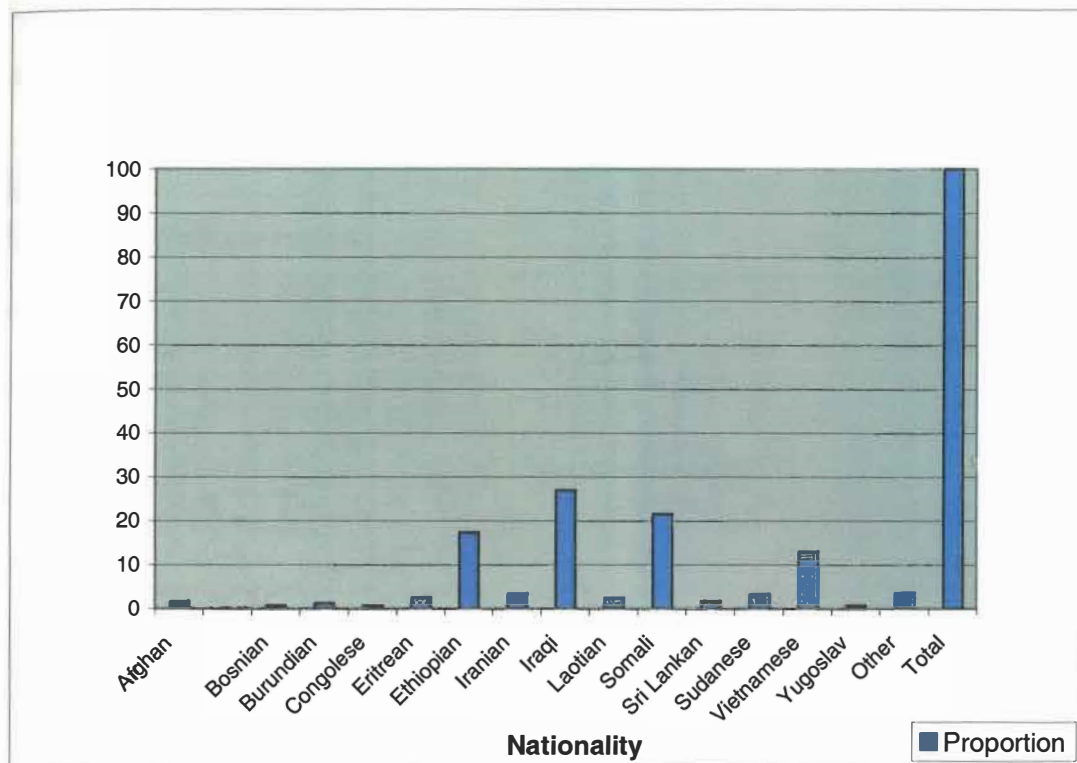
Year	Nationalities
1944:	Polish children and their guardians
1949-1952	Displaced persons from Europe
1956-1958	Hungarian
1962-1971	Chinese (from Hong Kong and Indonesia)
1965	Russian Christian "old Believers"
1968-1971	Czechoslovak
1972-1973	Asian Ugandan
1974-1991	Chilean
1974-1991	Eastern Europeans: Polish, Czechoslovak, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Romanian, Yugoslav and Soviet
1975-2000	Indochinese: Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian
1979-2000	Iranian
1988-2000	Iraqi
1992-2000	Bosnian, Somali, Sri Lankan, Sudanese, Ethiopian
1999-2000	Afghan, Congolese
2000	Burmese

Source: NZIS 2000:1

New Zealand started the resettlement of refugees in 1944, but Africans first arrived in the early 1990s. The Africans, mainly Somalians, Sudanese, Ethiopians and small communities of Congolese, are the most recent refugee communities to be resettled. What issues are being raised by their recent experiences?

**Graph 2.1:**

**Distribution of refugee populations by major nationalities**



Source: NZIS 2000: 1

Between 1994 and 2000, New Zealand Immigration services have resettled approximately 4280 refugees. This figure represents 1/1000 of the country's population under the quota policy. The numbers of asylum seekers are larger than this quota. NZIS refugee quota is determined by the government policy and agreement with the UNHCR. Refugees must meet the UNHCR's criteria to participate in its programmes.

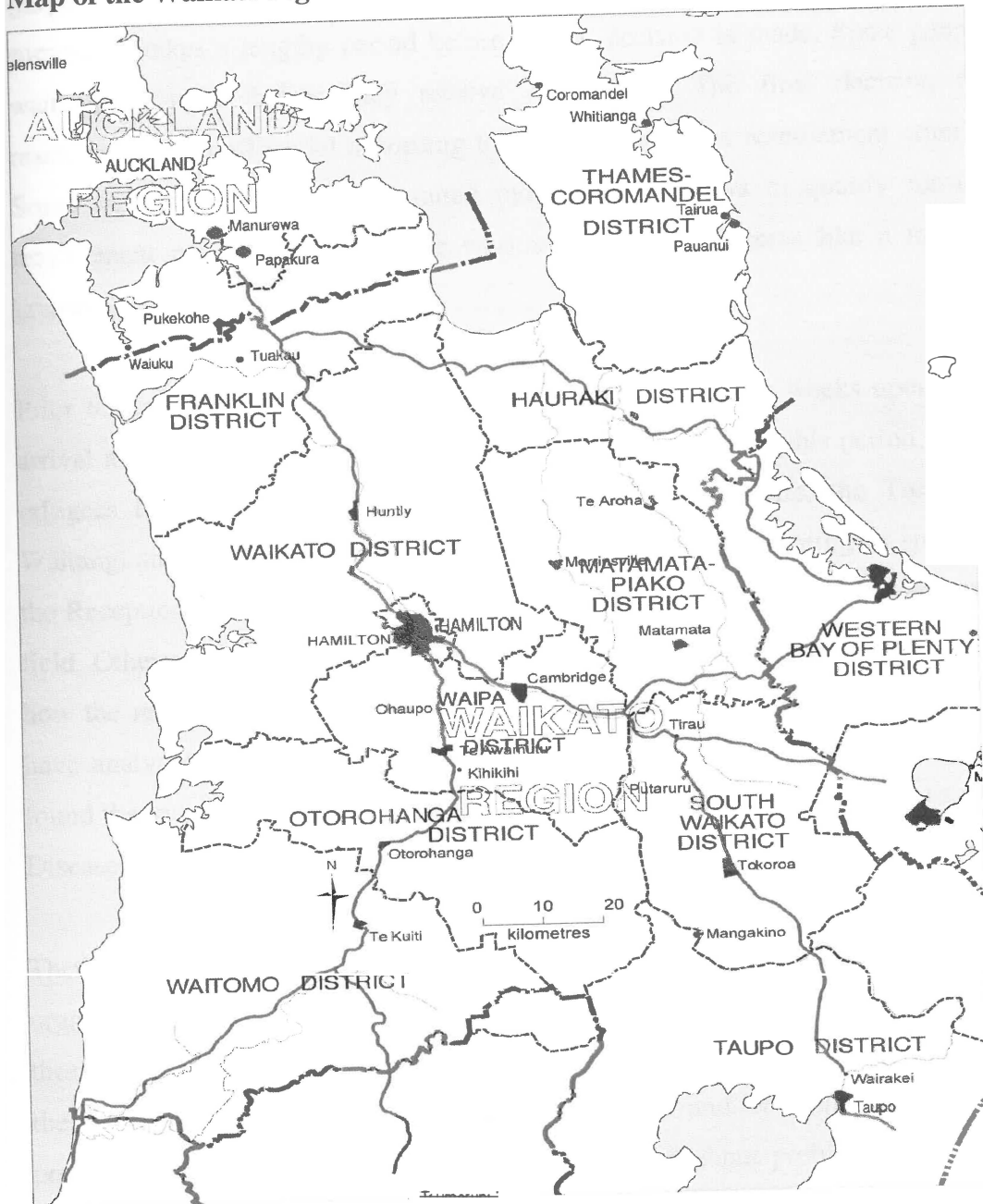
## **Presentation of the Waikato region**

A description of the Waikato region is necessary before turning to the study itself. The Waikato region according to data used in this thesis includes the following areas in 2001: Thames Coromandel District, Hauraki District, Waikato District, Matamata Piako District, Hamilton City, Waipa District, Otorohanga District, South Waikato District and Waitomo District, as shown in the map below (Figure

2.1). The majority of refugees live in Hamilton City especially in the University, Hillcrest West and Hamilton East neighbourhoods (Intersect Waikato 2002). Further research may disclose why refugees are not willing to settle outside Hamilton in such places as Tokoroa or Matamata. Below is the map of Waikato Region.

**Figure 2.1 :**

**Map of the Waikato region**



Source: Oulton, M., 2003

## **Refugee women's issues in the Waikato**

In order to classify a person into a refugee category, a country through its Immigration department, carries out interviews. Each country has its own policy. In New Zealand, Immigration officers carry out the interview in the country (airport office) and also outside New Zealand to select the quota of refugees. It sometimes takes a lengthy period before a final decision is made. Some people wait many years before they receive a response. The final decision for resettlement is confidential according to the country's own resettlement criteria. Some mandate refugees have waited more than 10 years to qualify for the resettlement programme. For those who are accepted it seems like a miracle granted by God.

Prior to their resettlement in the Waikato, refugees spend six weeks upon their arrival at the Mangere Reception Centre, in Auckland. During this period, quota refugees have English lessons, learn about New Zealand life, the Treaty of Waitangi and have their health checked (NZIS 1994). The time refugees spend in the Reception Centre and also the way they are resettled can be another research field. Other research has focused on refugee mental health and has demonstrated how the refugee experience can affect their life (NZIS 2001). Some researchers have analysed the reproductive health of refugees in refugee settlements. They found that many women had been infected with HIV/AIDS, Sexual Transmissible Diseases (STD) through sexual violence inflicted on them (UNHCR 2002).

There has not been found any study that focuses on the role of community organisations in the improvement of refugee women's socio-economic status. This thesis attempts to fill that gap. Refugees have been accepted and are resettled, but there is a lack of studies that evaluate the views and opinions of the local population about having refugees in the country and about problems that affect refugee women who seek to enter the labour force. These are the different objectives of this study.

It has been found that many refugees from developing countries are marginalised and suffer from exclusion, particularly from active groups in developed countries (Castles 1993; Leah 1993). Many women refugees are often unemployed and live in poor conditions. They are uneducated. The absence of networks (ethnic group or community) that can be a link between this population and the community in general, is another problem as refugees also need to recover from cultural shock (ACOSS 1992; Arber 1993).

The integration of refugees is a hard and complex issue wherever those refugees are living (Africa, Asia, America, Europe and Oceania). As the resettlement of the refugees is long and difficult process, it needs collaboration between national and local agencies and between different ministries and departments in the formulation of the resettlement policies (NZIS 2000). Each region, each country has different problems with the refugees' situation. (UNHCR 2000). What difficulties do these refugee women, who come to New Zealand and settle in the Waikato (Hamilton) face in gaining employment?

The resettlement of these refugees in a third country leads to different consequences and advantages in New Zealand and Waikato societies:

1. Population growth: the 750 quota refugees who come yearly to New Zealand and the many immigrants and asylum seekers can contribute towards the costs of health services and education and through paying taxes once employed.
2. Refugees and other immigrants increase consumption and income in the country. They will need telephone connections and will purchase equipment, clothing, food or housing.
3. Refugees and others immigrants increase savings even if some of that money is transferred to their families in the homeland.
4. Refugees and immigrants contribute to the development of both the sending and the receiving countries culturally, socially and economically. They are valid ambassadors of different countries where they have lived. More studies should investigate the input of refugees in New Zealand.

The successful integration of refugee women in western countries can make an impact in the development process of the developing world. It can improve the quality of life and well-being of women who are still living in developing countries. Refugee women united can establish networks or banks in the western countries such as the Canadian refugee women community, American refugee women community, New-Zealander refugee women community, Australian refugee women community .... These structures can join together to build the International refugee women Bank to support the empowerment of women in developing regions (UNHCR 2000).

## Community organisations role in the resettlement of refugees in the Waikato

**Table 2.2:**  
**Refugee population in the Waikato**

Number of Refugees in Waikato in 2001	
Somalians	800
Cambodian	700
Iraqi (Chaldean and Kurdish)	300
Congolese	35
Iranian Kurdish	13
Sri Lankan	4
Afghani	17
Djibouti	
Total	1869 (SIC)

Source: Intersect Waikato 2001:40 (SIC)

Somalians followed by Cambodians are the largest refugee groups followed by Iraqis. Smaller refugee groups are Congolese, Iranian, Djibouti, Afghani and Sri Lankan. *Intersect Waikato* did not mention other groups that live in the Waikato such as Ethiopians, Vietnamese and Latino American refugees.

There are many community organisations that support the resettlement of the refugees. The main agency responsible for the resettlement of refugees is Refugee

and Migrant Service (RMS). This agency is responsible for welcoming and sponsoring refugees. RMS also helps as a contact point for refugees regarding their diverse issues (health, schooling, contact with WINZ...). RMS specialises in training volunteers who can work with refugees for six months after their arrival (*Intersect Waikato* 2001). As Holborn noticed, to attract donors, refugee agencies use language in their advertisement that describes refugees as needy, helpless, jobless people. This image is filtered into wider community negative prejudices and stereotype on refugees (Holborn 1975).

Talking from my own experience, although those volunteers and sponsors find all the necessary equipment to give refugees a new start, such as bedding, towels, linen pillows, dishes, cutlery etc.... these items are secondary and they give a sad beginning for the refugees. Within three to six months refugees will work hard to make the future vibrant. They will change all the second hand equipment for new items. Agencies supporting refugees, knowing what happens with all the furniture given to refugees, instead of asking people to donate each time, should just collect these materials and keep them in storage for other new arrivals. The first impression people get from those agencies reduces their contact with refugees. As refugee women want to achieve their empowerment and restore their past life, there is a need to set up programmes or services within different organisations that will focus on the empowerment of refugee women and their family members.

Another agency is the ESOL-Home Tutor Scheme, specialised in the training of home tutors who will be available to teach refugees English at home or at a convenient place and time. However, this agency does not sometimes have enough volunteers who want to become home tutors and (new) immigrants and refugees can wait for more than 18 months without receiving any English lessons. Employment and finances seem to preoccupy the refugees rather than English lessons (*Intersect Waikato* 2001). Some refugees are learning English through Waikato Institute of Technology (Wintec).

The third organisation that supports refugees is the Multicultural Services Trust, which trains interpreters for refugees who cannot speak English. Refugees get interpreters for health, court and other issues. This agency is developing the

Waikato Migrant Resource Centre that collaborates with different services dedicated to the successful resettlement of refugees and immigrants in the Waikato. This Centre will serve as a 'one stop shop' and will provide more information for the refugees (Intersect Waikato 2001).

In Hamilton and in the Waikato there are other organisations available that can support refugee women. As listed in the Hamilton New Settlers Directory edited by Hamilton City Council (HCC), there are around 78 ethnic community organisations that support a specific ethnic group (HCC 2002). There are around 50 women organisations that help women in different aspects of their life such as domestic violence in family, childcare, advocacy, and women rights as mentioned by the Community Employment Group (CEG) (CEG 2002). There are also different local governmental departments who support refugees and the larger community such as, the department of Work and Income New Zealand that provides social welfare to beneficiary families. Most refugees belong to this category (CEG, 2002). The Department of Child, Youth and family advocates safer families and builds stronger families and communities supports also refugee women (CEG 2002).

Other governmental departments such as the Department of Education, Housing New Zealand and the District Health Waikato support refugees in the resettlement process. However, there is no department focused on finding and creating jobs for refugees so that refugees who want to work upon their arrival, can start work directly without going onto benefits as declared at the Australian Conference on Social Services (ACOSS) (ACOSS 1992). These refugee women still find many differences between their home country and the country of resettlement. Some refugee women have limited skills and that handicaps their possibilities of being in paid jobs. The creation of community paid job opportunities may be a key issue that can help them gain some financial autonomy while they build up skills to participate in the general labour force. This study is limited to the role of community, ethnic and religious organisations in the empowerment of refugee women by getting them into paid jobs.

## Conclusion

This chapter has presented the resettlement of refugees in New Zealand and in the Waikato. Many reasons explain the refugee crisis in developing countries such as political, economic, cultural or religious. Insecurity in Africa and in other regions often increases the number of refugees and asylum seekers around the world. A sustainable solution resides in grassroots and local initiatives. African and other governments must define their own way for development through community participation. A sustainable solution is to institute peace and to resolve the economic and political situation in the countries of origin of refugees. Solutions have been found in the resettlement of refugees. A durable solution must be found to help the refugees become integrated in the third country's wider community and be able to participate in the development of their home countries through the establishment of refugee women communities and banks. The question we are asking is if resettlement of refugee women in the Waikato is a best solution.

That question is topical and involves the reformulation of policies. For those who have succeeded in the resettlement process and who have obtained family reunification, resettlement is the best solution. Others report missing relatives in Africa and in other regions, which is incredibly stressful. Resettlement may be the best solution but resettlement programmes and policies need to be analysed so as to be improved and made more effective. Refugee women in the Waikato face difficult conditions in their adjustment and feel like strangers in their new country. Different agencies support refugee women's resettlement in the Waikato, RMS, WINZ, ESOL-Home Tutor Scheme, Migrant Resource Centre.... The support obtained from those different agencies makes refugee resettlement easier.

## Part two:

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# Research theoretical and methodological framework

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Can you imagine that we now know that between four to six million Germans today are the sons and daughters of Soviet soldiers who raped their mothers....! Indeed, it is much worse: it appears every German woman East of Berlin, from about the age of 10 through to the very old, were each and every one of them pack raped....(Pacific Women's Information Network, Wednesday, May 07, 2003)

31 Women Died in 2002 Honour Killings/Victimes de la loi des hommes. At least 31 Palestinian women were murdered in so-called honour killings in the West Bank and Gaza Strip last year..., the Victims, most of whom were under 18, were killed by family members for perceived sexual misconduct that brought shame to family, although in most cases the girls had been sexually abused or raped by relatives ... (women in the Middle East, Bulletin#1-3 From Azam\_yahoo.com, May 07, 2003)

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## Chapter three

# Research Theories

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### Introduction

Gender and ethnicity are complex concepts and are socially constructed. It is difficult to understand, to analyse and to describe the role of community organisations in improving ethnic refugee women's socio-economic status in the Waikato with just one theory. Most of the time, theories are limited to one particular aspect of women's lives. There are no clear links between refugee ethnic women's socio-economic empowerment and community organisations as demonstrated by (Ware 1992; Conduct and Ramsey 1996; Brinker-Gabber and Smith 1997). This chapter emphasises different theories that can help us to understand how refugee women can improve their socio-economic status through the help of different community organisations in the Waikato. What is the meaning of the policy of integration of the ethnic women? Do ethnic women want to achieve equality with men or only financial autonomy and integration in the new society?

Feminists are divided in their response to these questions. While feminist geographers emphasise the role of women in place and according to social class (Laurie 1999), radical feminists are likely to look at their role in the society and their equality through paid and unpaid jobs (Horsfield 1988). Black feminists are looking at the way Indigenous people and ethnic people need to achieve their empowerment in a culturally appropriate way (Zinn *et al.* 1990; McLaughlin 1995). Marxist feminists emphasise sex/gender relationships in the patriarchal society, where the link between women and men can be understood to stabilise the society. As it will be demonstrated in second section, women's organisations are also patriarchal (Jonasdottir 1994; Esber 1997).

How do ethnic women live in other developed countries? What theories can be used to explain different ethnic policies applied in a particular country? Gender, ethnicity and culture create complex problems. How can people of different ethnicity, culture, religion, class, living in a country where they are minorities be equal to the dominant groups? How efficient can be the policies (for economic development or other issues) that take care of the differences? How can people who keep to their cultural identity be integrated in a country of immigration such as New Zealand? These questions need investigating as follows.

## **Ethnic integration theory and policy**

Edward N. Herberg defines an ethnic group: “If one accepts the premise (originally from Durkheim) that a society, or group in a society, comprised of a multitude of unorganised, isolated or alienated individuals constitutes a veritable sociological monstrosity, one is led to the conclusion that structures mediating between individuals and the larger community or society are necessary to prevent isolation, anomie and anarchy” (Herberg 1989: 5).

Members of these groups are bonding together and searching the same values and norms that constitute their identity, their ethnicity and their culture. Alternatively, people belonging to an ethnic group can change their life style and abandon their cultural practices (Herberg 1989). By intermarriage, ethnic groups change their culture. Luke (1997) mentions a lack of research on interracial or intercultural families, and what there is, has not been centred in feminist studies, post colonialist and multicultural research. These interracial families can change the dynamic in the ethno-racial-religious relations in a society where there is a dominant culture or race. Luke tells the story about her six year old daughter who was treated as an outsider because her father was Chinese. She has a lot of friends and people who did not like to come to their place (Luke 1997).

How efficient can an ethnic policy be that wants people to keep their culture, religion and race?<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ethnic groups can also decide not to keep to their culture. They can be considered modernised by the insider community members.

In Canada, multiculturalism is used to promote the retention of cultural heritages and the sharing of them with all Canadians. An ethnic group maintains and creates cultural symbols, but the culture associated with an ethnic group does change over time (Berry 1977: 1-6).

In Canada, not everybody agreed with multiculturalism (Herberg 1989). The USA has applied the principle of Americanisation of immigrants, which means every one must become American. Everybody should speak English (Frankenberg 1993; Crawford 1998). However, in the USA, there are people who still keep to their culture, race, and religion. The Black American is an example of resistance to Americanisation. There are still socio-economic inequalities between different ethnic groups in both Canada and USA (Herberg 1989, Crawford 1998; David 1996).

In South Africa, apartheid excluded indigenous people and forced them to abandon their language. In spite of this segregation, a coloured population grew because of relationships between white men and black women. Relationship between white women and black men was totally unacceptable by the authorities, but the opposite (relationship between white men and black women) was accepted. The children born from those different relationships have different social considerations as Marger (2000) has demonstrated. The authorities in Australia decided to solve the Aborigine problem through their assimilation by intermarriage (Martiniello 1995). This policy was not successful. The Aborigine people are still part of Australian society (Babacan 1993). Each country is free to choose a particular integration model of the ethnic population.

