

Facilitating migrant settlement; strategies for education

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Abstract

Migration is a traumatic experience for many people; however, education of prospective migrants and organisations involved in assisting and advising migrants may mitigate negative consequences. Appropriate preparation, pre and post migration, could buffer the possible negative impact of migration and assist in settlement. This paper reports findings from a study of the impact of migration on women from the United Kingdom (UK) and Eire (N=154) (the "invisible migrants") now living in Western Australia (W.A.). Bowlby's grieving process was used as a theoretical framework to explore grief reactions to leaving the homeland (homesickness), exposure to a new culture and how transition through the process facilitates re-invention of the self and settlement. Crucial to successful settlement was the nature of strategies the women used to negotiate the grieving process. Participants who successfully settled and re-invented themselves engaged in more social, cultural and country activities - those participants who were less successful in this endeavour tended toward more solitary strategies. The study has social implications for the education of future migrants, migrant organisations and the general community since the awareness of, and encouragement and utilization of appropriate strategies could reduce the period of adjustment, enhance the ability to survive in the new country/culture and foster a sense of belonging to the new place.

Keywords

Migration,

Strategies,

New identity

Literature review

Bennet, Rigby and Booshoff (1997) and Luthke and Cropley (1990) observe that the process of migration is complex, yet, some people do not prepare adequately for this major life event and as a result possess a vague conception of the psychological impact. Some migrants, however, may not have the resources to develop the necessary coping strategies to buffer the impact of the migration process and the possible psychological stress involved. As a consequence, some migrants may not be able to come to terms with the massive disruption to their lives. As a result of exposure to a different, and often diverse ways of life, the person

must make significant changes to accommodate this newness, thus "build a psychological bridge between his present and past lives" (Schneller, 1981 p. 95).

Lee (1994) and Lonner and Dinnel (1999) propose that an adequate social system will reduce the psychological distress associated with such a significant life event. To moderate the possible immediate and long-term problems associated with relocation Fried (1962; 76), Hertz (1988), Lee (1994) and Ward (2001) advocate a positive commitment to preparation for the move. Thus, appropriate strategies could assist the person to build a bridge between his or her "old" identity and nurture a "new" identity to enable settlement and adaptation to the new life and new country. It is recognized that all newcomers bring with them their culture, code of living, code of conduct and life experiences: these things cannot be erased in the instant the decision is taken to move (Eitinger, 1981). Indeed, these intrinsic parts of a person's identity (Sugarman, 1986) may be relied upon in times of stress to give security and comfort, therefore, could be judged as valuable coping strategies.

Bowlby's (1969) grieving process has been used previously to explain the grief reaction to leaving the homeland (Arredondo-Dowd, 1981; Schneller, 1981; Ward, 2001) and reaction to multiple loss; this is, loss of family, community, culture, language, values and beliefs (Garza-Guerrero, 1974). Homesickness follows the path of the grieving process: From numbing, yearning and pining, disorganisation and despair, to the fourth and final stage of reorganisation. The final stage of resolution brings hope for a new beginning, a time to foster and build new relationships to replace those left in the homeland; in essence a time to build a new identity to enable settlement in the new place (Ward, 2001). This paper explores which strategies may be more or less efficacious in helping women through this process.

Richardson (1974) observes, it is possible to learn a great deal about a country by reading books, newspapers, watching films, and personal communication, however these activities may not present a full or true picture of the new country as an inhabitant would see it. The present study investigated whether realistic (not idealised) pre-preparation does assist settlement, and thus help avoid the outcome of the migrant being "suspended between two lives" (Schneller, 1981, p. 95). Moreover, it investigated whether preparation strategies prior to, and following relocation, help to reduce the impact of exposure to a new and strange place, and as a result assist the individual to adapt and survive in the new country.

Gaylord and Symons (1986) and McCollum (1990) propose that when families relocate it is the women who must make the major adjustments, as the established and essential social support framework will not be readily available for her, or her family, in the new place. Thus, to replace these essential social networks, the woman must generate strategies to rebuild a social framework, and in doing so the woman ultimately re-invents herself. Essentially, identity gives sense to the community in which a person lives, thus investing a sense of belonging (Erikson, 1980). Consequently, if a challenge to a person's identity should occur (in this case multiple loss as a result of migration) the person might be unable to make the necessary adjustments, therefore, a crisis situation is possible and the identity will be under threat (Whitbourne & Weinstock, 1979).