Multicultural policy supposes the full participation of different ethnic groups in the labour force and also the conservation of their cultural identity (Kawharu 1989; Jayasuriya 1996). New Zealand and Canada are doing their best to support integration of ethnic people culturally, socially and economically through multiculturalism but there are still refugees who are marginalised (Jayasuriya 1996).

When a country adopts multiculturalism, there is a need to reform the education system, religion, language, and family activities. The government allocates resources that can help different ethnic groups to develop their culture, languages, religion, and education. Ethnic minorities can be at high risk of segregation if policies put in place are not effective (Jenkins 1998). With multicultural policy, minority populations can still be excluded from the larger community for their lack of communication skills and thus remain marginalised. The best thing, as advocated by multicultural policy, is to help people retain their culture and also participate in the larger community, by supporting their learning of the dominant language.

Some countries have adopted a cultural policy that includes multiculturalism. This means that development policy must focus on the culture of the ethnic groups as a component of the national strategies to be achieved for their integration. Berry (1977: 8) comments that:

Cultural policy generally is not a well-developed area of government nor of social research. In Canada, such concerns are clearly divided both historically and politically into “native” and “immigrant” sectors, with the latter often divided into “charter groups” and “other immigrant” peoples.

In Canada and New Zealand, there are dominant groups governing the country. Cultural policy takes different directions when dealing with native and first immigrants (Treaty of Waitangi in New Zealand) (Hindmarsh 1993). Becoming a multicultural country means that these four areas of support are identified (Berry 1977: 11):

- First, resources permitting, the government will seek to assist all Canadian cultural groups that have demonstrated a desire and effort to continue to develop, a capacity grow and contribute to Canada, and a clear need for assistance, the small and weak groups no less the strong and highly organised.
- Second, the government will assist members of all ethnic groups to overcome cultural barriers to full participation in Canadian society.
- Third, the government will promote creative encounters and interchange among all Canadian cultural groups in the interest of national unity.

- Fourth, the government will assist immigrants to acquire at least one of Canada's official languages in order to become full participants in Canadian Society.<sup>2</sup>

This multicultural policy has been supported by the ethnic groups in Canada. The language policy (multilingualism) allows putting more resources in the development of many languages. Canada is a unique country which has adopted multiculturalism since its early age, creating a multilingual community. New Zealand adopted biculturalism and now the multicultural approach. How efficient is the multicultural policy? Are all ethnic groups receiving enough support to retain their culture (religion, education, language, food, political ideologies) (Kobayashi 1993)?

In New Zealand, multiculturalism is a way of integrating different minorities, through the organisation of cultural events, the establishment of the Department of Ethnic Affairs, a service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. *“In reality, Europeans dominate in this department. The organisers of cultural events are also European, and funding agencies to support all these ethnic organisations are ruled by Europeans”* said Dibaya (one of the interviewees). Is participation in the different cultural activities a sufficient indicator to measure the efficacy of the multicultural policy? What can be the future of multiculturalism if there is not enough assistance given to people to retain their culture (school programmes, cultural centres)? Although a multicultural policy is practised in New Zealand, there is a need for ethnic women to achieve their autonomy through the improvement of their socio-economic status (Hanchett 1997).

Another issue in cultural policies is gender equality. Are there indicators that outline the disparity between men and women according to their ethnic groups in different sectors? All statistics at different levels must show the gap by gender between different ethnic groups. All ethnic entities need to be divided into different groups on the basis of the region they come from, since their

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<sup>2</sup> That is the Canadian Premier Ministry's Statement, October 1971, p.3

origins can raise different kinds of obstacles in their integration. Those who come from English speaking countries, for example, will have fewer difficulties landing a job in New Zealand than those whose primary language is not English (Watts and Trlin 2000).

In an immigration country, such as New Zealand, gender and ethnic policy study can be more complex. There are five major ethnic groups (Maori, European, Pacific Islands, Asian and African) that need to be divided into their subgroups. Each subgroup must be further divided, and equality must be measured within the groups and between the groups. Is there a model that can be applied to measure the full integration of all ethnic groups and particularly for refugee women (Reinsch 2001; Edmonton *et al.* 1994)?

## **Gender inequalities and theories of justice**

The most effective theories of gender and equality from WID “Women Integration in the development”, WAD “Women and Development”, and GAD “Gender and Development”, have focused on the participation of women in economic development, without incorporating the social and cultural consequences of women’s participation into paid jobs (Visvanathan *et al.* 1997).

Economists have focused on the monetary value of women’s activities, as Marilyn Waring said:

As a politician, I found it virtually impossible to prove it – given the production framework with which we were faced – that the child care facilities were needed. “Non-producers”, housewives, mothers who are ‘inactive’ and ‘unoccupied’ cannot, apparently, be in need. They are not even in the economic cycle in the first place. They can certainly have no expectation that they will be visible in the distribution of benefits that flow from production. Unpaid work, productive and reproductive done by women for the family must be counted and receive a monetary valuation (Waring 1988: 1-5).

Women can choose to stay at home looking after the family and doing much vital work even if it is not assigned an economic value. Those housework activities

(such as: cleaning toilets, dishwashing, laundry, gardening, caring for children, childbirth, breastfeeding, cooking, motherhood function... ) are vital to the life and health of the family and thus to the economic productivity of the country and thus need to be recognised and taken into account in national statistics (Waring 1987; Domosh and Seager 2001; Mitchell 2000).

Since 1970, development theories have not achieved gender equality and in some countries the gap is getting wider and wider between men and women (Sen 1995). Many social problems have also occurred with women taking paid jobs. Children are becoming parentless and the divorce rate is increasing (UN 1995).

The official future will not take place, because there are still inequalities and in other countries statistics show that women have reduced their proportion in politics. Many women do not like to join politics and fight for their equality, they are happy in the way they are living. Many international conferences on women have taken place in the world since 1975, but there is not much change. Women are still suffering, women's rights are human rights, but there are common problems among women, of poverty, economic development, education, health, violence against them and their less than full share of power in everything from families to national governments to the United Nations (Conduct and Ramsey 1996).

As Snyder and Tadesse have stated:

Despite the economy and political situation, African women remain the main persons to care for the welfare and well-being of the family. They also look after everything but they have no control. Empowering women economically means that women will have access to financial autonomy and control of their income and productions (Snyder and Tadesse 1995).

Gender and class are socially constructed. There are differences between this construction in different countries and regions (McDowell 1999). All development discourses about gender and equality for women have not achieved women's empowerment or their equality (Daniels 2000; Esber 1997). Problems are still predominant in most societies. Many feminists believed that helping women obtain paid jobs would achieve equality between men and women. That meant increasing their financial autonomy as:

Gainful employment outside the home particularly as an independent wage or salary worker, does, undeniably, affect the self-image and the perceived value of women. It represents ways to escape male control and to regain female control (particularly in peasant households) (Nussbaum and Glover 1995).

Women's participation in paid jobs brought them financial autonomy but it did not increase women's bargaining power and autonomy within the household. It led to increased class, gender and individual consciousness. Women, however, still perform all the house chores, such as cooking and washing. They are responsible for sending children to childcare and to school. Gainful employment is important but fundamental change for women cannot be based solely on increased labour force participation. The conditions in which women are working must be just. Some feminist theorists have identified collective action as a primary step for women in achieving just employment and justice broadly as underlined by Sen:

the theory of justice has helped to understand that some gender inequalities within the family and different community groups are operated by women themselves (along with more powerful male members of the large society) who accept that their practices are natural and acceptable, because nobody reacted to them (Sen 1995).

Examples of these practices are that boys can (or can't) do certain things while girls must have long hair, do the cooking and dishwashing. In Nigeria, women have their own organisation that has operated independently from that of men. Women have their own activities in agriculture, but they are not in the high levels of decision-making. They are still dominated by men (Snyder and Tadesse 1995). Another example is primary education in New Zealand. Some women are key players as teachers, secretaries, administrators, etc but those in the top positions are men.

We call for social justice in order to eradicate gender and pay inequality for women and by women. Women's participation in reclaiming their rights is the issue they need to tackle to change their life, to have social justice. Women need to achieve equality, development and peace, without which women will still struggle (Pietila and Vicker 1990).

Economic empowerment is really what women want to achieve to be part of an equal society. Empowerment in practices (Rowlands 1999) can take place on a small scale, linking people with others in similar situations through self-help, education, support or social group actions, network building or on a large scale through community organisation(s), campaigns, legislative lobbying, social planning and policy development. Keller and Mbwewe's (1991) empowerment model highlights the idea of women empowering themselves through awareness-building capacities. This approach must not be a top-down method, but at grassroots level, as women themselves need to define their own project. This approach takes time but it is more sustainable (Peterson and Runyan 1993; Gilkes 1994).

The United Nations (1995) underline that social justice, equality, peace and development are values to achieve in order to ensure the empowerment of women. Women should not be living under any form of discrimination. Women's social and economic needs must be fulfilled for them to reach equality. This equality can be reached only if women are full participants in projects at the grass-roots level but, not all women want to be part of the change which can just be realised by consciousness and activism.

Women have the capacity to achieve equality and be employed but they need support for family burdens (Nussbaum 1995). Women have been activists and have had success for some of their claims as in the case of the mother in Texas who discovered how toxic waste had contaminated her family. Democracy enables women to reclaim a role and have power and come to the public place to protest (Jelin 1990, Krauss 1990).

However their empowerment cannot lead to disempowering the men, but to create a balanced and an equitable society. A process whereby women become able to organise themselves, to increase their self-reliance, to assert their independent right, to make choices and to control resources which assist in challenging and eliminating their own subordination, and give them power through economic strength (Ekejuba 1995).

Often, development work is still needed to be done “for” women, because an exclusive focus on economic activities does not automatically create space for women to look at their role as women or at other problematic aspects of their lives (Rowlands 1999; Horsfield 1988). The process and structures through which an economic activity operates need to be deliberately designed to create opportunities for an empowerment process to happen. The process of empowerment that seeks to engage poor and marginalised people cannot be effective if the methodology is “top-down” and directive or encourages dependency (Rowlands 1999).

This thesis investigates how community groups are working to improve the socio-economic status of the refugee women and their social integration. These organisations need to help women at the grassroots level. Those women who are in their home, without any support are not able to integrate into the new society. They need support to do so but only women who have the same cultural background and the same experience can help to empower them and this is what the Hamilton Ethnic Centre seeks to provide.

Empowerment as Rowlands (1999) examined, cannot be imposed by outsiders although appropriate external support can encourage it and even speed it up. Empowerment calls for a facilitative approach and an attitude of complete respect and therefore makes great demands on the change-agents, and may require (and feed into) their own empowerment. Many professionals have disempowered women by telling them what they must do or think. Empowerment can be possible only through the awareness-building capacity of those to be empowered (Gilkes 1994, Rowlands 1999). Ethnic women’s lives are affected by the colonisation experience, which needs to be deconstructed for their empowerment (Childs and Patrick 1997).

## **Post-colonial theory**

Thinking in the modern world was that paid work for women was the ideal through which equality could be achieved, but in reality it did not create equality, as Sen (1995) and Nussbaum (1995) have demonstrated. Many women are still in traditional sectors, that is, they are still living in poor conditions and their lives are miserable. Modernist theories think that if developing societies imitate western countries' values, women will achieve equality. Not all women are modernised, nor has their life improved (Nussbaum and Glover 1995).

Modernism has produced inequality and gaps in gender relations, where the male is still dominant. Thus modernism has produced an unequal patriarchal society. The modernist period has seen women remain in low status employment where they find themselves with fewer resources. Few women are educated as they are likely to be mothers and housewives (Ware 1992). During this period, male and white, are considered as superior to other categories. Modernism has created racism and genocide. Ware said:

While white women refuse that their children be taught in the USA in another language than English, it is an example of racism and rejection of other cultures considered as inferior (Ware 1992: 48).

Modernism has risen from colonisation, the supremacy of white culture and the European domination of the world. As a consequence, the colonised countries have followed the way of living and the mentalities of the white colonisers. Post-colonial theory is a critical discussion against colonisation and imperialism. Decolonisation was considered as the end of colonialism yet there is still domination of colonialist ideologies in the world. In this post-modernist period, where countries are independent, they still copy the colonisers' mentalities. This has created two worlds; the modern and the traditional, both creating effects and contradictory forces. Europe's definition of modernity has not overcome feelings of belonging to one's own culture (for example Africans have not abandoned their cultural practices) nor proven the superiority of a particular ethnicity and culture

because these are complex and contradictory (Eitinger 1981; Chambers and Lidia 1996; Goldberg 2001).

Colonisation based on modernism has produced inequality and transformed places and spaces. These colonised countries are still dependent economically, politically, technologically and spiritually on the colonisers' country. Hulme (2003) speaks about chronic poverty that existed in the developing countries and the wider gap between rich and poor in the world. Colonisation tried to abolish the indigenous culture and replace it by the coloniser's culture, —the dominant white culture, and the hegemony of western modernism. Although the indigenous people had resisted in some areas, leaders who followed the colonialists are perpetuating the ideology and ideas of colonising countries (Childs and Williams 1997).

The contradiction between the traditional and modern worlds still persists in the ethnic genocides, and in the contradictions between immigrants and receiving countries:

The courage that guided colonies to achieve independence and to rebuild their economy must be the same courage that may guide the post-colonial and feminist scholars and activists. They need to move away from hegemony of white dominance, of capitalism, racism and discrimination. They can achieve their independence through activism, and participatory approaches (Ferro 1997: 245).

Different people moving among different countries as international migrants, refugees, or International Displaced persons leads to the presence many ethnicities and different cultural groups in one country. To create harmony and to sustain the life of the receiving country (in our case New Zealand, the Waikato region), people need to apply the slogan from Sun Yat Sen and Chen Du Xiu as described by Ferro:

- Be indulgent, - be progressive, not conservative, - be aggressive, do not be on the defensive; - be cosmopolitan, do not isolate yourselves from the world, - be utilitarian, do not be conformists (Ferro 1997: 245).

The post colonial theorists Childs and Williams (1997), argue that gender and feminist theories are interconnected to post-colonial theory, since both (gender

and colonialism) are socially constructed by men and the dominant class. We need to understand all reality from the past and the present so as to project a future derived from past and present experiences but one that tries to correct past mistakes.

There are increased numbers of immigrants of formerly colonised countries who are living in the coloniser countries. Their culture and ethnicity have affected that of the developed countries, as these countries are obliged to accept and to integrate the migrants (Geddes 2000; Martiniello 1995). Establishing relationships between these immigrants called ethnic minorities, in short ethnic people, with the indigenous people and the first arrived, in the case of New Zealand, will mean relationships between Maori, Pakeha and other immigrants. This is the key point for the achievement of these women's full integration in the Waikato. How is this relationship established in the post colonial period? Hintjens answers:

Post-colonial relations are characterised by the hegemony of rich countries over poor countries. Those countries are still exploited but their citizens outside their boundaries are not accepted. The concern of immigration is to explore under what circumstances immigration and acquisition of a new citizenship might be regarded as a type of decolonisation at the individual level. Colonial relationships are usually exclusionary, hierarchical and unequal, and may involve apartheid, expulsion and even extermination as well paternalist dominance and forced assimilation. Post-colonialism demands equality, full citizenship, rights and freedom of movement. Inclusive rights however, are the very essence of integration and of any acceptable form of assimilation (Hintjens 1995: 235).

Post-colonial development cannot occur without the acceptance of the global movements of culture, ethnicity, race and class, which transforms the physiognomy of the countries (Chambers 1996). Some countries have adopted anti-immigration policies and selective migration. But none can stop immigration. People are moving from one country to another and they face problems of integration and adjustment into the new society (different foods, culture, way of living) (Spivak 1999).

Post-colonial theory attempts to redress the situation that has been caused by colonisation and tries to offer avenues for rebuilding a culture for the sustainable

future of those countries. The change will take time but needs more activists in this field (Childs and Patrick 1997). Those activists are scholars, community organisations and individuals who want to bring a change. In this thesis the focus is on community organizations, on what different organisations are doing to empower the immigrant women and to build relationships between different ethnic groups. As Richmond underlines:

But the refugees and immigrants with different culture, race, and religion are bringing a new ethnic conflict. Ethno linguistic and ethno religious heterogeneity by themselves are not sufficient cause of conflicts, but capitalism in those countries is creating inequalities that need to be redressed, which post-colonialism is trying to solve (Richmond 1994 ).

Post-colonial theory demands the deconstruction of ethnic relations and avoidance of racism. Ethnicity must be seen as a source of richness, not a way of dividing people. All these are ideas from the post-colonial period (Childs and Patrick, 1997). As gender is socially constructed, those ideologies need to be deconstructed in order to create a truly egalitarian society, a society in which there is no dominant race, where people can claim an ethnicity, and differences can indicate multitude diversity, as in multiculturalism in a natural way (Kobayashi 1993).

## **Critical realism theory**

Roy Bhaskar (1994) has highlighted in this theory that reality in the social sciences is produced by individuals and reflects their different character, cultural background and way of living. It means that reality is what they have produced without making any critiques or without making any judgment. Reality is different for different groups. He accepted the emancipation and feminism theories, but those theories will be better if they take care of both points of view, of men and women. Emancipation can take place if the system in which people are living can change.

Emancipation is characteristically the transition from an unwanted, unnecessary and oppressive situation to a wanted and /or needed and empowering or more flourishing situation (Bhaskar 1994:253).

It is only possible to deal explicitly here with one example of a group systematically subalternised in the history of philosophy, namely that provided by feminist philosophers and historians, for women. Those women face five aspects of domination:

- (a) domination by suppression;
- (b) domination by exclusion
- (c) domination by marginalisation and/ or fragmentation;
- (d) domination by idealisation;
- (e) domination by tacit complicity (Bhaskar, 1994:253).

Women's responsibility was limited to the family and private sphere; they were suppressed in the public sphere. This created domination by suppression. Women are employed in low status jobs and bear the burdens of household occupations that lead to domination by marginalisation. Women were idealised in Genesis as a symbol of impurity destined to suffer all their life. That has limited them to the reproduction role of pregnancy, child birth, breastfeeding, cooking and cleaning. These roles traditionally dedicated to women mean domination by idealisation.

With changes in the economy women are now moving from the house unpaid work to a paid employment and this move creates an unbalanced family life. This situation is related to domination by tacit complicity. Bhaskar insists that the emancipation and empowerment of women must be accomplished without negative effects on their family life and needs to find solutions to those different forms of domination that affect women's lives (Bhaskar 1995).

These forms of domination have also been analysed by Ware (1992). Women are assigned to the private sphere and excluded from some spaces (Ware 1992). Feminist geographers have worked hard to mobilise women in the public place, but the reality is not easy for women when all their time is concentrated in housework. They can come out if they have support but in reality it is almost impossible. Women are hindered from entering politics because of family tasks that are not recorded in the national statistics (Waring 1988; Hanson and Pratt 1995; Peterson and Runyan 1993; Rose 1993).

These forms of domination cannot be overcome by philosophical exposure to gender-equality. The change can take place if all systems can change and eliminate all stereotypes of women. It supports the feminist geographers' claim of the relation between race, culture and place (Mitchell 2000).

Refugee and immigrant women who are new in the receiving country find life hard to adjust to because they are discriminated against as refugees and immigrants. They have to survive cultural shock, loneliness, because of being a different race and of bringing a different culture. These women suffer from all those different types of domination. Successful integration, not assimilation can support their adjustment economically, socially and culturally by breaking down those forms of domination (Domosh and Seager 2001; Borrie 1959).

Social reality is exhausted by interpretative material, or that such material is not rationally corrigible or that a generalizing social science is impossible. In other terms, social science or social reality cannot be universalised (Bhaskar 1979: 153).

The reality of the world in which we are living needs to be understood in a natural way. Natural realism is impossible to achieve as each person has his/her own perception of things (Bhaskar 1978; 1979; 1986; 1989; 1994). The reality, in which we are living and that we observe, is what we think reality is according to our senses. Different persons can also interpret this reality in different ways. Each individual has his/her own way of understanding a reality that cannot be generalised to the whole society. Traditionally women can stand and achieve their emancipation with men. Emancipation can also be seen as the improvement of their education, not only to fight for equality with men but by considering different ways of living (Bhaskar 1994).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter presents different ideas and theories to understand the refugee women's socio-economic status in the Waikato. The reality is complex as New Zealand is a multicultural and multiethnic society. The persistence of gender inequality, racism, discrimination and different types of domination can limit the

integration and the empowerment of refugee women. Refugee women can remain marginalised or excluded in the new society.

In this research, the reality of empowerment of women is conceived differently and has answers that vary between ethnic women groups (European, Africans, Pacific Islanders, Asians and Maori). Women's equality or social justice can be achieved differently for different women. The empowerment of the refugees can be understood in a natural way according to their perspectives.

Through community and women's organisations refugee women can become full citizens who exercise all their rights and participate politically, economically, socially and culturally in the Waikato region and in New Zealand society. On the other hand community and women's organisations have different objectives to achieve that may be in contradiction with a woman's own vision of the future but these can be understood through a consistent research methodology and framework (Esber 1997).

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## Chapter four

# Research Methodology and Field work

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### Introduction

Different authors argue that no one research method is 100% objective, that is without any bias. Each method has its own advantages and disadvantages (Pole & Burgess 2000; Singleton et al. 1993). To achieve any research as defined by Bailey, “the methodology means the philosophy of a research progress” and methods “mean the research technique or tool used to gather data” (Bailey 1994). In this thesis, many tools have been used to ensure the validity and the credibility of the information collected (Sil 2000; Bryman 1988; Hay 2000).

As mentioned in the introduction, the philosophy of the research undertaken was to understand how people involved in different community organisations can provide support for refugee women to improve their socio-economic status. By helping them to be in paid jobs, social status would be gained, through the financial autonomy that jobs provide. This research was community based and the methodology informed by insights from Post-Colonial, Gender Inequalities and Social Justice, and Critical Realism theories. A single technique is not exhaustive and it is thus necessary to combine different techniques for a more comprehensive result. The different techniques used, are summarised in the following section (Mann 1985 Newman 1994; Pole 2000; Raymond 2001; Smith 1999).

The methodology used has also followed the approach advocated by Dora Daniels (2003). This author has combined different techniques to understand the life of women in the settlements in South Africa. In her research related to community leadership, in order to understand the lives of settlement women,

she had combined different research techniques such as photography, drawing, research participative, focus groups and individual interviews. These different techniques give a better understanding of the leadership among lower socio-economic class and semiliterate women in South Africa (Daniels 2003).

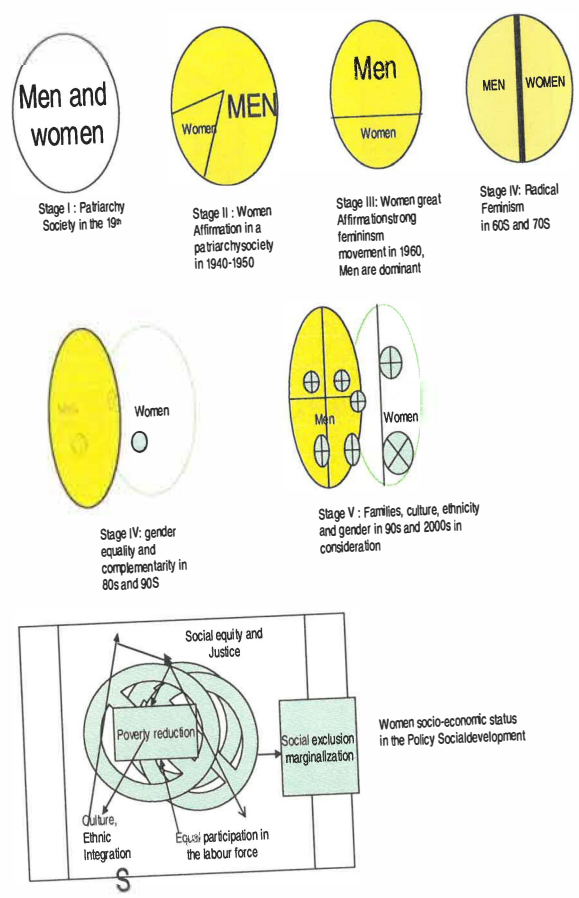
## **Research analytical framework**

‘Ethnic Women’ in this study refers to all ethnic categories other than Maori and Pakeha. Studying Maori Women as “Indigenous people” is a complex field and issues related to Indigenous people are different to those faced by refugee women. Further research can study Maori Women in their Iwi diversities. Pakeha, who are European immigrants in New Zealand, is another complex area. Their study should focus on their different countries of origin. ‘Ethnic women’ is also a very complex field. The study of ethnic women by regions of origin will show that in New Zealand, there are Americans, Latino Americans, Asians, Africans and Pacific Islanders. Each ethnic group can be studied by their region and country of origin. For example, if a study focuses on African women ethnic groups, it will look at different sub-regions of Africa (Horn of Africa, Northern Africa, Western Africa, Central Africa, Eastern Africa and Southern Africa) and select a particular country in this sub-region. This type of study can also create stereotypes and prejudices attached to this particular group although sometimes empowering the ethnic group. In this thesis we have limited the analysis on the region of origin. Information on different ethnic groups can be found in census data in appendix I. This is a complex study and time limits did not allow me to study all these women.

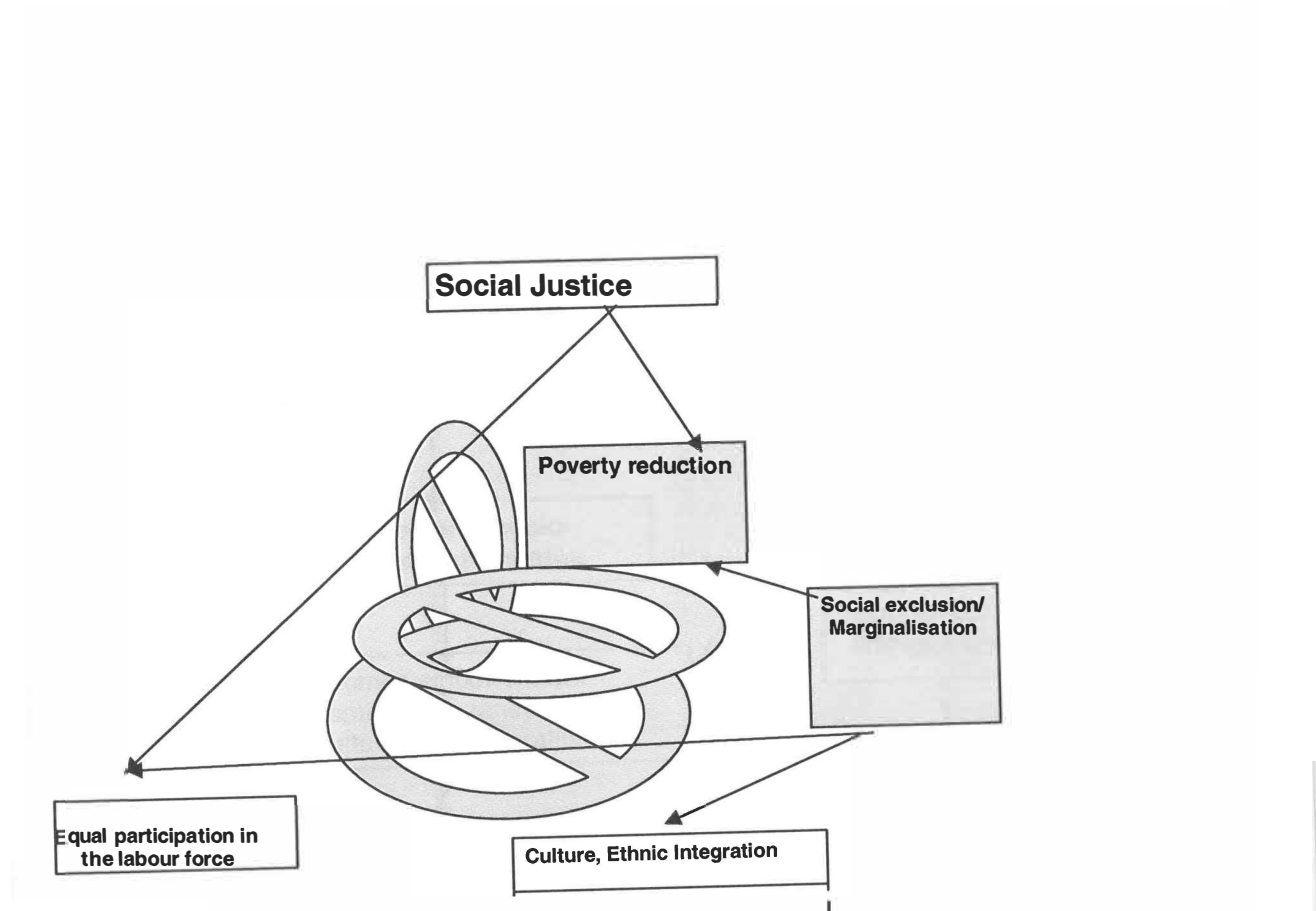
In this study, ethnic women in their diversity were targeted through community organisations that are helping them in their integration and empowerment processes. These organisations notify the researcher about how they deliver their support to different ethnic women they serve. Interviews and focus groups helped provide data for the study. Ethnic organisations were

consulted as to how they understand the way they respond to the ethnic women and their process of integration. Are these organisations helping the women reduce the obstacles to their participation of different social and economic activities and find a safe way for their empowerment? Different qualitative techniques were used to respond to this question. .

**Figure 4.1:**  
**Evolution of women’s socio-economic status across different decades**  
 Source: adapted from Visvanathan *et al.*, 1997

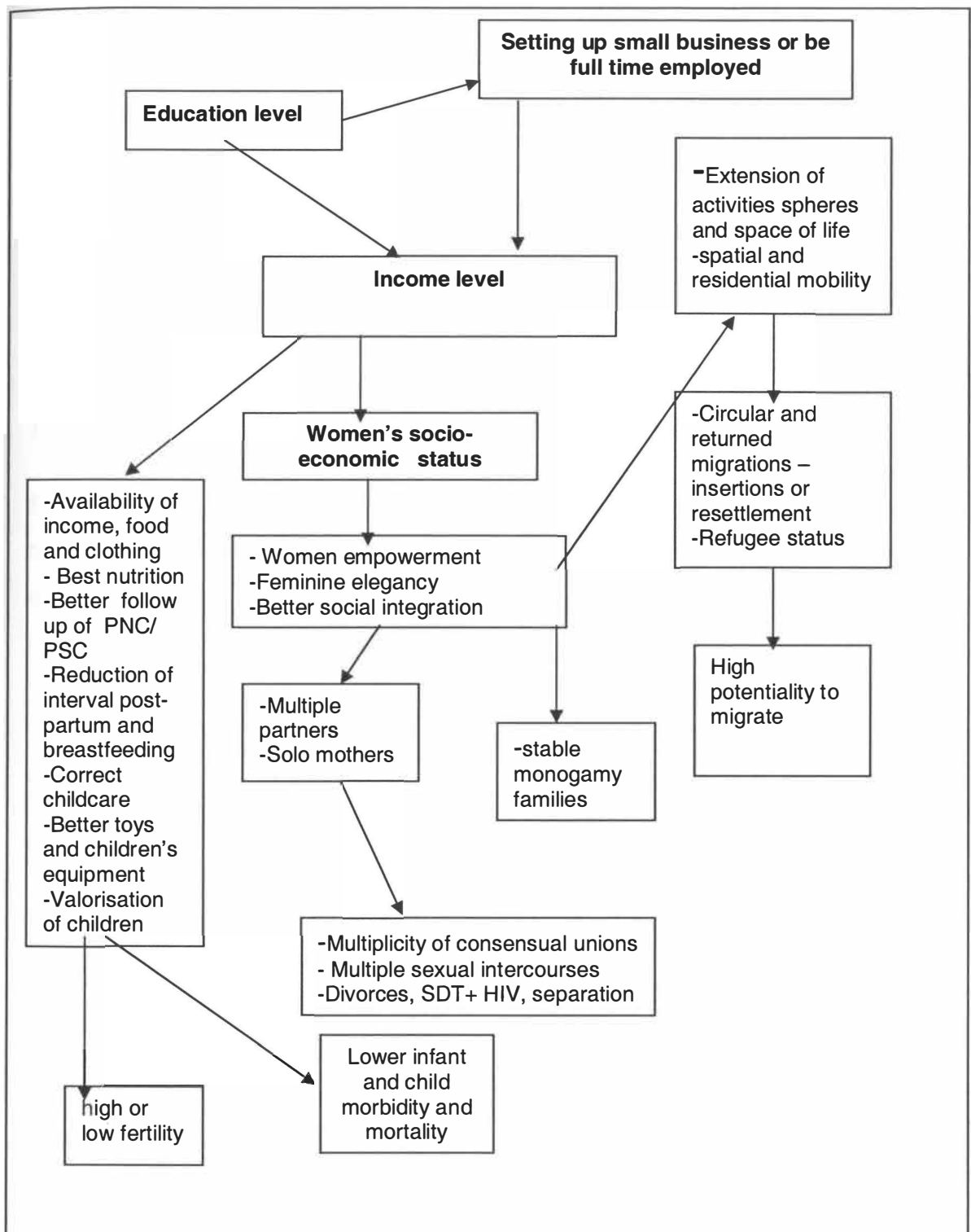


**Figure 4.2: Social integration of ethnic refugee women**



**Source: adapted from Herberg, 1989**

**Figure 4.3: Improving women's socio-economic status**



### **What do these different graphs tell us?**

Figure 4.1 shows different patterns through which women's socio-economic status has evolved over several decades. Despite discourses on women's emancipation and empowerment, women have remained inferior socio-economically to men as they obtain unequal incomes (Bhaskar 1994). This is why Sen (1995) is calling for justice. Equality between men and women can be achieved if women continue fighting for their equality and are organised in community groups (Childs and Patrick 1997; McLaughlin 1995). As shown by figure 4.2 on integration, ethnic minority refugee women need to be first integrated in the new society. There is a need to fight for poverty reduction, participate in the community life, express their opinions about social policy and then fight for their equality to men (Martiniello 1995; Clark 1996).

Figure 4.3 indicates the importance of women's emancipation and empowerment by improving their socio-economic status. This leads to a debate because women engaged in economic activities will increase their financial autonomy, have economic power, but meanwhile they lose control of their families. They may divorce and the children are then not looked after. They can become street children and delinquent (Lepina 1994). What can be the advantages and disadvantages of improving the ethnic refugee's socio-economic status in the Waikato? What can be the most appropriate research methodology?

## **Research Methodology**

This research has combined quantitative methods of analysis of the census data with qualitative research using focus groups, individual interviews, life histories, photographs and participant observation (Hay 2000; Bailey 1994). Census data give a snapshot of the population but do not allow understanding of how the refugee women, in particular, are integrated in the region and what role the community sector plays in supporting these women. The combination of different methods is used to understand the reality in which refugee women are living.

Smith's research approach, emphasising the decolonisation of western research methodologies, has also inspired this research (Smith 1999). Different methods used have been invented by western researchers who have their own way of understanding the world. The Indigenous people, minorities and people of colour all have their own way of researching, doing or understanding reality (Smith 1999). Smith's arguments are similar to those presented by the post-colonial debate (Spivak 1999).

Western feminists have been challenged, particularly by women of colour, by conforming to some very fundamental Western European world views systems and attitudes towards others. Differences between Western and Indigenous conceptions of the world have always provided stark contrasts. Indigenous beliefs were considered shocking, abhorrent and barbaric and were prime targets for the efforts of missionaries. Many of those beliefs still persist and are embedded in indigenous languages and stories and etched in memories that cannot be understood by Western researchers (Smith 1999: 43).

Some other differences are not well understood such as how "western race constructs intersect in complex ways with concepts of gender" as Smith 1999 indicates. Gender refers not just to the roles of women and how these roles are constituted but to the roles of men and to the relations between men and women. Gender conceptions and research are westernised and to better understand those relations, the insider/outsider approach is relevant (Smith 1999). An insider researcher is a person who belongs to the particular community s/he studies. S/he knows the history, life and culture of this community and wants to carry out the research on his/her own community as outsider. Even though this person knows the community, the insider researcher will still apply all the demands of research methodology, neutrality, objectivity and flexibility (an indigenous researcher will carry on research on his/her own community, a refugee will carry out research on refugee communities, a refugee woman can carry on research on refugee women resettlement). Different research methodologies need to be tested to understand the reality, because as the insider/researcher has experienced that reality, her/his personal experience is relevant to the analysis of the research data (Smith 1999; Bryman 1988).

## **Quantitative Method**

Feminist geographers have criticised positivist quantitative research based on published statistics as male dominant, by not taking into account women and ignoring jobs done for the family and for the community (Robinson 1998; Sarantakos 1998). The quantitative method is concerned with measurements.

Until the early 1950s, geography had used descriptive, qualitative methods. From that time quantitative methods were introduced, at first slowly, with an emphasis on hypothesis testing..... Quantification was attacked for being unrealistic and bloodless, turning humans into automata, for being too deterministic, and for ignoring the importance of subjective experience (Mayhew 1997: 347).

Quantitative researchers used methods focused on the generalisation of information to the whole population. They used questionnaires, large surveys representative of the large population and statistical analysis. They give basic statistical information for qualitative research (Lamont 2000; Mann 1985; Miller 1991). Some characteristics of the refugee women and their families are best obtained through quantitative methods.

To obtain the census data, funding received from WINZ helped in the purchasing of statistical data about different ethnic groups in different regions and their socio-economic characteristics. The details on the data purchased are in Appendix I. Quantitative data details have allowed me to describe the five major ethnic groups living in the Waikato. The analysis of census data purchased from Statistics New Zealand gives a good picture of all the population living in the Waikato by major ethnic groups but it remains a superficial description.

Data obtained from WINZ show up the number of people receiving different types of benefits in the Waikato. Data obtained are generalised, representative of all the population, and thus do not allow an understanding of the different ratios obtained for specific populations. Census data are based on the answer to specific census questions. Ethnic people who are not fluent in English may find some questions difficult and they may not respond to them or give the wrong information. These imperfections can affect the quality of the census data used. However, census data has helped to present the population pyramids of different ethnic groups

(European, Maori, Pacific Islanders, African and Asians). The results from this method are presented in chapter six. They were then improved by also adopting qualitative methods (Miller 1991).

## **Qualitative Methods**

Qualitative methods as described by Sarantakos (1998), Robinson (1998) and Hay (2000) are used to give meaning to people's lives. Participants describe their life and any topic can be debated in a natural way as described by Bhaskar's critical realism.

Mayhew describes qualitative methods as concerned with the meaning, rather than with measurement. The emphasis is on subjective understanding, communication, and empathy, rather than on prediction and control, and it is a tenet that there is no separate, unique, 'real' world (Mayhew 1997:347).

Qualitative methods help to understand populations in depth. The information obtained is not generalised. It represents the view of the respondents and cannot be applied to all of the population. It gives an inside glimpse of the thinking of the respondents. Data are diverse so it is best to combine them with quantitative methods by having a representative sample of the population (Doby 1967; Phillips 1971; Singleton and al 1993; Mann; 1985; Miller 1983; Neuman 1991; Bailey 1994). Sil suggested that a unified methodology or organic solidarity, gives a better understanding by combining both quantitative and qualitative methods:

Many social scientists, despite some reservations, are justifiably excited: as a result of uniform rules and standards for good design and scientific inference. Qualitative researchers will no longer be dismissed as 'soft' and the scientific status of craft will be greatly enhanced (especially relative to those employing quantitative methods) (Sil 2000: 503).

For qualitative research to be more exhaustive, Sil argues that the interpretive and comparative analysis needs to be driven by the same quasi-experimental logic employed in quantitative research (Sil 2000). Different qualitative research tools have been combined in this study in order to understand the lived reality of refugee women as scientifically as possible.

## **Focus group**

The focus group method as mentioned by Hay, “involves a small group of people discussing a topic or issues defined by the researcher. Briefly a group of between six and ten people sit facing each other around a table, the researcher introduces the topic for discussion and then invites and moderates discussion from group members. The interaction between members of the group is a key characteristic of this research method, and it is that which helps differentiate it from the interview method” (Hay 2000: 84). Hay adds that “for geographers interested in the process of knowledge production focus groups is an excellent research tool” (Hay 2000: 88).

Focus groups help to create and transform knowledge and the understandings of researchers and participants as both get to hear the points of view of each and every member of the focus group. Interviews do not allow that kind of access to other peoples’ knowledge. Each speaker can also be stimulated to remember and/or to contribute more insights when listening to the accounts of the other members. It also permits one to be aware of the nuances and complexities associated with people-place relationships, which this thesis examines in the case of the relations between refugee women and the (new to them) place they now occupy.

The focus groups can provide otherwise unavailable and often important insights for the understanding of the social world of different groups. Focus groups thus contribute to the acquisition of important new knowledge and, if the researcher is reflexive, to a better understanding of his/her positioning (Hay 2000: 89).

It would be best to combine focus groups with a quantitative survey, to extend the sample to a larger number, in order to compare the results with those from the focus group. But in this study I was limited by time and resources and chose to just rely on focus groups. The results of data gathering from focus groups are not very different from those obtained from the large scale survey. Focus groups remain a useful technique to gather data especially when people from different groups have different opinions. The focus groups I organised gathered people who belong to different community organisations (Raymond 2001; Singleton 1993).

Focus group can be used by people to create social change and empower 'the researched' (Raymond 2001). The better you can conduct your research, the more information you can get. However, the data analysis was the hardest task to achieve as focus group materials take a long time to analyse.

The first focus group was conducted with different community organisations working for all women, immigrants, non immigrants and as well as refugees. Ideas and comments debated in this focus group were then discussed in focus groups at the second level. Focus groups at the second level were conducted successively with the following ethnic community organisations: Asian, Pacific Islanders, European, African and Maori. At the third level, a religious group debated ideas and opinions coming from the second level. Diverse ideas were generated at different levels. Only ideas reiterated at different levels were retained in a common conclusion. Throughout these focus groups, post-colonial discourse on race and ethnic relations was debated (Goldberg 2002).

### **Individual Interview**

An interview can be defined as 'face-to-face verbal interchange in which one person, the interviewer, attempts to elicit information or expressions of opinions or belief from another person or persons' (Hay 2000: 51).

An interview is a data gathering method in which there is a spoken exchange of information. Interviews are used to gain insight into different opinions and experiences that arise from the varied backgrounds of the interviewees, such as different class, ethnicity, age and/or sexuality. Interviews have showcased such distinctions. Often because of the face-to-face exchange, the interviewee is more likely to give the answer that may satisfy the researcher (Hay, 2000). The interview schedule or questions are flexible.

In this research individual interviews were used to obtain views and opinions of some leaders and key informants who were unable to participate in the focus groups due to their religious beliefs, their social class, their time and those who wanted to keep their ideas private and confidential. Individual interviewees were held with politicians, religious leaders, and senior women from different ethnic groups and strong advocates for women's rights. The interview schedule was

similar to the focus group guideline [see appendix V]. The roles of community organisations and the socio-economic status of the refugee women were debated and people expressed ideas similar to those transmitted in the focus groups.

### **Life story and photographs**

As mentioned by Hay (2000):

Life histories are interviews in which the researcher attempts to elicit information about the experiences and development of an informant's entire life. Unlike oral histories, the research focus is not on the informant's role in or perspective on key historical events or times, but rather on how the informant's life has unfolded. The research is really based to get the informant talking (Hay 2000: 63; Bailey 1994).

This technique is really useful when wanting to understand the refugee experience, although it will cause feelings of sadness as past experience is recalled. This technique was used by talking with former refugees while they described some past event. Often community organisations have used this technique while describing their role. Photographs are necessary to understand the situation of the refugees. They highlighted some events and cultural shocks that they experienced in New Zealand. Photos are used to understand the lives of refugee women (Daniels, 2003).

### **Participant Observation**

This approach has been adopted and adapted by geographers seeking to understand more fully the meanings of place and the context of everyday life (Hay 2000).

Evans (1988) is suggesting that no matter how much we are able to put people at ease before and during an interview, its structured format often removes the researcher from the 'flow' of everyday life in both time and space. In other words, an interview ordinarily has an anticipated length and occurs in a mutually agreeable place often set apart from other social interactions. Participant observation is concerned with developing understanding through being part of the spontaneity of everyday interactions (Evans 1988 in Hay 2000: 108).