This present study explores the impact of migration on women migrants from English-speaking background; namely, the UK and Eire now living in WA. Although migrants from the UK and Eire continue to make a major contribution to the population of Australia - second only to New Zealand (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001), in recent years they have attracted scant research, and according to Madden and Young (1993) have become the "most invisible" group of migrants. This present study addresses this gap by examining the impact of migration on these women from the UK and Eire to determine the adaptations or strategies these women might use to try to adjust to the process of migration.

Method

This paper presents a part of a doctoral dissertation, which investigated the reaction of women from the UK and Eire who relocate to Australia and the possible physical and psychological impact of migration, and grief reaction to the perception of multiple loss (that is, loss of family, community and cultural aspects of the homeland), impact on childrearing, sense of belonging to the new country, impact on identity and re-invention of the self.

The design incorporated a cross-sectional study in a naturalistic setting - both qualitative (semi-structured interview) and quantitative (questionnaire) approaches were used to elicit women's perception of and feelings about the impact of migration. Quantitative data were collected using a 10-part questionnaire that addressed the many variables associated with the process of migration, settlement in the new country and the possible impact on women's health. These scales included questions on homesickness, loneliness, social support, preparation for migration strategies, and psychological distress. Presented in this paper are the results of the qualitative data (interviews) and items in the questionnaire related to demographic data and items related to pre and post migration strategies. To ensure confidentiality a four digit number was allocated to each participant who was interviewed and this number is used when quotes are presented. When the four digits are followed by the letter "Q" this identifies a participants response to an open-item within the questionnaire only.

Interview questions for use with a subset of the women surveyed were devised following review of the literature related to the experience of migration and homesickness. Data gathered from the interviews were managed and coded by using the Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theory Building (NUDh IST 4) a software package that can aid in the analysis of qualitative data (Richards & Richards 1994; Rouse & Dick 1995). Coded also were the strategies used, pre and post migration, to assist in the migration and settlement process. Steps were taken to ascertain reliability of the coding: Firstly, the nodes were crosschecked to ensure that duplication and miscoding had not occurred; and, secondly, an independent coder reviewed the codes.

Sample

Participants were recruited using a variety of methods, including distribution of a flyer outlining the study to local libraries, shopping centres and universities. A small feature was placed in community newspapers and the researcher was interviewed about the study by a local radio station. One local hospital agreed to contact women, born in the UK or Eire, who had birthed at the hospital within the previous two years. Women were included if they met the selection criteria: Firstly, that the participant was born and grew up in the UK or Eire, and secondly, that she had children (either, she may have had her first child in Australia, or brought children with her or added to the family following migration). If a participant met the criteria a questionnaire was sent to her with a return envelope. If a volunteer did not meet the criteria, an explanation was given to her and she was thanked for expressing interest. Of the 209 questionnaires distributed, 170 were returned, making a return rate of 81%. Of the returned questionnaires, 16 were excluded either because they were incomplete or because the woman was very young when she migrated. Thus, in total, 154 questionnaires were accepted for the study - a return rate of 73.6%. Participants indicated on the questionnaire if they agreed to be interviewed and of the 154 participants, 93 (60.3%) agreed to be interviewed. The questionnaires were allocated into one of seven sub-groups according to the length of time the participant had resided in Australia (see Table 1).

Table 1

Number of participants within each of the seven sub-groups depending on the number of years they had resided in Australia and number selected for interview from each sub group.

SUB-GROUP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
Years of residency	Up to 5 yrs	6 to 10 yrs	11 to 15 yrs	16 to 20 yrs	21 to 25 yrs	26 to 30 yrs	31 & over 35 yrs	
n=	33	24	14	21	23	17	22	154
Selected for interview	9	5	5	6	5	5	5	40

A review of the responses to both the scales and open items within the questionnaires gave the impression that participants were positive toward the process of migration. This review assisted in the selection of five participants within each of the seven sub-groups and provided a balanced perspective (negative and positive) on the experience of migration.