Through participant observation, I took part in the everyday life of community organisations to verify information obtained from focus groups and individual interviews. I was able to identify problems faced by the ethnic women in their

communications with the community organisations. Usually, as an informal observer, I visited different community organisations to help me understand their efforts. For example, I took part in sewing classes, in cooking classes or just spent some time in the office. I also visited different refugee families and baby sat children to understand the problems faced by the African women. As the next chapter will show refugee women and women's organisations are facing different problems and there is a need to identify the appropriate solutions. I noticed that the results were not significantly different from what participants had said in the focus groups (Daniels 2000; Sarantakos 1998).

### **Questionnaire**

A questionnaire is a form of individual interview to which the respondent has the ability to respond on his/her time, without any interference of the researcher. It gives him/her more flexibility. The questionnaire sent to organisations asked about their mission statement, their expenses and also the number of staff and volunteers is in appendix IV. As the respondent was free to fill in the questionnaire, no less than six months were needed to get the questionnaire back, few organisations did respond to it (Bailey 1991; Bryman 1998).

By combining these different techniques, this research was able to uncover the problems faced by women, refugee women and African women and to select appropriate theories to understand these problems and their causes. It was useful in order to get the following out comes.

**Table 4.1:**  
**Summary of research outcomes**

<b>Sources of Data</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
<b>Census data</b>	Population pictures of the Waikato, population picture of the Waikato by ethnic groups and the map of the population in the Waikato region.
<b>WINZ data</b>	Population receiving different type of benefits by gender and ethnic groups.
<b>Focus groups</b>	Discussion on the label 'ethnic women', on the refugee women's life in the Waikato, on the role of the community organisations and possible solutions for the empowerment of the refugee African women, on uniting all women for a sustainable solution to the empowerment of refugee women
<b>Individual interview</b>	Give leaders' opinions and suggested solutions for the integration of women.
<b>Photographs and life stories</b>	Identifying where the women come from and how communities support them.
<b>Questionnaire</b>	Mission statement of the community organisations, number of staff, expenses, financial situation. Limits to collaboration with other community organisations were also identified.
<b>Participant Observation</b>	Reality of refugee and other minority women's lives is challenging. It is hard to expect them to join the labour force without child care support

Source: Lepina's summary

## **Field Work**

### **Organising the field work**

Field work is an important component and was a long process in this research. The procedure followed included obtaining the ethical approval by the Geography Department. Ethical approval is a University requirement. Any research dealing with people needs an approval. A copy of the consent form approved by the Department is given in appendix III. Once the ethical approval was obtained, the next step was to contact different community organisations and ethnic groups. The Hamilton city new settlers' brochure was used and letters were sent to different organisations. No organisation responded through this contact.

The research then proceeded to the second step by using a 'snowball' method. My first contact was with a Pacific organisation, who introduced me to different community groups that are setting up and at least four were added as participants. Each particular organisation introduced me to another. This technique enabled me to select participants in focus groups.

After identifying community organisations, letters to potential participants [see appendix II] were sent to different organisations who may have agreed to take part in this research. Waiting for a reply from community organisations took time. While waiting, I kept on emailing and telephoning them. For the ethnic groups, one contact point was established. Focus groups and individual interviews were organised in the office or home of the participants through email and telephone. For the ethnic community groups, focus groups and interviews took place in the home and churches.

### **Starting the research**

Participants in focus groups would sit around the table. The researcher labelled each organisation or participant and this label was placed in front of each person. The researcher started by introducing herself to the groups and explained the research methodology, insisting on the confidentiality and anonymity of the data obtained during interviews or focus group discussions. Each participant introduced the organisation s/he worked for and introduced him/herself. Each participant signed two copies of the consent form in appendix III, one for the researcher and the other for their own records. Focus groups and individual interviews were tape-recorded with a dictaphone obtained from the University Information Technology System (ITS) help desk. Coming back from the field, the next step was the transcribing of tapes and the comparison of the notes taken with the information recorded. The best analysis of data is easy with software, but the unavailability of tutoring to use the software and also time limits constrained the use of the software. A transcriber, borrowed from the University ITS help desk, was used to treat the data obtained from interviews and focus groups.

**Table 4.2:**

**Total number of participants by different qualitative research techniques used**

Research techniques	Focus Group	Individual Interviews	Questionnaire
<b>Participants' background</b>			
Community organisations	1(8participants)		8
Asian community	1(4 participants)	1	3
Pacific Islanders community	1( 3 participants)		3
European community	1( 3 participants)	3	4
African community	1( 7 Participants)	1	7
Maori community	1( 6 participants )	1	5
Religious groups	1( 5 participants)	3	3
Total	7 (36 participants)	9	33

Source: Lepina's field work Summary

The field work was a successful experience as through this research we have a useful data set to understand the different aspects and attitudes of various ethnic groups about the socio-economic status of the refugee women. I used anonymous names to describe different participants.

**Table 4.3:**

**List of different participants**

Techniques	Number	Organisations	Participants' names	Gender	Age group	
Focus groups	<b>I</b>	<b>A</b>	1- Stela	Female	40-50	
			2- Chantal	Female	40-50	
			<b>B</b>	3- Zoti	Female	40-50
			<b>C</b>	4-Kafisa	Female	50-60
			<b>D</b>	5-Kazadi	Male	40-50
			<b>E</b>	6-Kilari	Female	40-50
	<b>II</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>F</b>	7- Bibi	Female	40-50
			8- Odette	Female	40-50	
			1- Pascal	Male	30-40	
			2- Richard	Male	40-50	
	<b>III</b>	<b>H</b>	3-Nadine	Female	30-40	
			4- Charlotte	Female	30-40	
			1-Opel	Female	30-40	
	<b>IV</b>	<b>I</b>	2- Lidia	Female	30-40	
			3- Natasha	Female	30-40	
			1- Nalia	Female	30-40	
				2- Nicole	Female	30-40
				3- Carine	Female	30-40

Techniques	Number	Organisations	Participants' names	Gender	Age group
Focus groups	V	J	1- Flora	Female	30-40
			2- Kazanga	Male	30-40
			3- Kuria	Male	30-40
			4- Nita	Female	30-40
			5- Mbo	Male	30-40
			6- Mpia	Male	30-40
			7- Kazanga	Male	30-40
	VI	K	1- Natika	Female	30-40
			2- Mabansa	Male	40-50
			3- Bipendo	Female	40-50
			4- Nzita	Female	30-50
			5- Mpako	Female	30-40
			6- Ansalme	Female	30-40
	VII	L	1- Katanga	Male	50-60
			2- Mayume	Female	40-50
			3- Toka	Male	30-40
			4- Bongo	Male	30-40
			5-Kabuanga	Male	30-40
Individual Interviews	Intervie wees		1 Dibaya	Female	50-60
			2 Nkong	Female	50-60
			3 Dimaya	Female	50-60
			4 Dokari	Female	60-70
			5 Kakanga	Male	50-60
			6 Hosine	Male	30-40
			7 Mirika	Female	70-80
			8 Santos	Female	50-60
			9 Siro	Male	40-50

### Fieldwork difficulties and limitations

Contact with participants was a long process. Introduction to the group was a big barrier to overcome during all the discussions. Usually the person in charge of the organisation would inform their particular co-groups about my research, but people wanted to know more about the objective of the research, its credibility and confidentiality. As English is my second language, at the beginning participants had problems understanding my accent. But, with time they became used to it.

As the researcher is an ethnic refugee woman and a volunteer community worker in different organisations, her experience sometimes was outlined to the group and people then understood the topic better. People sympathised with the ethnic

women because the research was conducted by someone who had a similar experience. In the future, a comparative study can be carried out with the same community organisations by using investigators of different ethnic backgrounds. Because time and funding were limited, this research was conducted with community organisations established in Hamilton.

The research follow up was easy for people who have access to email and who can speak English. I have neglected people who have no email address and who are not fluent in English to avoid translation fees. The main difficulty was the equipment. The Dictaphone was sometimes useless and stopped recording in the middle of the discussion. I had to take notes. Another problem was that participants did not allow the use of an aid, so that I had to take notes myself. The limited funding available did not allow me to carry out a quantitative survey after the qualitative research that would have covered a larger sample of community organisations.

## **Conclusion**

The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods has helped the study to cover different problems faced by refugee women and to understand the role of community organisations in finding solutions to those problems. Diverse information has been collected from different community organisations. Quantitative data obtained from census and WINZ have helped to describe through different statistics the situation of different ethnic groups in the Waikato, giving a snapshot of the ethnic population in the Waikato. Qualitative data help explain the situation of different ethnic groups regarding their integration and the role of community organisations. By combining both techniques, this research has minimised the disadvantages of qualitative and quantitative techniques. However time, language and funding were obstacles encountered in this research.

## Part three

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# Research Analysis

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“Women in general and Black “ women of colour” in particular constantly have to deal with the related psychological and economic issues of identity and livelihood as a result of their structural position in the society” (Felicis Ekejuba 1995: 61).

# Introduction

This part analyses data obtained from quantitative and qualitative research methods, by emphasising the role of community organisations. Are community organisations improving refugees' women socio-economic status, by getting them into the labour force? Unemployment in New Zealand affects many people. Refugee women are faced by a triple burden as will be demonstrated in chapter five: *1. they are also facing the same problems as other immigrants and minority groups due to their ethnic background, 2. they are facing problems caused by the stigma attached to their refugee status, 3. they are facing the same problems as any woman living in the Waikato (Arber 1993).*

However, through successful integration and the improvement of their socio-economic status, refugee women can overcome those problems and find emancipation and empowerment with the support of ethnic community organisations and others types of organisations (Bhaskar 2000). The research analysis is based on the following objectives:

***\*Objective one:*** Identifying the triple burdens faced by the refugee ethnic women

***\*Objective two:*** Identifying different problems faced by refugee ethnic women in the Waikato-Hamilton

***\*Objective three:*** Describing the role of community organisations interviewed and examining sustainable solutions in improving refugee women's socio-economic status.

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## **Chapter five**

# **Triple burden endured by ethnic refugees in the Waikato**

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### **Introduction**

This chapter discusses the triple burden that is endured by refugee women. This triple burden is: - (a) being an ethnic person, - (b) being a refugee and –(c) being a woman. These burdens can affect the determination of the refugee status, socio-economic standing and the social integration of those women. This chapter will present a brief comparison between refugee women’s socio-economic status in the Waikato and in their region (country) of origin, mainly Africa. The documentation for this chapter comes in great part from the refugee women’s auto-biographies and personal experiences described during informal conversations, individual interviews and focus group discussions.

### **The first burden: “being an ethnic woman”**

Being minority ethnic women, refugee women will encounter many barriers for their integration so that they will likely be isolated from the dominant groups (Antobus 1995; Arber 1993). Belonging to an ethnic minority, these women will face the racial constructions prevalent in the new country. Peterson and Ruyan underline the way western and westernised men have engendered race, ethnicity and sexuality. White women are constructed as prudish and almost asexual, while black women and men are seen as wild and even oversexed. The Asians are portrayed as perfect, sexual playthings, childlike and virginal even if they are engaged in sexual work (Peterson and Ruyan 1993). Some of the women were engaged in informal work in their country of origin but they were receiving low income and thus had a low socio-economic status. There are persistent gender

inequalities in the world that can affect those ethnic women's lives in the new country (Oakley 1980; O'Neill 1995; Seller 1994).

Different people have different understandings as to who are to be defined as ethnic people. From qualitative research carried out, ethnic women are a socially constructed concept as demonstrated through focus groups discussions and individual interviews:

- 1. Most of the participants to this research consider that the majority of residents of Hamilton specifically constructed this **label** to signify difference and also to resist the integration of these ethnic refugee women, who are different from Pakeha and Maori (as stated by Dibaya)*
- 2. It is a way of differentiating people according to their cultural background and their skin colour. It is just considering people as 'others'. It is a way of differentiating "Indigenous and European first settlers" from other groups (all immigrants and refugees) (Said by Opel, Lidia and Natasha).*
- 3. Ethnic people say it is the way Europeans classify other people who look different from them such as Asians or Africans or people who cannot speak English (from Pascal, Richard, Nadine and Charlotte).*

These definitions are limited since the study covered only a small sample of the population from different community organisations in Hamilton. However, it does indicate that future studies will need large scale surveys to understand how people from different ethnic groups living in different places in New Zealand understand this label (Bailey 1994). Even from this limited number of responses, it is clear that the label 'ethnic women' is a socially constructed concept dependent on the context the respondent lives in. The interpretation of the label depends on people's cultural background, ethnic group, education level, and gender. It needs to be deconstructed to ensure gender equality and social justice and to avoid racism (Childs and Williams 1995; Sen 1995).

This research has also adopted for quantitative analysis Statistics New Zealand's definition of ethnicity:

Ethnicity is a variable that is collected and measured, to analyse social and cultural characteristics within a population. On the macro level, ethnicity grouping allows analysis of the population in the field of education, employment, health status, morbidity, and many other variables. Differences found between groups have an impact on policy and placement of resources (Statistics New Zealand 2001: 4).

Data on ethnicity are collected on the basis of the census definition (Allan 2001). Different countries have used several questions to locate people in ethnic groups.

- In New Zealand, the census asks questions about ethnic group, Maori descent, country of birth as well as the language(s) in which one is fluent.
- In the United States, the census asks questions about race, ethnicity for Hispanics, place of birth, citizenship, ancestry, language spoken at home.
- In Australia, questions concerning citizenship, indigenous identity, ancestry, country of birth, parents born overseas or Australian born, language spoken at home are asked (Allan 2001).

McDowell (1999) argues that people will have different perceptions of the role and place of women in New Zealand. These differences depend on the ethnic group, culture and place. Indigenous people, immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees will have different perceptions too.

We all act in relation to our intentions and beliefs, which are always culturally shaped and historically and spatially positioned. So, what people of different cultures, places, believe to be appropriate behaviour and actions by men and women reflect and affect what they imagine a man or a woman to be and how they expect men and women to behave, albeit men and women are differentiated by age, class, race and sexuality, and those expectations change over time and between places (McDowell 1999:7).

Ethnic women who have a different culture, language and way of understanding the world will find it difficult to integrate in the new society. They can face racism in the labour force or at school (Seller 1994). But with the support of different organisations (churches, religious groups, Mosques, community groups...), those ethnic women can achieve real integration by breaking all those barriers down.

Some ethnic children find it hard to adjust at school, because they look different. It will be the role of the ethnic women to work hard with their children and spend time at school with them in order to help them settle at school. In some circumstances, these children will want to go to their home country to visit their family. Parents need to find ways to help them to love both countries and also find some income to travel and to visit their family. That cannot be possible for all ethnic women especially for the refugee women, who are living on a benefit. It is

the responsibility of the ethnic women to educate their children so that they can be part of New Zealand society as well as of the country of origin. How they do it remains each family's choice.

As different countries have different definitions of ethnicity, international comparison between countries is sometimes very difficult. Future research may be needed to clarify these issues of definitions to create standardised categories of ethnicity (Crawford 1998). As participants in the study concluded, each person has an ethnicity in New Zealand that is different from what ethnic people are called in practice. This research will focus on the practical definition, which affects people's lives. Theoretically, there are social policies that give equality to all and ensure social justice and equity between people but this does not happen in everyday life. When ethnic minorities become more visible and are concentrated in a particular place, ethnic conflicts may occur as illustrated by McDowell 2000 and Diken 1998.

Community organisations can contribute to help these ethnic women (Stern 1998). Susan Parkinson Stern in 1998 in the USA has used a community research conversation-based way to find a solution for the struggle of African American children at school. In her approach by using community activism, the teachers have changed their low expectations on the African-American children and racism practices have been reduced at this school. This activism in the community organisations is needed to improve the life of refugee women in the Waikato. Racism needs to be abolished before empowering refugee women (Stern 1998).

Women activists, especially those who are ethnic, need to work for social justice and to overcome all prejudices. Babacan (1993) has demonstrated that the anti-racist community has an important role in countries where racism dominates the system (Babacan 1993). Should ethnic women become part of the new society without changing their cultural values? This research presents some ethnic values that affect ethnic women's lives. Ethnic women need to be educated about racism and prejudices, how to avoid them and educate their children (Augoustinos and Reynolds 2001). Below are summarised some ethnic values, arising from conversations with ethnic women (in Hamilton):

**Table 5.1:**

**Differences in ethnic culture between the homeland and New Zealand**

<b>Ethnic values</b>	<b>Considerations in the homeland</b>	<b>Situation in New Zealand</b>
<b>Community oriented life</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I used to live always with people around me. I knew my neighbours.</li> <li>- I considered my extended family as part of my family.</li> <li>- We are open people and always smiling.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I cannot live in a country without knowing people around me.</li> <li>- I need support; I need to rebuild my community life.</li> <li>- I am homesick, lonely.</li> <li>- It is very hard to know the neighbours.</li> <li>- It takes time to adjust to the Kiwi way of life.</li> </ul>
<b>Naming people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-I could not believe that younger people are calling adults by their first name,</li> <li>- We are very polite people</li> <li>- We call every woman mama, Aunty, Tantine, every man papa, uncle, Tonton.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-I always tell them to call me aunty.</li> <li>-I always tell my kids to call everyone “Aunty, grandmother, every man ‘uncle, grand dad’.</li> </ul>
<b>Public place</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In public places (bus, shopping centre, post office) people let women go first, specially pregnant women, a woman caring for a child, “ women first”. Elderly people receive the same consideration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Here everyone is equal, women must wait as any body else.</li> <li>It is very hard to see what is happening, but I always follow my culture and give priority to the women and to the elderly in public places.</li> </ul>
<b>Family income</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is the men’s main responsibility to bring income to the family. When women are working, their income is for their personal needs and also caring for their extended family while men care for the children and for the whole family. Some women are happy to stay at home or running a business from home. Other women have nannies or a relative to help them with housework while they are working outside their home.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Here it is a family issue. Both parents can contribute to the well being of the family. Husband and wife have the same right Their income is used to care for their nuclear family. They have fewer obligations to their extended families.</li> </ul>
<b>Housework</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is the women’s responsibility to care for the family, to do everything, cooking, washing, cleaning. Women must do everything, sometimes men help but not on a regular basis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both parents help. Men can participate in the housework. Some families have timetable assigning responsibilities to each member. Some children are paid when doing house chores.</li> </ul>
<b>New challenge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adjustment in the new society and being in touch with the extended family, phoning them, supporting them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training the next generation to keep the culture and participate in the new culture and to be part of societies ( the homeland and New Zealand).</li> </ul>

**Source: Conversations with different ethnic women**

The process of adjustment for refugee women in New Zealand is complicated by the varying opinions resulting from Pakeha/Maori relations. The arrival of refugee

women in New Zealand brings yet another race and class problem into the country (Duckitt 2001). As Lecouteur and Augoustinos argue “that the language of contemporary racism is flexible, ambivalent and contradictory in western societies” (Lecouteur and Augoustinos 2001: 215). In New Zealand, Wetherell and Potter (1992) have identified ten common “rhetorically self-sufficient” arguments about the Pakeha’s vision of relations with Maori, such as:

1. Resources should be used productively and in a cost-effective manner.
2. Nobody should be compelled.
3. Everybody should be treated equally.
4. You cannot turn the clock backwards.
5. Present generations cannot be blamed for the mistakes of past generations.
6. Injustices should be righted.
7. Everybody can succeed if they try hard enough.
8. Minority opinion should not carry more weight than majority opinion
9. We have to live in the twentieth century.
- 10 You have to be practical (Wetherell and Potter 1992: 177).

McCreanor listed a series of common ideas or patterns of ideas and language that were evident in Pakeha view of Maori/Pakeha relations:

1. *Maori culture.* Maori culture is fundamentally inferior to the mainstream of this country.
2. *Good Maori/ Bad Maori.* Maori fall into two groups — good and bad. Good Maori fit without a fuss into Pakeha society. Bad Maori fight against it or otherwise refuse to fit in.
3. *Stirrers.* If Maori agitators (‘stirrers’) would stop stirring up trouble where none actually exists, race relations would be harmonious.
4. *Maori violence.* Maori men seek out and enjoy violence.
5. *Maori inheritance.* There are few ‘real’ Maori left.
6. *Sensitivity.* Maori have become over-sensitive about their culture and this has led to racial tension.
7. *Ignorance.* Where Pakeha do offend Maori, they do so out of ignorance rather than intent.
8. *Privilege.* Maori have special privileges which are unfair and racist.
9. *Rights.* Equal rights for all is a democratic cornerstone, privilege is anathema.
- 10 *One people.* All people in New Zealand are New Zealanders Kiwi, etc. and should be treated the same (McCreanor 1989: 91).

The above statements present the views on race and ethnic relations in New Zealand. Refugees who come to New Zealand will need to be aware of past and continued Pakeha/Maori relations and to learn the history of the new society in order to adjust to their new life. Future studies can also be extended to describe the relations between refugees, immigrants, Maori and Pakeha. Understanding the way each group represents others, can help to formulate policies that can help avoid or reduce racism.

In some cases, countries have adopted preferential practices for the disadvantaged and minority groups. Preferential policies in the area of education and employment can uplift groups that had been previously disadvantaged. Such policies can also create feelings of discrimination on the basis of differential treatment and emigration of the so-called advantaged groups (Jenkins 1998). For example the Malay in Malaysia, the African-American in the USA, and the Maori in New Zealand have been considered the less advantaged. Some preferential policies in the arenas of education and employment can uplift these groups but they remain marginalised so that social inequalities continue, maintaining the gap between different groups. These policies as illustrated by Jenkins (1992) gave advantages for a group even if they did not merit it. The better policy may be providing equal opportunities that give equal chances to different ethnic groups. However, Crawford (1998) assumes that different ethnic groups are equally represented in this particular area (employment, education...).

## **The Second burden: “being refugee women”**

The concept *refugee* is defined chapter two. Refugees have left their country and try to survive in countries where they can become asylum seekers. The United Nations, in the declaration of Human Rights, recognised that international migrants and refugees have human rights, as declared in the United Nations Conference on Population in 1984.

Despite the existence of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the OAU convention, the term refugee is translated into Swahili by *Mukibimzi* (Tanzania, Kenya...) and in Lingala in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and in The Republic Congo by *Ngunder, Mupaya* (“people who left their country”, “the without territory”, “the lost land”, “unstable people”, “the second citizens of the world”). Those labels ‘Mukibimzi’ and ‘Ngunder’ are derogatory and reduce refugees’ value and their rights and it affects their emotional life and personality.

Refugee and immigrant women living in New Zealand indicated in informal conversations that they always feel homesick. Their children always ask them when they are going back home to see the members of their extended families (grandparents, nieces, nephews....). They may choose to go back to their country when the situation becomes normal. However, if hostilities and insecurity should regain a grip on the homeland, they may decide to leave and return to their third country. This makes people who have been fighting for change and who have not left their country of origin, angry and is the reason why they do not want to welcome back these former refugees and immigrants (Rachelle 1981; Gilkes 1994).

Local people in different countries where refugees are living say to the refugees *'you need to go back in your country; you are Mukibimzi, Ngunder, Mupaya'*. *'You are opportunist people, you just rejoice in the efforts of others'*. *You harvest fruits you never sowed'*. *'We cannot trust you'*. Similar attitudes can exist in both receiving and sending countries. Some people complain that refugees are receiving benefits and live in luxurious houses. Some refugees achieve their socio-economic status by getting credit. In the case where the refugees develop some business opportunities, contributing to the development of their homeland, they are welcomed and appreciated. But, should they appear to remain indifferent, or not to be doing anything, makes people angry and brings about revolt in the country of resettlement (Discussion with refugees' communities 2002).

Being refugees, these women lose trust in both countries (country of origin and the country of resettlement), whose residents sometimes cannot believe how hard refugee life is. There are many challenges to overcome. But through different community and women's organisations, these refugee women can be integrated and made to feel part of the society. By improving their socio-economic status and by making great contributions in the Waikato and in the country where they come from, they will have a happy life. Here are the distinctive characteristics of the refugee women.

**Table 5.2:**

**Comparing refugee and non refugee women's lives**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Refugee women</b>	<b>Non refugee women</b>
<b>Education</b>	The majority are illiterate, unable to write and to speak English. Sometimes, they have never been to school in their own country. They give more importance to the boys' education. However, there are some refugee women who are well educated and can support other refugee women.	Well educated, able to speak and write English. Equal opportunities for boys and girls to complete their education.
<b>Life skills</b>	They are often without any skills, so they have to learn new skills in the new country, even just to drive a car, or to sew clothes.	Possessing skills that can be used to help those refugee women.
<b>Cultural shock</b>	As refugees, some women have been abused, raped in the refugee settlements and that can affect their integration. Isolation from their family is a problem. Women who have many children will remain full time mothers. But with family reunification, they can find a way to further their education and improve their socio-economic status.	Establishing strong friendships can help to integrate the refugee women. They cannot understand why those women are not working and are having many children. What can be their future? How can they contribute to the development of both the home country and New Zealand.

**Source: Dialogue with former refugee women and the author's personal experience**

Meanwhile, some refugee women had work experience, skills and qualifications before going to the refugee camp. They were civil servants, researchers, doctors, teachers, politicians in their home country and they had to live in the harsh conditions in refugee settlements. As Jayasuriya (1996) and Böhning illustrate (1994), their resettlement in the third country needs to give them opportunities so that they can continue their career. If they cannot find these possibilities and are unable to work, they can migrate to another country to further their education or change their career.

Being refugees, these women carry with them their life experiences before and after being a refugee. Those refugee women even after being resettled and having

gained a new citizenship will still be affected by this refugee burden. They can develop mental illness if they remain poorly integrated as demonstrated by Cernea and McDowell (2000).

### **The third burden: “being women”**

An ethnic refugee woman has to perform seven roles as she used to do in the country of origin as described by Oppong (1986): 1. Wife, 2. Mother, 3. Woman, producer or generator of income, 4. Person engaged in community life and education, 5. Parent, caring for the children, 6. “Compagne de vie du mari” “companion for her husband”, 7. Educator, for the socialisation of children. As their life style changes in the new society, those ethnic women will find it hard to perform their seven roles. They will either have not enough time to socialise or to integrate into the society. If they want to perform their seven roles and be part of the new society conflicts will occur within the family possibly leading to divorce or to abuse in the relationship. How can these women be part of the new society and subsequently perform their seven roles and improve their socio-economic status? As these roles are engendered and socially constructed, childbearing, childcare and housework are for women, working outside the house, as a principal income earner is for men so most refugee women will remain at home as housewives (Peterson and Runyan 1993).

Talking about double role/double shift, Floro (1999) insist on the increasing burden that affects women’s life. They have taken the role of income earners (paid job) and at the same time they continue to perform their traditional role of household managers and childcare (unpaid job). Women also are community workers. Those overlapping activities push women to perform tasks 3 to 5 at the same time and that can affect their health.

Refugee women face many difficulties before coming to New Zealand. When refugee women live in rural settlements, they face unemployment and harsh conditions. They are mothers, producers, and reproducers (UNHCR 2002). These multiple roles can also affect their health as was the case of the refugee women

from Somalia, Ethiopia, Congo, living in settlements built in rural Sudan (Holborn 1975). But, researchers did not show whether the refugee status increased or decreased women's maternal mortality and fertility level (UNHCR 2000). Refugee women and children are also affected by a change of nutrition. They can develop malnutrition, diarrhoea and other infectious diseases due to the lack of sanitary water in the refugee camp. Future research on refugees may investigate the link between refugee status and the health status of the women. In the new society such as Hamilton, they have different facilities (stove, electricity, washing machine, car, good water and regular health checks). They will continue to work hard and be good to the husband and children. There is a need to research the impact of the new environment on refugee and immigrant women's health.

UNHCR (2002) noticed also that women and children refugees are likely to be vulnerable and victims of abuse and violence. Women in refugees' camps can be raped and abused, or sexually harassed, especially solo women who run away from their country, because the husband has been killed or is missing. There is no protection and respect of women rights in the refugee camps. Their resettlement in a third country is thus often required.

Because of all these difficulties, refugee women will not have time to socialise in their new environment. They will remain at home, doing house work and having children (Antobus 1995). Relief agencies always work hard to protect the health of the mother and children. Holborn suggested that surveys and research must be carried out to monitor and to evaluate the programmes of the relief agencies (Holborn 1975; UNHCR 2000). Another issue is that statistics on refugees are not disaggregated by gender and age in order to analyse the consequences of the refugee status on women and children.

As resettlement is a long process, other people corrupt those who are helping in the decision to select quota refugees. Some women who come from different countries go to the refugee camps to marry a refugee who then travels out of the camp with her. In this case, they want a health check up of the man, to avoid HIV/AIDS infection. This is often the case of European and American women (dialogue with former refugee).

Refugee women, just as other women living in the Waikato, will continue to be the principal carer for the family, the community and will perform housework and childcare without receiving any remuneration (Waring 1988). These house chores can limit their full participation in the labour force and society.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the triple burden that is endured by ethnic refugee women. Being an ethnic person, a refugee and a woman creates burdens that can limit or facilitate the integration of those women. These women may choose to challenge their culture and thus make way for their integration or keep strongly to their culture and thus make way for their marginalisation. Some refugee women who have skills and qualifications need to work and continue their career for their integration but they will face childcare problems and conflict between different roles in the family. Racism in the new society can restrict refugee women to staying at home performing their traditional jobs (producer, reproducers and house managers) as it will be demonstrated in the following chapter.

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## **Chapter six**

# **Problems faced by ethnic refugee women in the Waikato-Hamilton**

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### **Introduction**

Refugee ethnic women have different problems that affect their integration and their participation in the labour force. Their problems are related to the different burdens as demonstrated in the fifth chapter. They are a minority, they look different, they think different and they bring a new culture to a country with dominant European and Maori cultures. There is also the problem of a lack of statistics that describe the refugee population (Ware 1992; UN 1995; Antobus 1995). Throughout different quantitative and qualitative data, problems faced by refugee women in addition to those labelled burdens in chapter five, are established and set out as follows:

### **Being minority ethnic groups**

Refugee women belong to the minority ethnic population as tables 6.1 and 6.2 below illustrate. They have little impact on social policy as they are not a dominant group. As emphasised by Bhaskar, refugee women will suffer from domination by suppression and marginalisation (Bhaskar 1995). It is evident that ethnic minorities will face demographic discrimination, because of their small numbers as different data below show. Europeans are the dominant group and the integration of ethnic minorities will depend on the willingness of the dominant group to accept them (Ware 1992).

**Table 6.1:****Proportions by ethnicity of populations in percentage in the Waikato by gender from 1991-2001**

Year Ethnic	1991			1996			2001		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
African	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.27	0.25	0.26
Asian	1.70	1.71	1.71	2.69	2.81	2.75	3.48	3.77	3.63
European	82.81	82.92	82.86	80.80	81.46	81.13	78.58	79.31	78.96
Maori	16.89	17.36	17.12	19.40	19.66	19.53	19.68	19.80	19.74
Pacific	2.15	2.12	2.13	2.83	2.70	2.76	3.14	2.94	3.04
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Statistics New Zealand 1991, 1996, 2001 in Lepina 2002: 8.

**Table 6.2:****Proportions by ethnicity of populations in absolute number in the Waikato by gender from 1991-2001**

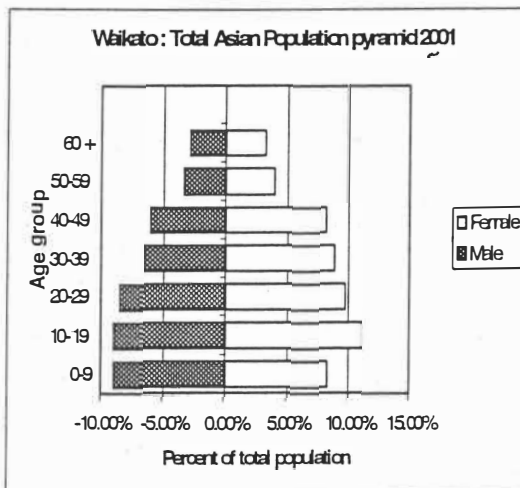
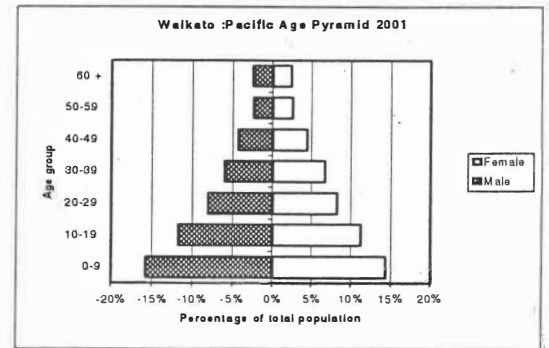
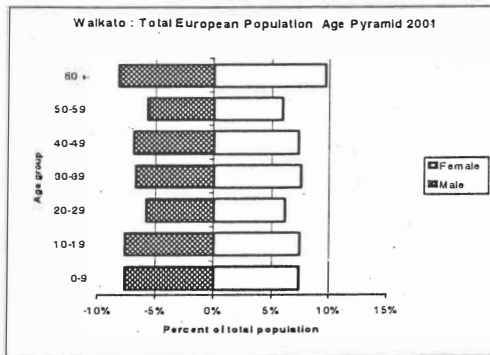
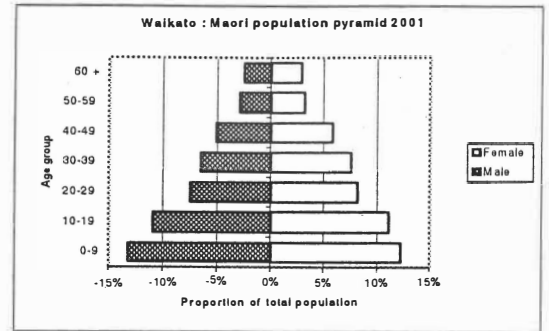
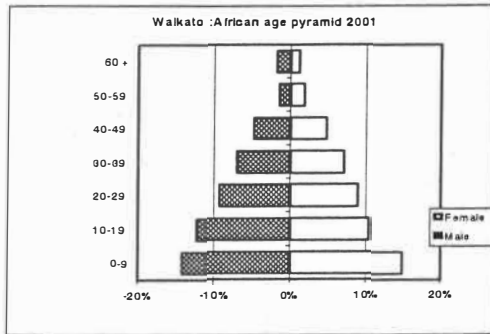
Year Ethnic group	1991			1996			2001		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
African	36	27	66	156	147	303	411	396	807
Asian	2,433	2,481	4,917	4,029	4,305	8,331	5,268	5,931	11,199
European	118,422	120,018	238,440	120,903	124,629	245,532	119,043	124,677	243,723
Maori	24,150	25,125	49,275	29,028	30,075	59,100	29,811	31,122	60,933
Pacific	3,069	3,063	6,129	4,239	4,125	8,364	4,755	4,620	9,369
Total	143,007	144,744	287,751	149,634	152,991	302,625	151,485	157,200	308,685

Source Statistics: New Zealand, 1991, 1996, 2001 in Lepina 2002: 7.

The European ethnic group is the largest group but its relative size is decreasing. It represents 82.86% of the total population in 1991, 81.13% in 1996 and 78.96 % in 2001. The African population makes up the smallest community with a rapid recent growth, from 66 in 1991 to 303 in 1996 and 807 in 2001.

The gender ratio shows that there are more males in the African and the Pacific populations through different years, while in the Asian, Maori and European populations there are more females than males. Further research will be useful to investigate differences in the ethnic sex ratio in the Waikato.

**Different Ethnic groups population pyramid in Waikato, 2001**  
**Graph 6.1. Different ethnic population pyramid**



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Census

These different population pyramids illustrate how the social development in New Zealand/ Waikato may have different priorities for different ethnic groups. While the main issue for the African, Asian, Maori and Pacific people will be health, education and employment for young populations, the European population will need more care for the older people, education and jobs for the young people. The social development policies as demonstrated by Lepina and Pool (2000) will need to set up sectorial programmes for each ethnic group in terms of their participation in the labour force, health, type of benefits, access to social services and education as each group has needs.

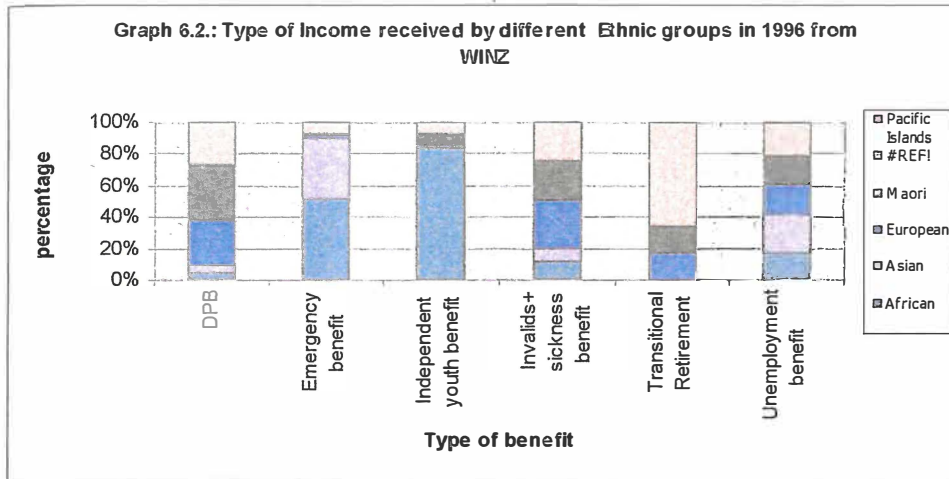
Being a minority group and having no family ties, refugee women pay the cost of living isolated and having busy and long days. The majority of women who responded to the questionnaire indicated that they wake up around 6am, start the family chores with their bath and dress up children, prepare their breakfast, cleaning and sending children to school. Back home in the evening, they continue with cooking, children's homework and bathing children and sending them to bed. They go to sleep around 10-11pm. These long and busy days will reduce women's participation in the labour force as they become super women in New Zealand (*said Charlotte*). Waring thus calls for the valorisation of housewife jobs (Waring 1988).

*Being minority groups, ethnic refugee women are also isolated because the new society is egocentric. People are concentrated on their family but not on others. Family ties have lost value (Nalia).*

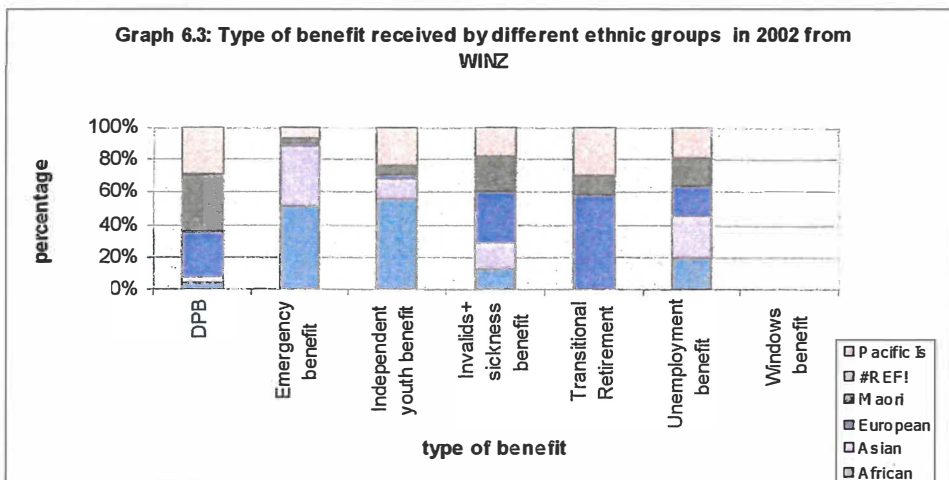
There is a need to find the best approach for a good balance in the country. Different approaches exist in building inter-ethnic relations. See chapter three for a discussion of such issues in New Zealand [page 27-30] on the added difficulty of switching from biculturalism to multiculturalism. The integration of refugee ethnic women in New Zealand remains a challenge and a give-and-take exercise for each individual, for families, ethnic and religious groups and community organisations (Childs and Williams 1995). Different ethnic groups need to learn to collaborate with each another as it is a new vision of New Zealand where each individual retains his/her own culture and shares it within the larger community

(Jayasuriya 1997). [See page 35-38 for more a complete view of ethnic relations from a post colonial perspective].

## Being dependent on social welfare benefits



Source WINZ Statistics 2002 from Lepina 2002: 22



Source WINZ Statistics 2002 from Lepina 2002: 22

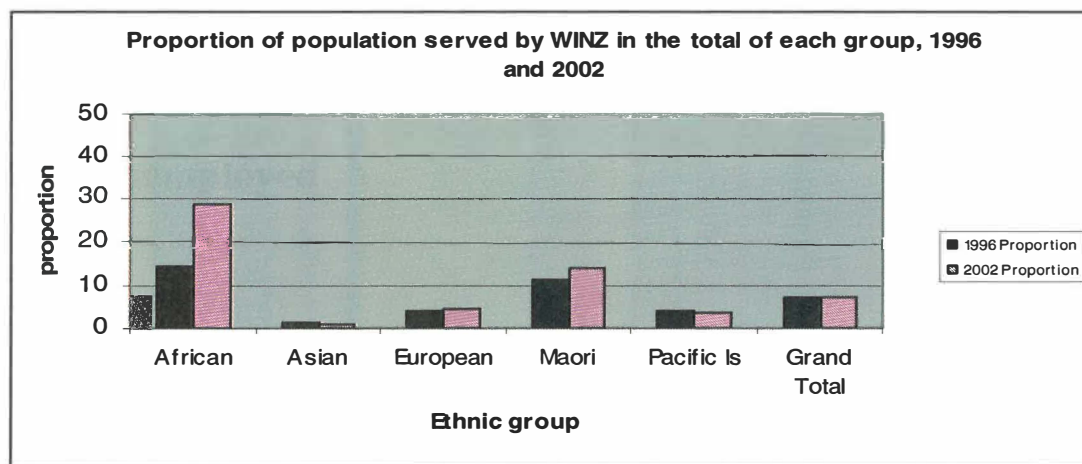
For this study, unemployment benefit is combined to include the student allowance, unemployment student hardship, the training allowance and the community wage benefit. Africans have a high proportion of people receiving unemployment benefits and emergency benefits. The Asian ethnic group has the highest proportion receiving unemployment benefits.

In graphs 6.2 and 6.3, for both years 1996 and 2002, the DPB category is important, in order, for European, Maori and Pacific recipients. There are no or

few Africans and Asians who are receiving the DPB, mainly because these women do not want to be considered as solo mothers. It is either a cultural issue or an ignorance of their rights.

Africans, followed by the Asian population, show high proportions receiving emergency benefits. Overall, there are few youths living under the independence youth benefit, but the African population has a high number within this category. While emergency benefits, mean food grants for other ethnic categories, for Africans it will be bonds for tenancy, the telephone bill or electricity bill.

**Graph 6.4:**  
**Proportion of population receiving benefit from Work and Income New Zealand by comparison to the census data in 1996 and in 2002**



Statistics New Zealand, Census, 1996, 2001 from Lepina 2002: 25

As shown in graph 6.4, Africans show the greatest need for the services of Work and Income New Zealand. There are some differences between these sources of data. The census data refer to the total population while the Work and Income New Zealand data are related to the population who are served by the system. Work and Income New Zealand data, however, refer to the main applicant not to the whole population. From 1996 to 2002, the proportion of Africans who received benefits from Work and Income New Zealand increased, followed by the Maori, European and Asian. Proportions for Pacific Islanders were diminishing.

Social inequalities are revealed through statistical data in this section. The data show the marginalisation and dependence of the minority groups on the social welfare system. Some inequalities in the world are created and perpetuated by women themselves, as they need to redress the situation (Ware 1992). This can indicate a need to help refugee women to decide and to empower themselves through participation as illustrated by Jelin:

Women's participation in reclaiming their right is the issue they need to achieve to change their life, to have social justice. All women must come together and want things to change and to come to the public place where they can stand to protest for their rights, it is what to achieve (Jelin 1990).

Social benefit is another way of maintaining minority ethnic groups as dependent and poor as declared by one interviewee. The best integration of the refugee women is through employment.

## **Being unemployed**

Unemployment is a big issue among women from different ethnic groups and this is for many reasons. Being minority groups, refugee women have less influence on social policy. Bhaskar has demonstrated the persistence of the different ways domination affects the life of these women and does not allow them to be in the labour force (Bhaskar 1995).