Those participants who were selected for interview were contacted and a mutually agreeable time, date and venue was arranged. Only two women who originally agreed to be interviewed later declined stating that they did not want to relive the experience of migration. Another two participants were selected in their place. All ethical procedures were preserved, participation in the study was on a voluntary basis and confidentiality was maintained. Interviews took place in an environment selected by the participant - either their home or workplace. The researcher conducted all the interviews and each participant was interviewed once only. Interviews took approximately 45 – 60 minutes and all were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. The researcher was aware that recounting migration experiences might cause distress to some of the participants, therefore it was emphasised that the participant could stop the interview at any time.

Findings

As Table 1 shows the number of years the participants had resided in Australia from less than one year up to and over 35 years. The longest time a participant had resided in WA was 48 years. Ages ranged from 25 to 84 years ($M = 48.4$, $SD 12.12$). There was a cluster of participants between the ages of 35 to 54 years ($n=89$, 57.3%). This distribution reflects the fact that 83 (54%) of the total number of participants have resided in Australia for at least 20 years, and up to 35+ years.

A multiple response question within the questionnaire asked the participants to identify pre-migration strategies that helped them to settle. Results showed that, overall, a high

proportion of all ($N=154$) participants 89% ($n=138$) had undertaken some form of preparation prior to migration to assist in settlement while 17 participants (11%) did not undertake any pre-migration strategies. Of the 40 women who were interviewed, 87.5% ($n=35$) used preparation strategies and five participants (12.5%) mentioned that they did not prepare for migration.

Data from all participants in the study ($N=154$) in relation to *items within the questionnaire* showed that a high proportion (64%, $n=98$) read *books/newspapers* about Australia. Other strategies identified by the women included: *investigating employment opportunities* (55%, $n=84$); *investigating availability of housing and house prices* (45%, $n=69$); *studying maps* (40%, $n=31$), *watching videos* (28%, $n=43$). Forty-three (28%) had made *previous visits to Australia* (of these, 14 were from the interview group). The value of a previous visit to Australia assisted in the decision making process for this group of women, is indicated in the following quote:

"I came with friends on a one year working holiday and loved it! The climate, the beaches, the desert (I worked on a remote mine site for over six months). When I returned to the UK, I knew I wanted to come back" (1604Q).

Two items in particular, were included in the questionnaire; one related to the *number of mementos* the participants had brought with them and the other to the *type of mementos* (such as; pictures, books and furniture) of the homeland. Responses show that 88% of the total group had brought from the homeland some kind of memento. Seventeen participants (11%) did not have any articles about the house, 78 (55%) had a few items, 49 (25.8%) had many items and 19 (12%) had quite a few items. Responses indicate that; 126 (81.8%) brought photographs, 102 (66.2%) ornaments, 97 (63%) pictures, 88 (57.1%) books, 52 (33.8%) furniture, and 43 (27.9%) maps of their homeland. The following quotes from participants in the interview group illustrate how the arrival of their possessions made them feel better:

"When we opened up our worldly goods it was like Christmas - I remember that - did we really bring this - then we started to settle into the house" (2502);

"For us when our furniture and things turned up and it was so exciting opening the boxes like we'd never seen this stuff before and we had comfortable chairs to sit in and it made you really appreciate possessions" (8431).

Pre-migration strategies – Interview group

A pre-migration strategy frequently mentioned by 39% ($n=19$) of the women was treating migration as a *holiday* or *planning staying in Australia for a short time only* and then they would return to the homeland to live (although they did not see this as a strategy). Sixteen participants (39%) in this group mentioned setting a time limit of a two-year stay, treating the move as a trial or a holiday before returning to their country of origin. (Those migrants who relocated through the Australian "10 pound scheme" had to stay for two years or they had to repay the travel fees). The women in the interviews talked of using an assortment of strategies to assist in meeting people and making new friendships. Some strategies were personal, being *solitary* or private in nature, for example: writing letters/emails, keeping busy, seeking self-help, planning a holiday and reading books. Other strategies were more *socially* inclined and involved interacting with others in the community (i.e. other mothers, people) or meeting people via their children, and the children's activities and

school. Another strategy was gathering information related to the geography of the *country* and/or *culture*.