Comparing different ethnic, female populations to the total female population in the Waikato, these graphs reveal that the European ethnic group has the highest proportion in all the different labour force categories (employed, unemployed and not in the labour force). Refugee women are not represented in the labour force. As it will be demonstrated in the qualitative data each ethnic group justifies differently, refugee women's unemployment and employment status.

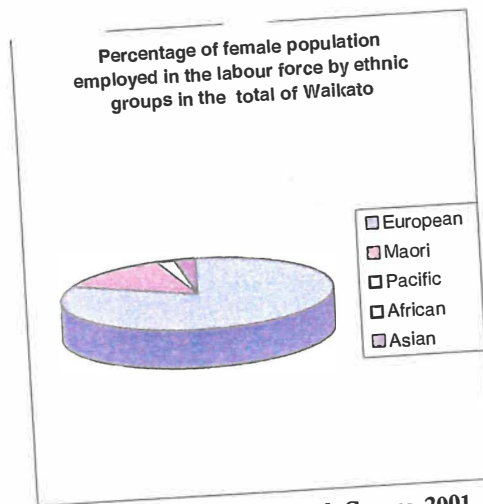
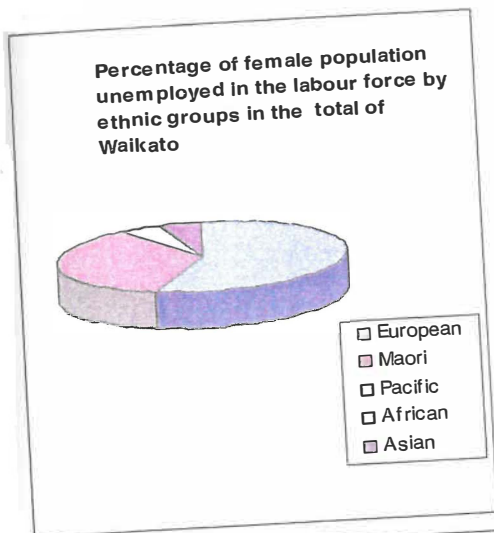
All ethnic groups are represented in the unemployment category. This means that a sustainable solution must be found that aims to reduce unemployment among all

ethnic groups, especially the African refugee group. The integration of Africans will mean finding ways to become self employed or to obtain full time employment and thus not be on unemployment benefit. The question remains how can this be achieved?

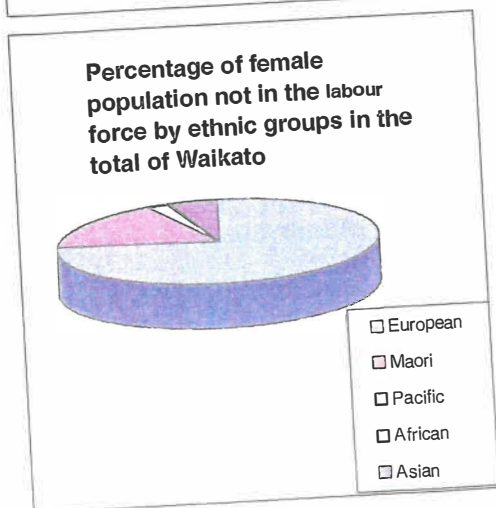
Post colonial theory has criticised social and economic inequalities created by the domination of one ethnic group. An ethnic group can dominate demographically, economically, politically and culturally (Childs and Williams 1997). In New Zealand and in the Waikato “the white-European ethnic group” dominates. European domination is revealed through the quantitative data regarding labour force participation and other socio-economic indicators presented in section 6.2.

**Graph 6.5.**

**Proportion of different ethnic female population in the labour force in 2001, in Waikato**



Source: Statistics New Zealand, Census, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand, Census, 2001

Through focus groups, individual interviews, participant observation and questionnaires, factors that limit refugee women participation into the labour force are listed below:

### **Big family size**

**Table 6.3:**  
**Different ethnic group family size**

Ethnic group	Family Size
African Horn	3.02
African	2.45
Asian	1.65
European	1.72
Māori	2.04
Pacific Islanders	2.13
Total People	1.77

**Source: Statistics New Zealand 2001  
from Lepina 2002**

In table 6.3, among all ethnic groups, Africans and above all Africans from the Horn of Africa have a large family size. Their religion and culture places more emphasis on childbearing. Family size limits the integration of the African, Maori and Pacific Islanders population in the Waikato. However it is not clear that, by reducing the level of fertility, Africans, Maori and Pacific Islanders can be easily integrated into the labour force.

Refugee women have chosen to have a big family and will become full time mothers. Their choice is creating inequalities in the family task. They will perform all the house chores alone as the men will be working outside the house as a taxi driver, picking apples or milking on a dairy farm. These women will be full time mothers but they may want to work when the children grow up. Sen demands for justice to eradicate the inequality between men and women (Sen 1995). Waring insists on the evaluation of housework that absorb women's time and keeps them unemployed (Waring 1988). Those refugees, who are not working, will be more dependent on the social welfare and on the husband. These women, as qualitative

data found, will avoid mixing with white women for the fear that they will lose their culture and become like white women who fight for their rights (Bhaskar 1995).

### **Being dependent on the husband**

Although there is freedom of speech and women's rights are respected in the new country, these refugee women are not used to this life and they are still dependent on their husband's decisions. Husbands have to decide for them. If the husbands do not allow the women to work, women will stay at home while the husbands are working. While the new society offers advantages, refugee women may be limited as to which ones they can draw on. Sen (1995) called for justice to support women's participation into their social development, in that they are not impeded by their husbands if they choose to join the labour force, or that they receive some help with the housework.

*Some refugee women faced the new society law; they seem to get more freedom of speech and can easily ask for support for any domestic violence issue, they are covered by the same law and everybody needs to respect the new society law. Some practices on women accepted in their country of origin, are against the law here such as polygamy and genital mutilation. Women rights are human rights, people need to respect the New Zealand law (Dibaya).*

As Bhaskar insists in the critical realism theory, each woman has her own natural way of thinking for her emancipation. By being dependent on the husband, some women are achieving their empowerment (Bhaskar 1995). However, this dependence on the husband decreases the bargaining power of the women and creates gender inequalities that need to be eradicated by social justice (Sen 1995).

### **Immobility and lack of education**

Some refugee ethnic women who wish to seek support from community organisations are not able to drive, to speak English or to find childcare. Poverty and dependence on benefits are the major problems refugee ethnic women face in New Zealand. They have no friends because of their religion so they will face isolation and marginalisation as they are not integrated in the society. The problem is partly their inability to speak English, therefore they need to get

lessons in English to help them integrate in New Zealand. Lack of money for education or childcare, flexibility in work hours, requirements to be the principal caregiver of children and principal housekeeper, poorly subsidised childcare and education are other issues ethnic women face, which limits their participation in the labour force.

*New Zealanders and especially New Zealander employers need to understand immigrant and refugee accents. If this person was a doctor or an accountant back home, he/she can still work in New Zealand, to further his/her career (Zoti).*

*We are agreed that we are different and we need to accept each other. One thing that can bring people together is the language, English. Everyone needs to understand and speak the English language even though some people can speak other languages and through developing the ability to speak English, many problems can be redressed in the society (Nalia).*

The inability to speak English remains the barrier that limits women's participation in the workforce (Watt and Trlin 2000).

### **Health problems**

Other refugee women have health problems that need to be treated for their integration. Medical problems such as tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, diabetes and others will not allow refugee women to be in the work place, because they are not used to the healthcare system. Some refugee women are affected by the medical system and the way the system works in this country. The women always complain about the delay to see a specialist or lack of traditional health facilities that would be available back home. The appointment time is hard to keep sometimes because the women cannot drive and must rely on someone else to take them to the hospital.

*When I arrived recently in New Zealand, I was thinking that you can just turn up to the hospital to see the doctor as it was the case in my home country. That is not the case, in New Zealand you need to book your appointment time to see the General Practitioner and to be referred by your family doctor to see a specialist. You can wait for many months. Sometimes you forget your appointment time being new to the system. Only in an emergency case you can go directly to see the specialist. But you need to spend a long time in the waiting room (Dimaya).*

## **Suffering from discrimination and lack of adjustment**

Another reason that justifies the unemployment of women is discrimination. As Sen states there are still some practices in the workforce that discriminate against women. Their participation in the labour force does not mean their empowerment, as they are still suffering from injustices, Muslim women, especially suffer from this.

*Muslim women are wearing different clothes. We are not used to it. It will be better for them to change their way of dressing up. Some employers will not give them the job as they dress up like that (Nkongo).*

*I don't think that the Muslim women and African women have problems. They are happy in the way they are dressing up, it is their culture, and people need to acknowledge these differences. There is a need to open an inter-religious dialogue so that these differences can be overcome (Kakanga).*

Meanwhile women are facing racism and discrimination due to their skin colour, religions, beliefs and customs, which different community organisations need to overcome. Women's organisations need to advocate equality so that refugee women can get into the workforce without any discrimination (Sen 1995). There is discrimination not only for the ethnic and refugee women but also for any woman in New Zealand. Sometimes the employers do not like to employ young mothers.

*I notice that there is discrimination against young women. Discrimination is everywhere. Look at the University Secretary staff, there are almost no young women there. Even in finding jobs, some employers prefer not to have young women staff. They believe that they will be absent for their children, husbands and pregnancies. Any immigrant is discriminated against in a new country. Employers will prefer to employ a single woman and a woman who cannot give birth. They are afraid for the maternity leave. Even though the law does not accept this kind of discrimination, it is still prevalent in New Zealand (Nkongo).*

There is also *discrimination based on the country of origin* as participant one in focus group III mentioned:

*You may come today with a person from Australia, South Africa or the United Kingdom, even if it is his/her first time, s/he will not be considered as ethnic, because s/he is white. That is racism. You may find out that white immigrants get*

*jobs quickly in New Zealand, faster than other races. I came with my wife, my qualification was recognised by the (New Zealand Qualification Accreditation Authority (NZQA), but not hers. She is at home even though back home she was a teacher. Problems of ethnic women in New Zealand are gender and cultural issues. Some African refugee women are unable to work in New Zealand because of racism. Employers see a black woman and they think she is lazy. She can just give birth and look after the children. They never think that these women are not the same as in the 1960s. Because they are now educated and able to work (Kazanga).*

*Not all immigrants want to adjust and to integrate in the new society. Some want to live and do things as they did in their home country. However, refugee women need to know that keeping themselves apart can engender racism and division in the society (Nita).*

*Even though I made efforts for my integration in the society, my children have the same problems although they have a diploma, a bachelor degree from New Zealand, they cannot get jobs. When they apply for a job, employers look at them as Indian, even though they were born and grew up here. They should not look at them as Indian, because they look Indian, but born here. There are still signs of racism (Dimaya).*

Discrimination and racism are relevant in New Zealand society, but they are expressed in a subtle way, that cannot be noticed by everyone. As there have been misunderstandings between Maori and Pakeha, [see page 68] there will continue to be problems in the integration of other minority ethnic groups. [See page 36 the slogan illustrated by Ferro 1997 on ethnic relations].

Minority ethnic groups need to be activist and participatory to overcome racism, discrimination and the hegemony of white dominance and of capitalism. Community organisations need to support those ethnic minorities in the emancipation fight (Bhaskar 1995).

Discrimination and racism exist in any country, even when there is not a dominant white race. People can discriminate between other ethnic groups, by differences in tribes, religion, sex and language spoken. Each person needs to accept the differences in the society and accept other persons as they are (Ware 1992). Different community and women's organisations and religious groups need to come together to discuss racism, discrimination and prejudices that affect refugee women (Babacan 1993).

*Some refugees and immigrants were ready to go out for a job, but they could not find one, it is for that reason that many women prefer to stay at home because there is no job available. Therefore, they will remain at home, and be housewives (Mirika and Santos).*

## **Conclusion**

This analysis has shown that the dominant European, ethnic group has an important role to play in the integration and the empowerment of refugee women and their families. The dominant groups, their life style and their relations with other ethnic groups determine the integration or the exclusion of the refugee women. Refugee women may want to get into paid jobs but there are many barriers such as discrimination, racism and cultural differences.

The analysis of different socio-economic indicators of the integration of the Africans and of other ethnic populations shows that African refugees are not well integrated in the Waikato region. Social development policies need to implement specific programmes that will help the integration of the minority ethnic populations, such as Africans, Asians, Maori and Pacific Islanders. The lack of integration of the African and minority populations in the Waikato is an important issue. Different indicators and statistics analysed here describe the ethnic refugee populations as:

1. Minority groups
2. Having high levels of disadvantages and of needs
3. Being dependent on social welfare benefits,
4. Policies relative to integration must focus on employment for refugees as a key factor,
5. Because of small size and broken extended family structures, the ethnic refugee populations do not have well developed support networks and they are isolated as they suffer from discrimination. While the mosque helps the integration of the Muslim refugee women, Christian refugees could become more creative to build up their church, a chorus or social clubs to help the integration of Africans and other minority groups.

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## **Chapter seven: Are community organisations improving refugee ethnic women socio-economic status in the Waikato?**

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### **Introduction**

The answer to this question is challenging and limited to the information obtained from diverse research techniques as demonstrated in the methodology chapter. Refugee women still rely on different community organisations for their integration in the new society.

Although refugee women find support from the community organisations, they are not always happy, as these organisations are hierarchical and patriarchal (Hanchett 1997; Luke 1994; Abukhlil 1997). Different organisations are focused on their mission statement and they cannot change it even if women have different needs that sometimes are in contradiction with the mission statement (Esber 1997). Because European, Maori and Pacific Island women's needs seem to dominate the policy agenda of the government, the particular needs of minority ethnic women cannot always be fulfilled by the central government and they thus rely on community organisations (ACOSS 1992).

These community organisations are working for the development and wellbeing of the people who give them support and existence. There are some principles that the community organisation needs to observe as described by Babacan:

- Democratic decision making
- Openness in objectives, agenda and process, for example, planning and action.
- Commitment to social change in a way the constituent group requires
- Commitment to "the community"- to the aspirations and methods of the community
- Participation – involvement of those affected in the decision making processes

- Empowerment - developing an understanding of power in the community, building structures and processes which empower people
- Accountability - to the constituent base and with appropriate evaluation mechanisms.
- Support mechanisms - for the individual, agency or client group, networking
- Advocacy on behalf of client or group
- Awareness raising, belief in social education" (Babacan 1993:51-52)

These principles are not always followed by the diverse community organisations located in Hamilton, as this chapter will illustrate.

## **Refugee women within community organisations**

### **Understanding the real life cycle of refugee women**



**Plate 1: A woman attacked by the rebels in the DRC**

**Source: AP Photo/Sayyid Azim**



Source: UNHCR, 2000

Plate 2: Refugee women living in hard conditions in the refugee camp



(c) BBC

Stop the stoning  
-Fatima & Ahar  
Source: [www.stopthestoning.org](http://www.stopthestoning.org)



Such a response.

Source: UNHCR, 2000

Plate 3: There is life before and after refugee status



Source: Lepina

Community organisations that support refugee women need to understand refugee women's life cycles before giving them any support and seeking their full participation as demonstrated in the above principles (Babacan 1993). The different backgrounds of refugee women as set out below reveal the diverse reality of refugee life. The life history of these women embodies the consequences of colonialism and modernism described in the third chapter.

1. Each refugee had a life prior to being a refugee. Some refugees are educated, having acquired skills and professional experience before coming to New Zealand. They will need to re-establish their past life style in New Zealand.
2. Other refugee women have no skills and are not educated. They will require specific programmes to acquire some education through the life style programme, to help them adjust in their new life.
3. Some refugees have health problems (HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, mental difficulties) and they will need medical care in the new life.
4. Another refugee women group are those who have children in their first year of arrival. They will need childcare support as well as more help in their adjustment.
5. Some refugee women have been abused and raped and have suffered from that trauma and it will be hard for them to adjust in the new society, as they are carrying with them their past experience (UNHCR 2002).

A deep understanding of the refugee life cycle is a complicated issue and this research is focused on the role of community organisations in helping these refugee women adjust in their new country or new city, in this case New Zealand, especially in the Waikato and in Hamilton city. Understanding refugee women's past, present and future life can help different community organisations to offer better support. Information on the refugee women's life can help these community groups to give them more support in a natural way and also for the participation of the women in their empowerment process (Bhaskar 1995). A study of the life cycle of refugee women reveals that not all refugee women will be able to work.

Their integration needs to be not just culturally sensitive as underlined by Black feminists (Zinn *et al* 1999; McLaughlin 1995) but also sensitive to their personal histories. Refugee women need to achieve their full integration as post-colonial theory has demonstrated (Childs and Williams 1997; Hintjens 1995)

### **Community organisations and refugee women**

Even though these community organisations are supporting women, some concerns have arisen about the way they are set up. Some ethnic men and women who have set up ethnic community organisations want to achieve their own personal goals, such as becoming a political leader, getting a good job in an international organisation or in a government department. Their efforts in trying to help these minority women, as Bhaskar (1994) has illustrated, has resulted in the domination of the women by these organisation leaders (Bhaskar 1994; Collier 1994; Sellar 1999).

Ethnic refugee women in their multiple ways of thinking and through their different immigration stories are often not united. They are divided by their country of origin, by religion, by region of residence and by tribes (O'Neill 1995). The founders of ethnic organisations become more powerful and dominate the rest of the community creating divisions in the ethnic community organisations (Crawford 1998). Ethnic community organisations are not always successful in a predominantly white society. The structures of these organisations copy the European models which are often not culturally appropriate for minority ethnic women and cannot truly respond to their needs. Post-colonial theory insists on the respect of culture and identity of the minority groups and in the deconstruction of ethnic relations to reflect the views of different people living in the country (Morgan 1970; Childs and Williams 1997; Diken 1998).

Ethnic organisations also want the women to go and seek their services as they cannot go out to meet those women in their home or their centres of socialisation (church, mosque and gathering places) as they have limited funds and resources. For this reason, they cannot afford to employ social workers and people with expertise such as consultants. Limited funding handicaps organisations that try to

achieve their mission statement and to work closely with women at grassroots level, therefore women's equity cannot be achieved (Sen 1995).

*Funding received is insufficient so we are unable to help with different problems. Nearly 25% of the funding goes in rent, 55% goes to administration costs and only 30% covers the salary of staff and volunteers" (Community organisation questionnaire).*

Many refugee and ethnic minority women are not mobile because there was no necessity to drive in their home country where buses were common. In other cases if husbands had a car, they would employ drivers for their wives as this was a way of caring for the wives and for protecting them. For others, it was seen as a form of domination and the maintenance of the patriarchal society. This practice limits the mobility of women so they remain dependent on men. The women cannot drive and they cannot go to the places where these organisations have their offices (Haour-Knipe 2001). There is a need for ethnic and other organisations who want to support the refugee women to meet them in their homes or their space of socialisation.

They also do not speak English so they remain isolated and marginalised. This is what Jenkins (1998) emphasises —multicultural policies support the continued use of native languages. For the majority of refugee women, English was not the main mean of communication in their home country. People can learn it at school without using English in daily life. They prefer to use their national language or dialects. There are organisations in New Zealand specialised in teaching refugee women English. They provide interpreters when refugees need to use public services such as welfare, healthcare, court etc. The use of interpreters helps refugee women in their integration process, but also it is a barrier to their learning English (Watt and Trlin 2000).

McLaughlin insists on the role of studying the culture that people from different countries bring with them (1993). Meanwhile, the continued use of the languages from the colonising country such as English, French...demonstrates the persistent colonisation by white culture. Post-colonial theory encourages the deconstruction of those ethnic and race relations (Spivak 1999). People can choose their own

language, but without being excluded from the global development process (Ferro 1997). The ideal is to avoid the inequalities created by those community organisations by encouraging women to go out but that can produce cultural conflict. The ethnic men do not accept that their women should go out to seek those services.

*Our women do not need those organisations. They will not go there to tell them their problems. Back home if you have a problem you go to see a friend, uncle, aunty. You have all the community and extended family support. You cannot go to tell your problems to a stranger who may tell other people. You will lose dignity. It is for that reason, the African and other minority ethnic women are not going to seek help and support from those organisations, but from their friends (Dokari).*

It is perceived as a consequence of the patriarchal organisation of the society, they come from:

*Refugee women and African women have not any problems. They are happy in the way they are living, caring for their husband and family, because it was their socialisation. But, the white women could not understand it; they are talking about the African women domination or discrimination. African women have not a problem, but the white women, they want to control other women's lives (Kuria).*

Different cultural attitudes exist about the social consideration of women and some feminists believe that such problems need to be resolved first (Mies and Shiva 1993).

*Ethnic women cannot come out until they are confident with the new environment and encouraged to go out. Then, they can come out. Their culture is very different; their life style is very different. May be when you stay longer in a place, you can have your life transformed slowly if only you want it to change (Kazadi).*

Bhaskar, in his critical realism theory, illustrates the importance of taking care of women's emancipation the natural way, so by being full time mothers, those women are also empowered (Bhaskar 1995). Maintaining those women at home creates gender inequalities. As Sen (1995) states, to obtain social justice and equality, refugee women need to be activists and challenge the attitudes of the society (Gilkes 2000). Even though refugee women have problems they are limited in the support they receive from community organisations. There is a need for community organisations to improve their approach to achieve the integration of refugee women into the new society (Hanson and Pratt 1995).

## **Role of community organisations**

### **Keeping true to their mission statement**

Mission statements vary between organisations: some organisations offer sponsorship for refugees, others emphasise life skills and orientation programmes and support, others provide only information and social services to the women in a friendly environment. Some organisations want to empower women by uniting them. Others deliver social services such as health and education. The last type of organisation supports and cares for single parents through education, counselling and community services.

*Our organisation cannot tell the women what to do for their successful integration. We are counsellors, advisors and support groups. It is the women's choice. They can choose to be a good and full time mother at home, and they can choose to further their education, go to work or be a single parent or single woman. It is the women's choice not an outsider's (Bibi).*

Women who are leaders need to use a grass root approach for the integration of refugee women. Esber (1997) emphasises that women's organisations are not the solution to the empowerment of women as they are patriarchal and hierarchical and they are not working for the needs of women but for themselves.

### **Developing Collaboration**

Many organisations collaborate with one another. The City Council should provide an adequate office that can bring all those organisations who want to work together to help refugee women in their integration process. It would reduce their rent and their administration costs and increase the time and funding devoted to support women in the community. The creation of a migrant resource centre would bring together all different organisations supporting migrants and augment their collaboration. In the case of Hamilton, collaboration between different community organisations starts on the arrival of the refugees and I have outlined below a model that needs to be followed.

Upon their arrival in New Zealand and in Hamilton, a woman activist needs to inform those refugee women about the different organisations available that can support them. An information booklet on Hamilton city and New Settler's documents can be distributed. RMS will invite other organisations to different refugee functions such as: a welcome ceremony, citizenship ceremony, refugee day. These organisations will introduce themselves to the refugee and explain the way they can provide support to them, for example, the Hamilton Ethnic Women Centre, Hamilton Women Centre, Link house, Hamilton Women Refuge, HAIP (Hamilton Abuse Intervention Project), religious and ethnic organisations. Refugee women then can decide which organization(s) can support them in their integration process. Within six months RMS will carry out regular evaluations to find out which organisations are doing their best in this role.

### **Improving refugee women's socio-economic status by getting them into paid jobs**

Social inequalities are revealed through statistical data in section 6.2 from Work and Income New Zealand which show the marginalisation and dependence of the ethnic minority groups on the welfare system. As indicated in the theory chapter, WID, WAD and GAD advocate women's liberation through economic development and paid jobs. The question other feminists ask is whether women would so readily join the labour force if house work was recognised for the value it represents for any society (Waring 1988). That is why they ask for the recognition of housework in economic statistics (Domosh and Seager 2001; Waring 1988).

Getting these women into paid jobs is not an easy exercise as these women firstly, need to adjust to the new society and to learn the new culture and build friendship relations. Secondly, they also need childcare that is culturally appropriate to which they feel safe to send their children. These childcare services need to be flexible as some mothers will require part time or after hours care, while they work or study. Thirdly, the inflexibility of available childcare and hard conditions on the job force refugee women to stay at home caring for their families. Fourthly, shifting

refugee women from home to the labour force is not a priority for the refugee as different organisations have mentioned. Fifthly, those women will be afraid of the perturbations that occur in the family as participation in the labour force maximises the role of women outside the home and minimises their role in the family (Conduct and Ramsey 1997).

*What is the importance of the economic status if it will destroy the family? How to empower women without disturbing the family life and the education of the next generation? (Stela).*

Women who are leading community organisations are doing their best to define priorities for the community, while the beneficiaries of the project are not contacted. This follows the line of New Zealand's cultural policy which encourages cultural activities as a spectacle for the community. There are limited programmes to support a true policy of multiculturalism. As different scholars insist multiculturalism is maintaining class and gender inequalities (Abucar 1993; Leah 1993; Mahuta 1993).

Community organisations support these refugee women to get into paid jobs by providing some skills (producing curriculum vitae, preparing a job interview, giving a referral letter, driving skills, organising English lessons, sewing and cooking classes, and informing them about the employment agencies). They are not responsible for the women's choices. Refugee women need to decide what they want to achieve in the new society and then different organisations can plan their action: *"We refer women who want to work to the employment agencies and provide a referral letter to them"* (said Stela). They are supporting services for the integration of the refugee women. They can only advise them.

Community organisations, ethnic community organisations and women organisations do not have in their mission statement creating jobs for the improvement of women's socio-economic status or getting them into a paid job, to ensure their social and economic integration. Ethnic women themselves need to improve their socio-economic status (Ware 1992).

As they live in a white society, some ethnic women, especially the African women, will spend their money on the tyranny of beauty, as they want to have blond skin and hair like Europeans. They can be malnourished and poor, but they will find money for their beauty and clothing. Even at work, those women cannot be empowered and become financially independent. They will need support from their husbands. If the husbands are not working but staying at home with the children, the money they earn is not theirs as it goes to support the family (Ekejuba 1995; Bhaskar 1995), and this enables the men to maintain patriarchal relations

*Refugee men should be placed in their field of expertise and start to work in their first month. They will learn English in the work place, and women can stay at home while the husbands are working. Living on a benefit creates tension and abuse in the family. Both parents can work and arrange appropriate care for the young children (Katanga).*

*We cannot accept that a new person coming from a new country, his/her first reaction is to get a job. Even if s/he spoke English, in the majority of the cases his/her English is not good enough and this person cannot find a job. When this person comes to us, s/he can improve their English, understand the New Zealand accent and then can get a job (Stela).*

*I think the best solution for those ethnic women is to stay at home looking after their children; being a full time mother, supporting children at school, helping with homework. Until the children are big enough and they can progressively enter the labour force, as part time and later on full time. For me, I have been a full time mother for 15 years until my child went to secondary school. When I went back to work I have to retrain with the secretary technology (computer). Culture is a big barrier for the integration of those refugee women. But the longer they will stay, the more they will need to adjust in New Zealand society. They will over time live like the New Zealanders. It will not be very hard (Siro and Marika).*

Refugees and their families, since New Zealand has signed for their resettlement, will become citizens. They must have equal opportunity as other New Zealanders. They will access benefits, education, health system, employment and housing, without any discrimination. In practice this is what happens, but efforts need to be put in place for these refugees to be resettled and integrated in New Zealand for the rest of their life, otherwise, those refugee women and their families will migrate to another country such as Australia, Canada, United Kingdom... where they believe their economic situation will be better (personal communication).

*The problems those refugee women are facing are due to their status as refugee. They are not accepted as full citizens. They are still considered as refugees, ethnic people. A person who comes into the country and is given a residence permit and in three years this person can apply for his/her citizenship; this person is considered, is still considered as a refugee, as an ethnic. It is a discrimination against refugees (Mbo).*

That is why post-colonial theory demands the de/reconstruction of race, ethnic and gender relations (Kritz 1983; Kwame 1997; Marger 2000).

## **Dilemma of getting women in the labour force**

As a signatory country to different United Nations Conventions on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, New Zealand is a country where women hold high office. Women are quite well represented in New Zealand society in different decision making areas, for example Prime Minister, Government Ministers and Members of Parliament. In comparison to others countries, New Zealand can be counted as a leader in this area. But the full participation of women in the labour force and in the political sector may bring some concerns for the family. New Zealand has registered a high level of divorce, a high proportion of solo mothers, a high proportion of single women who do not want to have children and husbands. This issue makes people question why there are so many divorces. Does gender equality mean family destruction (Coddington 2001)?

*Women spend most of their time at the workplace; children are placed in day care. The consequence is that children are brought up being parentless and there is a high divorce rate. Policy makers need to define the best moment when women are allowed to find jobs and receive compensation for caring for the family. Single parents need to receive enough income that can help them stay at home and look after their children. Married couples need to make deliberate decisions to choose who can work and who can look after the children. There is a need for people to return to God and follow God's commandment focusing on family first and not on money (Katanga).*

How does one sustain and support family life when many women are in the labour force? In New Zealand many organisations are helping women to cope with family life and to care for the children when women are working. There

are childcare facilities but they are too expensive for low income families. There are also home based care programmes, where children are looked after at home by a woman in her family home but they are also expensive. African and other minority ethnic women are not used to sending their children to childcare when they are still very young. They are used to a system where they have nannies who look after the children or sometimes a relative comes to look after the children, particularly the very young, in the woman's house. In New Zealand, they can not afford to have nannies because they are very expensive. Because these facilities are so expensive and not culturally appropriate, refugee and ethnic women prefer to stay at home with their children.

UNICEF (1996) has shown an increase in the number of street children in Africa and other developing countries, because of the poverty that has pushed their mothers to work and abandon their family, and spend their time in the small business sector. Those children are not able to stay with their parents. So, in most developing countries, there are street children, sewer children. In developed countries such as New Zealand, governmental and non-governmental services look after children who do not live with their biological parents. Such agencies provide foster parents. Is the approach used by foster parents culturally appropriate for the ethnic children? Some women, who have an education and obtained qualifications, need to be employed and gain experience. Staying at home, they will become illiterate. Some, however, worry about the personal development of their children, which may encourage them to stay at home until the children are older.

Community organisations need also to educate New Zealand employers who need to change their attitude against refugee and other ethnic women. They do not trust refugee women, even though they are well educated and professional. They are afraid to employ them. Another role of community organisations is to help those refugee women to set up their own business and become self employed. Women can be successful in their own business while working from home and producing some crafts or writing their own story. By doing this, women can be empowered. Another job opportunity is in the agricultural sector, such as picking fruit or milking cows. These jobs do not need qualifications, but some understanding of

different principles and they provide New Zealand work experience. These refugee women will be networked into the community to help them succeed in their businesses or courses of study.

Refugee women who have health problems will not be able to work (Scheck 2000) until their health status is improved. Refugee women need to control their reproductive health before planning to go to work.

## **Sustainable solutions for improving refugee women's socio-economic status**

### **Provide appropriate childcare**

Community care is another option where women can decide to have volunteers who are willing to look after the children as parents or ethnic refugee women can also help each other to look after their children, but it is not easy as these refugee women may sometimes not trust each other. The best option is to have these community "parent rooms" which need to be located at the place of work or study areas and to operate twenty four hours a day where necessary as for industrial shifts. Parent rooms can be funded by different agencies (for example central and local government departments, different donors ...) and have children cared for by retired women who will do it as volunteers and community support.

This approach can be adapted to different ethnic backgrounds. This would be an achievement for the women to work seriously without worrying about the children. Women would still have an opportunity to have children and get employed if they so wish. But if women choose to stay at home, then housework needs to be remunerated. Even though the majority would benefit, a few women noticed that if their children are close to them at the workplace, they are not able to concentrate. All their attention is focused on their children. It would then be better to have a flexible childcare solution, culturally appropriate and closer to their household.

## **Building refugee ethnic and gender relations**

*Some refugee ethnic women tend not to have much to do with white women. Race and ethnic relations are challenging and need to be rebuilt. Ethnic men find that Kiwi women are arrogant and control their families, while in the ethnic family, the husbands are the breadwinners (these comments summarize the interviewees' attitudes). Dialogue between Kiwi and other ethnic groups is an issue to consider. European women find that ethnic men do not help their wives with the house chores. Ethnic women work a lot, but they do not complain as they were brought up to a different social division of tasks between men and women (Focus group IV).*

*House work is for women. Men cannot cook (Ansalme)  
Men cannot wash dishes or clean the toilet, as it is woman's responsibility (Mpia).  
This social division of work between men and women maintains social and cultural unity and creates stability in the household (Mbo).*

Building ethnic relations can help ethnic groups change their behaviour for the better (Hintjens 1995). Until now the debate in building ethnic relations has been open and each country has different issues and definitions for this ethnic concept. The way people interpret the concept 'ethnic', as discussed in chapter 5 [see pages 63-65], has an impact on social integration and social justice for refugee women who belong to minority ethnic groups (Ware 1992; Vasta 1996; Vogel 1991). Some of the integration approaches proposed by different interviewees and participants in focus groups are presented in appendix VI.

The integration of refugee ethnic women in New Zealand remains a challenge for each individual, family, ethnic and religious group, and/or community organisation. Each ethnic group needs to learn to collaborate with others. Each individual retaining his/her own culture and sharing it within the larger community. Post-colonialism demands:

The deconstruction of ethnic relations [that] seeks to avoid racism and create a society in which ethnicity is seen as a source of richness not, a way of dividing people. A society in which, there is no dominant race, where people can claim an ethnicity and indicate a multitude of diversity, as in multiculturalism (Childs and Williams 1997), [see pages 27-31 the discussion about multiculturalism policies].

While the European ethnic group has an important role in building inter-ethnic relations since it is the dominant one, ethnic organisations, women's organisations and religious groups also need to play a role to sustain the integration of refugee ethnic women (Jonasdottir 1994; Lamont 2000).

*We are agreed that we are different and we need to accept each other. One thing that can bring people together is the language, English. Everyone needs to understand and speak the language even though some people can speak other languages. By this means many problems can be redressed in the society. The second is our faith, our Christianity. By sharing our faith with others we can avoid divisions among people (Bongo and Kabuanga).*

### **Supporting refugee women in empowerment models**

The results used in this section were obtained through questionnaires. Ethnic organisations have raised many issues that affect refugee women in the new country, if they want to improve their socio-economic status.

*Women are the motor of the family. Their absence in the family can change many things. Children can become parentless, motherless and fatherless. Women in developing countries in Asia, Africa, the Pacific region and Latin America are working very hard to generate income in order to send their children to study, to travel overseas. In Congo, when women are in the labour force or the informal sector, there are street children who do not want to live with their family because the mother or father is not at home (Kuria and Mabansa).*

Some women would like to work but they are unable to find a job and they remain at home. Other women want to achieve integration through education. Some refugees would like to continue their study and gain a New Zealand qualification, and find a job. After considering the cost of gaining an education, few refugee women have taken the risk. Some women would like to know about their rights, live in a peaceful family with zero domestic violence, learn about New Zealand family rights and practice them in their family.

*The means of empowering women varies for different cultures. Maori women empowerment is part of their culture. Each woman has her own definition of empowerment according to her culture, education, background, and government policy. Maybe for the immigrant women, giving children a better education is part of their empowerment. Being a full time mother or being in the labour force or study can also be part of their empowerment model. I do not want people who impose their ideas on what is empowerment. Each person has her own empowerment model. The model is defined by your culture, background and in*

*some countries by the government. I do not want to give the empowerment to other people who may say that to be empowered you must be educated or go to work (Zoti).*

By knowing their rights, those refugee women will become empowered and reclaim all rights from the husband. That can create problems in the family, because the men's authority is reduced. However, the adjustment in the new society and the collaboration with other ethnic groups living in the Waikato and in Hamilton is an issue that affects not just refugee women but all society. That demands a redefinition of ethnic relations. As those different empowerment models [in appendix VII] show, there is no ideal empowerment model for refugee women. All models are complementary to each other. Community organisations insist on a woman's choice. They will support them to realise their choice. Being a full time mother is a profession as with any other type of economic activity. The time women spend with their family can be counted. Women who choose to stay at home need to receive compensation for their work (Waring 1988; Sen 1995).

## **Conclusion**

-Community organisations are not preoccupied with the improvement of refugee women's socio-economic status. They are support agencies for their social integration and are counsellors. They can orientate those women who want to work to career services and to employment agencies.

-Community organisations do not impose on women their empowerment model. They respect the women's choices to determine what they want to achieve.

- If ethnic organisations are preoccupied by the cultural and ethnic identity of the women, the women will continue to remain as they were back home (housekeeper, mother and wife).

- Religious organisations are focussed on inter-religious dialogue to bring people of different religions together and to learn English as an instrument of social cohesion.

- Refugee and ethnic women suffer from racism and discrimination in society and the way the Muslim women dress poses problems to other ethnic different women, but they are proud to be Muslim and to keep their style. People need to accept each other's culture.

Community organisations can support those women to overcome those barriers, by building ethnic inter-relations, educating New Zealand employers to give refugees a chance to sell their skills, lobbying for those refugee and ethnic women in local and central government agencies and parliament. Ethnic women need childcare to support them getting into paid jobs, but childcare needs to be flexible according to the women's working hours. As those women are newly arrived in this society, their absence from the family in order to hold a job can reduce family ties and engender divorce and ethnic women will suffer again. These community organisations are focused on supporting women according to their mission statement. The empowerment of the refugee women through the improvement of their socio-economic status remains women's own decision and not that of outsider's (Smith 1999).

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## **Chapter eight**

# **Conclusions and Recommendations**

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### **Introduction**

It is New Zealand's obligation to accept 750 refugees annually under the 1967 United Nations Convention of which New Zealand is signatory. Therefore, the refugee population is increasing each year and sustainable solutions need to be found at the grassroots level to stop the plight of refugees by instituting peace, fighting against corruption, and supporting economic, social and cultural development in the refugee countries of origin such as Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Djibouti, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. If this is not done, refugee crisis will remain a global problem. Refugee resettlement needs to be a continuous process, as different theories examined have shown. Accepting refugees is one issue, helping them to become full citizens, is another. This thesis set out to study refugee women's integration into the Waikato region society. Refugees were described in Chapter two which also distinguished refugees from other kinds of migrants. They require more support for their integration, as they have survived harsh conditions before their resettlement in New Zealand.

### **Academic framing of my research**

There is no successful integration model. Theories proposed focus on ethnic relations and seek to build a society where social justice is celebrated and racism is abolished, i.e., where multiculturalism is celebrated. On that basis, as well as on the basis of my own experience, I chose four perspectives to form the theoretical framework in chapter three that defines the kind of integration, ethnic relations and socio-economic needs of refugee women. These require a post colonial

perspective to deconstruct colonial notions of ethnicity and gender relations. Since this thesis focuses on women, gendered analysis is also essential to reach social justice. My work being grounded in personal experiences, as well as in statistical data (even though the samples frame itself is small) I also included Bhaskar's critical realism theories.

The theories chosen underline that integration is a complex activity that needs to be grass roots driven, as is demonstrated by the research analysis [see chapters 5 and 7] and that must incorporate more than just financial autonomy. This is all the truer because most refugees had traumatic experiences before and while waiting for resettlement.

These theories led to the use of specific qualitative methodologies, described in chapter four to answer the research questions raised by the problems faced by the refugee women and their need to be integrated. Quantitative data were obtained from census data purchased from Statistics New Zealand and clients' data from Work and Income [see chapter six]. These data have given us a snapshot of the different ethnic populations, but did not focus on the problems faced by refugee women, nor on their integration into the labour force. Different qualitative tools have been used to better understand these statistics. I have conducted only a limited number of individual interviews, focus groups and participant observation to understand the challenges those women are facing in New Zealand. Because of different problems affecting the lives of refugee women, prior to their arrival in New Zealand, refugee women need support from diverse community organisations to improve their life in New Zealand. This thesis will help those community organisations determine the women's needs and hence evaluate existing solutions and provisions.

What are the problems refugee women face in the Waikato and to what extent are community organisations helping to overcome these problems and improve their socio-economic status? This question has been answered in diverse ways. Building ethnic, refugee and gender relations, the theme of this thesis, was examined through the role of community organisations in improving refugee ethnic women's socio-economic status in the Waikato. Do community

organisations help refugee ethnic women to be in the labour force or do they just support them in their empowerment process?

### **Problems faced by the refugee women in the Waikato**

New Zealand women occupy a different position in the society than in the refugees' country of origin. They have a dominant role. Some refugee women accept this but many refugee men still see themselves as head of the family, the one who has the job and must support the family. This can lead to tensions in the family if the men are not working. Refugee men need to get a job upon their arrival in New Zealand. Therefore, they need to be placed in a training centre or in different jobs that can help them to secure their patriarchal role in the family.

Refugee women have diverse experiences. Their resettlement needs to be multiform, multicultural and multi-ethnic. Qualified refugee women can join the workforce, while others can still work to achieve their social integration. The analysis of different socio economic indicators of the integration of the Africans and of other ethnic populations shows that these African refugees are not well integrated in the Waikato region. Social development policies need to implement specific programmes that will help the integration of the minority ethnic populations, such as Africans, Asians, Maori and Pacific Islanders. The lack of integration of the African and minority populations in the Waikato is an important issue.

Their life style, their relations with other ethnic groups determines the integration or the exclusion of the refugee women. Refugee women may want to get into paid jobs but there are many barriers such as lack of education and /or mobility, discrimination, racism and cultural barriers that make the adjustment difficult.

### **Community organisations' role in supporting refugee women**

Community organisations can support these women to overcome barriers, by building ethnic inter-relations, educating New Zealand employers to give refugees a chance to sell their skills, lobbying for those refugee and ethnic women in local

and central government agencies and parliament. Because refugee groups are not large, they do not rate very highly with the government and are overlooked. Insufficient funds are allocated for their needs which do not allow community organisations to support refugees. Europeans, the dominant ethnic group and diverse community organisations groups have an important role to play in the integration and the empowerment of the refugee women and their families.

Community organisations play an important role in the resettlement of refugee women but are not focused in improving refugee women's socio-economic status by getting them into paid jobs. It is a woman's choice to decide whether or not she can join the labour force. Community organisations are support agencies and counsellors to the integration of the refugee women. For women who want to work, they send these women to other organisations that will advise the women as to which careers they are best suited for and help them apply for jobs. Further, they can guide them to a job.

Community organisations do not impose on women. They respect the women's choices so that the women determine what they want to achieve and not the organisation. Ethnic organisations are preoccupied by the cultural and ethnic identity of the women. The women will continue to socialise as if they were back home as a housekeeper, mother and wife. Religious organisations are focused on an inter-religious dialogue to bring people of different religions together and to learn English as an instrument of social cohesion

Limited funding handicaps the work of community organisations at grassroots level and prevents them from getting refugee women to participate in the different projects that these organisations make for the women. Refugee women feel like strangers in their new country. The support obtained from different agencies could make the resettlement easier. These refugee women still find many differences between their home country and the new country. They have limited skills that handicap their possibilities of being in paid jobs.

## Recommendations

Refugee women need to obtain a vibrant future in New Zealand by getting paid jobs. The creation of community paid job opportunities may be a key issue that can help them gain some financial autonomy while they build up skills to participate in the general labour force. They can gain financial autonomy if they use their income in an adequate way, increasing savings or investing to start a business. They will need support from different agencies: families, central and local government agencies and different community organisations. This research based on the theories described earlier and on the analysis of the experiences refugee women shared with me offers the following recommendations to ensure their integration into the Waikato's society:

1. Increasing funding by different donors to sustain community organisations' activities will provide more supports for refugee women from the community organisations.
2. Developing collaboration between organisations can help them reduce their administration costs (rent, phones, electricity....).
3. Locating them (with the help of local and central government) in a single building will make diverse community organisations more accessible to the women (one trip will result in access to several organisations).
4. Carrying out regular accountability and evaluation of community organisation activities and achievement by an independent body, community organisations can help more refugee women.
5. By networking, different organisations can avoid multiplication of the same services and better support refugee women to obtain paid jobs.

6. Some preparation tasks could be better done by former refugees living in New Zealand, in the resettlement camp or country prior to coming to New Zealand: giving the selected quota refugees information about New Zealand such as New Zealand culture, the position of Maori people, the Treaty of Waitangi, job situation, New Zealand law, what different localities have to offer, having refugee medical check done, a full understanding of refugee expectation of their resettlement and the organisations that can support them. This could reduce the use of the Mangere Reception Centre by the quota refugees.
  
7. Census data need to describe clearly the situation of refugees for the formulation of a refugee ethnic policy.
  
8. This thesis has shown other areas that researchers can investigate:
  - Impact of refugee status on women's life and maternal health,
  - Impact of wasted time by refugee women in the refugee settlement camps on their empowerment,
  - Refugee fertility and life expectancy in the receiving countries,
  - De(re)construction of integration policy and ethnic refugee and gender relations in New Zealand,
  - Sustainable mechanisms to support refugee ethnic women to get into the labour force or to further their education.

A number of difficulties have limited me in carrying out this research, especially in the fieldwork part such as time, family tasks and English. I have managed to overcome these difficulties and worked to produce this thesis. Quantitative data used were related to different ethnic populations not typically to the refugee. These recommendations if applied by different governmental and non governmental agencies can help refugee women to become empowered, employed and more successful, so they can contribute to the development of the Waikato region and of New Zealand.

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# Appendices

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## **Appendix I: Details on census data purchased from Statistics New Zealand population and dwellings**

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Note: How the variables are defined are included at the end.

### **Variables from Statistics New Zealand Censuses of Population and Dwellings**

1. Age group
2. Region of usual residence
3. Gender
4. Ethnicity
5. Birth place
6. Labour force
7. Education level
8. Language spoken
9. Personal income level
10. Income source
11. Dependent children in the family
12. Year
13. Youngest child in the family

**If number in the tables below become too small, drop the age group variable for the years affected.**

**Table 1:** age group x gender x ethnicity x birth place x regions x year

**Table 2:** age group x gender x ethnicity x birth place x regions x Labour force x year (15-59 years)

**Table 3:** age group x gender x ethnicity x birth place x regions x Education level x year (15+ years)

**Table 4:** age group x gender x ethnicity x birth place x regions x source of income x year (15+ years)

**Table 5:** age group x gender x ethnicity x birth place x regions x language spoken x year (1996, 2001)

**Table 6:** age group x gender x ethnicity x birth place x regions x personal income level x year (15+ years)

## Family Data – Linking individual characteristics of the occupier of the household to the family

**Table 7:** ethnicity of occupier x birth place of occupier x regions x number of dependent children x year

**Table 8:** ethnicity of occupier x birth place of occupier x regions x youngest child in family x year

### Variables Required

#### 1. Age group

0-9 years

10-19 years

20-29 years

30-39 years

40-49 years

50-59 years

60+ years

Total

*Note: Where tables are 15+ use 15-19 yrs*

#### 2. Gender

Male

Female

Total

#### 3. Ethnic group

European

1 European Ethnic Group

Maori

2 Maori Ethnic Group

Pacific

3 Pacific Island Ethnic Group

Asian

4 Asian Ethnic Groups

Not Specified

- 7 Response Unidentifiable
- 8 Response Outside the Scope
- 9 Not Stated

Other

(Remaining People)

**4. Labour force**

Full time employed

Part time employed

Not in Labour force

Not specified

Total

**5. Income source**

Sickness+Invalids

Salary+Wage

Other Incomes

Not Defined

Total

**6. Number of Dependent children**

0

1-2

3-4

5+

Not Known

Total

**7. Year**

1986

1991

1996

2001

**8. Region of usual residence**

Waikato

011 Thames Coromandel District  
012 Hauraki District  
013 Waikato District  
015 Matamata Piako District  
016 Hamilton City  
017 Waipa District  
018 Otorohanga District  
019 South Waikato District  
020 Waitomo District

## Appendix II: Researcher's letter to Potential Participants

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Date:25/09/2002

To Researcher's letter to Potential Participants

Re: Research project on "Ethnic Women in the Waikato: analysis of their socio-economic status".

I am a student at the University of Waikato, enrolled for the Degree of Masters of Social Sciences, in the Department of Geography. I am undertaking a research project that aims to analyse in which stage of the social development are located different ethnic women groups and what particular policy can be taken for each particular stage in order to avoid perturbation in the families' structures and welfare of the children.

This research will be based on focus groups and individual interviews. A literature review is another part of the project. The information you will give will be recorded on audio, audio-visual tape to keep accuracy of the information and also when the study will be completed, the materials will be used to evaluate the result of the study in the dissemination seminar. The final report and the materials used will also be given to your institution.

The interviews are anonymous, but I will need some identification (name, address, telephone) in case I need a further verification of the information collected. I would be much obliged if you would agree to participate in this study. If you decide to participate in an interview or in focus group discussions, I will arrange an interview with you. With your permission, the interview and the focus groups will be taped to keep the accuracy of the information.

All data collected and processed during the research will be kept strictly confidential. Your identification characteristics will not be published in any reports.

I solicit and hope your collaboration in the success of the research. I will contact you again to know about your decision in the research. If you freely consent to participate in the study, I will contact you as soon possible. In case you may want to know more about the study, you can contact me at 07-8535096 or my supervisor Dr Anne-Marie d’Hauteserre at 07-8384466 Ext 8270 (or email [adhautes@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:adhautes@waikato.ac.nz)).

I hope to hear from you,  
Sincerely yours,

Marie-Claire Lepina

## Appendix III: Consent Form

<p>Department of Geography Te Wāhanga Aro Whenua Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences University of Waikato Private Bag 3105 Hamilton, New Zealand Marie-Claire Lepina Mwabiere Telephone: 07- 8535 096</p>	<p>Telephone: +64-7-838-4046 Facsimile: +64-7-838-4633 email: <a href="mailto:ml40@waikato.ac.nz">ml40@waikato.ac.nz</a>  <a href="http://www.waikato.ac.nz/wfass/subjects/geography">http://www.waikato.ac.nz/wfass/subjects/geography</a></p>	 <p><b>The University of Waikato</b> Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato</p>
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### CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate in this “*Ethnic Women in the Waikato: analysis of their socio-economic status*”. The purpose of the study is to identify in which stage of the social development is located each ethnic women group and what policy can be taken for each particular stage in order to avoid perturbation in the families’ structures and welfare of the children. A report summarising the findings of the study will be submitted to the Geography Department and to the Population Studies Centre, University of Waikato, at the end of the project.

I understand that taking part in the study is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time and to decline to answer any individual questions in the study.

I understand that my participation in this study is confidential. No material, which could identify me, can be used in any reports on the research.

I consent to my interview being audio-taped yes/no

I consent to my discussion in the focus group being audio taped yes/no

“I agree to participate in this interview and acknowledge receipt of a copy of this consent form”

Participant’s signature:

Researcher’s Signature:

Date:

This project has been approved by the University of Waikato Human Research Ethics Committee on –20/05/2002-----

## Appendix IV: Profile of Community Organisations

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Name of your Organisation.....

Contact phone number:

Email .....

### I. Organisation description

1. When was your organisation formed?

2. What is your organisation's mission statement? What are?

-Your main realisations

-Your main expense in percentage

- Give an estimation of your annual expense (an estimation range)

- Rent (percentage of rent in total expenses)

- Expense for women support (in percentage of total expenses)

- Salaries and administration (in percentage of total expense)

3. a. How many people are working in your organisation?

- Staff

- Volunteers

- Beneficiaries

- What are their different nationalities?

b. Tell us about the place and space occupied by your organisation?

c. Would you complete this table about people involved in your organisation by ethnic groups and education level?

Categories	European			Maori			Pacific			Asian/ African		
Employed By education level												
Doctors												
Masters												
High school certificate												
Total												
Volunteers By education level												
Doctors												
Bachelors												
High school certificate												
Total												
Contractual/ Consultants By education												
Doctors/ Masters/ Bachelor and High school Certificate												
Total												

## II. Improving women socio-economic status?

4. How are you helping the women in particular your organisation?
5. How do you think women can achieve their socio-economic status in your organisation?
6. What are the advantages and consequences for women becoming autonomous for your organisation?
9. Is the woman empowerment model used in your organisation a community based one? How do you know?

## III. Collaboration

10. a. What other organisations collaborate with yours?
  - b. If, there is not one, why have you not linked your organisation to the other community organisations? (Such as religious and other community groups that people (women) are likely to have joined
11. What are the main realisations done by your organisation in the last 12 months?
14. Who are your main sponsors?

## **Appendix V: Focus group/ Individual interview guidelines**

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Introduce yourself

What is your social status, Mother of ....., Married....., Number of children, ethnic background (country of origin)?

### 1. Ethnic women label

- What did you know about,
- Ethnic women, who are they?
- What are different organisations helping those ethnic women? Name different organisations you know
- Did your particular organisation participate in the resettlement of the ethnic women, in which ways?
- How do you think about the future of the Ethnic women, especially the Black African women in the Waikato?
- According to your knowledge, from which country did those Ethnic Women come from?
- What did you know about the multicultural and ethnic policy in New Zealand?

### 2. Problems faced in Waikato at home, in the labour force and in the public place:

- a) By all Ethnic Women
- b) By the African Women

What are different problems women faced in New Zealand? Will those problems affect the African women and other ethnic women's integration in the Waikato?

### 3. Women in the labour force:

What are different problems they are facing to enter into the labour force, to further their education? What kind of support can be offered to the women in order to avoid family perturbations and improve their socio-economic status?

### 4. Women's equality

What do you understand about women equality? How can women achieve this equality?

#### 5. Domestic Violence

What did you know about domestic violence in a relationship? How does it affect the life of women, their socio-economic status? How can ethnic women deal with this issue?

#### 6. Life cycle of boys and girls, socialisation process

What is according to you the life cycle of a girl and boy? Until what age can they be having?

- Education
- Labour force
- Marriage
- Childbearing
- Family support

#### 7. Differences between women status in New Zealand and other ethnic country

What are the differences according to you between Africa, Asia, Europe, America, Pacific region and New Zealand in the women socio-economic status?

#### 8. Sustaining the role of some ethnic community organisations

What did you know about Shama “Hamilton Ethnic Women Centre”, “Waikato Ethnic Council “WEC”, RMS “Refugees and Migrants Services, African Community in the Waikato “ACW”? What must be the role of those organisations in improving women socio-economic status?

#### 9. Future of the ethnic women

What are different stages those ethnic organisations and yours can follow in aim to achieve the full integration of the ethnic women in the Waikato?

#### 10. Other suggestions

## **Appendix VI: Ethnic Integration approaches**

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### **Assimilationist approach**

Through this model, interviewees agree that immigrants and refugees who come to New Zealand need to learn to live like New Zealanders. They need to adjust to New Zealand life and not the New Zealanders to adjust to their life. They must follow the way the kiwis are living. They need to speak English like us, dress up like us and also follow the law in this country. We need to avoid divisions among people and making separation in the system, to emphasize those differences. Ethnic is something that creates unity among people. For example the language, people are different, but one thing can bring us together is the English language.

Everyone needs to learn and speak English to avoid divisions. The government policy must focus to create social cohesion with no social division. There is a ministry for Indigenous affairs, as the result of the treaty, but we cannot make ministry for Pacific Affairs, Maori Affairs, Asian Affairs, African Affairs and ethnic Affairs.

One of the interviewee told me: “Marie-Claire, suppose that I decide to go to live in the Congo or to another country around the world, I will eat the local food, I will dress up like them. I will not ask the Congolese people to follow my example. Why those people who come to New Zealand want us New Zealanders to learn about their culture, they do not like our culture.....I think people who live here for long time are kiwi, not ethnic. I come in New Zealand since I was 18 years old. Now, I am in my sixties, they still considered me as an ethnic woman. My children were born here; they went to school here, my grandchildren also”(Nkong).

### **Integrationist approach**

Participants and interviewees who sustain this model want that refugees and immigrants who live in New Zealand must keep their culture, their identity; they cannot change their identity to be like the kiwis. They are what they want to be. They need to keep those identities for the next generation. That is created cultural richness in the country and multicultural society.

“I am in New Zealand for 25 years; I am not considered myself like a New Zealander. My way of living is very different; I still live like the Tongan. I am a Tongan, not a New Zealander..... Consider yourself as a Tongan New Zealander, because you have in New Zealand for many years.”(Kuria).

However, here is another approach, “All New Zealanders”. Hamilton city councillors have signed not to separatism. “New Zealand is heading down a dangerous path. We are all New Zealanders irrespective of where and when we came” (Hamilton Press, Wednesday, July 30, 2003, P.).

### **Treaty of Waitangi and ethnic policy approach**

By implementing and understanding very well all the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, participants argue that the Treaty of Waitangi traces the ethnic policy in New Zealand. “Everybody is equal; we want to build this country with respect and acceptance of the differences between people and the respect of each other culture. As you notice, New Zealand is at the same time “monocultural society” where dominates the European culture and “a multi-ethnic country” with many ethnic groups living apart from each others. This country needs to build ethnic and race relations within the community with the support Maori, the Tangata Whanua, the Indigenous people”(Nalia).

...I think the New Zealand people must change its attitudes to welcome diversities and accept differences; the current life in the workforce, school must be flexible and opened to accept differences..... As Maori, “We are the ethnic people of this country, the Indigenous people. We are the Tangata Whanua of this land. People who come from Africa, Asia and Pacific Islands are ethnic because they carried with them their cultural values. According to the Treaty, immigration and refugees must be welcomed by the Maori people. Having Maori immigration officer, the Treaty acknowledged and practiced by everybody can help in the successful resettlement process of the refugee and immigrants. (Nicole).

## **Appendix VII: Ethnic refugee women empowerment models**

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### **Model I: Full time wife, mother and housewife**

.....In New Zealand, most women in our day expect to be in the labour force, that was very different a hundred years ago, when women were happy to be at home. The way life operates in New Zealand is very different. Can you expect after 5 years to jump in the labour force, and become a modern New Zealand mother? What are the expectations of the ethnic and refugee women? (Richard).

### **Model II: Full time mother and housewife**

.....Women can choose to work or to stay at home. If in the past, in my home country I have been working, in New Zealand I must continue the same way of living. If in my country, I have stayed at home looking after my children, in New Zealand I can continue to stay at home. To enter the labour force in New Zealand you need childcare that is costly. In my country, we are not used to give our children to foreigners; it was a member of my family, a relative who cared for my children (Carine). In New Zealand we are not comfortable entrusting our children to strangers. I must stay at home looking after them until they can go to school. Those women will not enter the labour force early (Lidia).

### **Model III: Full time community worker, support person “school, language nest”**

.....: I do not know in the case of your country. I am a Pacific Islander, married to a European; my children's colour looks like that of other European children in the Kindergarten. There is not much difference with others. In Wellington, we used to support other ethnic, Pacific Islander Communities. There was the case of a Somali woman. I was helping her to settle her son in the Kindergarten The first day when we went there, the boy looked around and exclaimed: ‘there is not Somali boy here, people are different from me’. This woman stayed with me until she found him to be comfortable in the Kindergarten. We set up the Pacific Nest (Samoan, Tongan....) to help those women to bring their children to school and spend some time with them. I wonder if it cannot be the case for other ethnic groups to set up a Nest for the Cambodian, Somali, or African to support those women be part of the school. Having someone similar in the school can make a difference for the children. To come to the women centres, they need women like them to support them. Other New Zealand women must give support to help those women who are new to New Zealand until they feel comfortable in the new environment (Stela).

..... The children's nest is a start for women to have a start in the new environment. There are mostly Europeans, they are not like us, the best think is to start the Kohanga Reo, Whangani, there are other options for ethnic communities.

In Wellington, people who are working in the community organisations are closer to each other than in Hamilton where people are not open. You do not know what other organisations are doing and you can not support others. I think if people in the community sector change their attitudes, have the common goal of supporting ethnic women, things can move faster in the Waikato (Stela).

#### **Model IV: Full time indoor social person**

...Ethnic women cannot come out until they are confident with the new environment and encouraged to go out. Then, they can come out. Their culture is very different and their life style is very different. May be when you stay longer in a place, you can have your life transformed but slowly if only you want it to change (Kazadi).

...Women are the motor of the family. Their absence in the family can change many things. Children can become parentless, motherless and fatherless. Women in developing countries in Asia, Africa, the Pacific region and Latin America are working very hard to generate income in order to send their children to study and to travel overseas. In Congo, when women are in the labour force or the informal sector, there are street children who do not want to live with their family because the mother or father is not at home. What is the importance of the economic status if it will destroy the family? How to empower women without disturbing the family life and the education of the next generation? ( Zoti)

The empowerment of women is different and appropriated for the different cultures. Maori women empowerment is part of their culture. Each woman has her own definition of empowerment according to her culture, education, background, and government policy. May be for the immigrant women, giving children better education is part of their empowerment, being full time mother, or be in the labour force. Study can also be part of their empowerment model. I do not want people who impose their ideas on what is empowerment as each person has her own empowerment model that is defined by your culture, background in some country by the government. I do not want to give to other people the empowerment, which say that to be empowered you must be educated, going to work (Kafisa).

#### **Model V: Safe environment, stop domestic violence**

Another model of empowerment of women is to stop domestic violence, create safer environments for women. In our Pacific Islander Community, the husband often abuses women. Domestic violence is very high in Pacific Islands families. These women accepted to live in these hard conditions to help children. In Auckland we run education programme in the Pacific Islander organisation to stop domestic violence in the Samoan, Tongan, and Cook Islanders families. The reaction of men was really harsh because your organisation is destroying our family. For women all around the world there are issues that must redressed for women without distinction of their race, culture, ethnicity, country of origin? Women rights and safety are very important to achieve before improving their socio-economic status( Chantal).

I think the length of time people lived in place makes a difference on the different attitudes, backgrounds and different ways of operating. People have been breaking the law because they were not aware of the New Zealand law. There is a way of unify people, by accepting the law and asking everybody to follow what the law is saying. Coming to New Zealand people must be aware on what is going on, they must follow the New Zealand law. The issue is how to integrate the law in the life of those ethnic people. Someone has talked about the length of time people have stayed here and I think it makes much difference (Kilari).

#### **Model VI: Full time employee in the labour force**

Communication has an impact in the workforce. Because those people before they come to New Zealand have their own way of socialisation, they have to use (Lidia).

We are concerned about the English for the ethnic people, but there is not enough education in the workforce for people who can encourage it, making the environment more flexible to people with different attitudes (Pascal).

#### **Model VII: public place empowerment**

New Zealand has a lot to offer to other countries, such as our environment. Even I have lived in this country for twenty-five years; I am not still a New Zealander (Chantal).

Community organisations need also to participate in an education campaign for New Zealand employers who need to change their attitude against refugee and other ethnic women. They do not trust refugees even with their education and career. They are afraid to employ them. Another role of community organisations is to help those refugee women to set up their own businesses and become self employed. In this area, these refugee women will be networked in the community to help to succeed in their business courses (Natasha).

Community organisations can help ethnic women and their families to get jobs in order to gain New Zealand experience. Those hard jobs as those refugee mentioned can disturb their health and they may become invalids. Refugees and their families as New Zealand as signed for their resettlement and those refugees will become Citizens and they must have equal opportunity as other New Zealanders. They will access benefit, education, health system, employment, housing without any discrimination, in practice they are and efforts need to put in place to put in place for those refugees to be resettled and lived in New Zealand for the rest of their life, otherwise, those refugee women and their families will

migrate to another country such as Australia, Canada, United Kingdom... where they will face also racism and their economic situation will be better (Kazanga).

Refugee women themselves need to express their intention of getting into paid job, as another refugee women told one participant in the focus III, “you see how tired, I am with those small children. I have to wake up each morning clean make breakfast for the children who are going to school, dress them up and send them to school. When I am back home, I start cleaning the house, washing clothes and dishwashing. By the time, I will finish, it will be 12.30, just time to send my youngest toddler to the Kindergarten, When I came back I cook and It is ready 3pm and all the children are back home, I am serving them and clean up their mess. While they are doing their homework, I am cooking dinner. By the time they finished their homework, I am looking after my youngest child. When I finish with my youngest child, I serve all my family and clean the house. I have a lot to do at home, I will not be able to work outside the home. As you know back home when women are working, they have support from the family, they have employ a house worker, who cares for the home and not the women. May I can work when all my children will be at school and bigger. As I like many children, I will be at home with my children and when my husband will join us, he can go to work and I will be at home. When both parents are working, it is very stressful for the all family. I will stay at home with my children”( Flora).

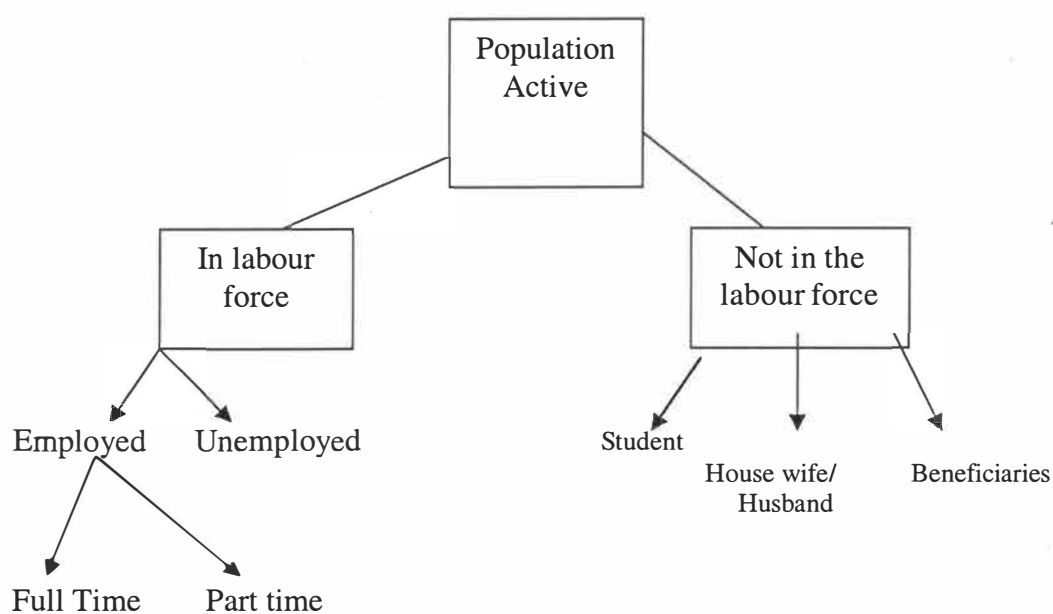
## Appendix VIII: Categories of labour participation

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Are as follows in the diagram:

- Not in the labour force
- In the Labour force

### Diagram of the labour force participation



Source Lepina 2002: 16

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