Solitary strategies

Table 2 shows the number and percentage of women who engaged in solitary or private strategies. Fourteen women (35%) wrote letters or emails, nine (23%) attended self- help groups, 15 (38%) planned a holiday back to the UK, 15 (38%) planned to stay in Australia for two years only and then return to the homeland, and six (15%) read books. Results show that over half of the women reported they *kept busy* (n=21, 53%) and, by doing so, utilised an assortment of activities such as: Crafts (knitting, pottery, lead lighting), decorating, baby-sitting clubs, organising events and gardening.

Social Strategies

The *social* type of strategies, which involved interacting with "others", are shown in Table 3. Of the women in the interview group, 19 (48%) sought employment, 15 (38%) telephoned home on a regular basis, 12 (30%) joined clubs (i.e. gym), 10 (25%) undertook education programmes, six (15%) mentioned sending photographs and/or videos to the relatives in the homeland, 21 (53%) were involved in activities with their children's school/playgroup, 18 (45%) were involved in activities with their own children, and 13 (33%) mentioned that they met other mothers usually through their involvement with school and playgroups. The children were an important factor as the means to meet other mothers, form friendships and be involved in activities. In the main, by being involved with their children, the women were able to access the community and meet people.

Table 2

Number and percentage of women in the interview group who undertook solitary activities as strategies for settlement

Solitary strategies			
No	%	Strategy	Description
14	35	<i>Wrote letters</i>	"I used to write and then you can write a bit more can't you? (1604)
		<i>emails</i>	"Now we make a point of connecting up to the email every fortnight and get on the chat line" (1816)
9	23	<i>Self-help groups</i>	"There was a psychiatric unit there and she was wonderful" (1516)
		<i>Planned a holiday</i>	"Postnatal professional support group" (9691)
15	38		"As long as I know I'm planning a holiday or my parents are coming on holiday I'm alright" (1058)
			"I think I definitely need to go home. I've got to have that at the back of my mind because if I've got no plans to go back and I don't

			know when I'm going back I would find it very difficult to manage " (4115)
6	15	<i>Read books</i>	"My worries disappeared when I read my books" (7836)
		<i>Kept busy</i>	"I read books all the time and withdraw from what is happening" (1126)
21	53		"I joined an aerobic class and did pottery" 1021)
		<i>Short stay</i>	"I did all my own knitting and made all my piccalilli" (1354)
			"So I wrote submissions and I did voluntary tutoring and I gave French lessons" (7131)
15	38		"I was planning just to come for 2 years" (5292)
			"This would be for 2 years, short term, and then back to Scotland" (6790)

Table 3

Number and percentage of women in the interview group who used social strategies to assist settlement.

No	%	Strategy	Description
19	48	<i>Employment</i>	"It gave me a sense of belonging. It brought more people into my life " (2462) "I felt it was more beneficial for me to go and work" (6790)
10	25	<i>Education</i>	"One of the good things about uni there are a lot of young kids there but there are people my age and older who are going through uni and one of the ladies I've become friends with" (5426)
12	30	<i>Joined clubs/</i>	"So join everything like Parents & Citizens and all that jazz. So I did" (2596)
15	38	<i>Telephone home</i>	"I joined the tennis club that made it a little bit better" (7530) "We probably speak to each other on the phone every other fortnight" (7505)

6	15	<i>Photographs videos</i>	"Even when we are on the 'phone we talk for half an hour and it is just about everyday things" (1058) "They are sick of the photographs of the house and swimming pool" (2505)
21	53	<i>Involved with school</i>	"We bought a cam recorder we send videos of J. so they don't miss out...it all helps" (4115) "I went there for reading, I went for to maths. I went to assemblies that they were in. When they were older I ran the book club for a year" (5292)
18	45	<i>Involved with children Met mothers</i>	"I helped out at my children's school in as many capacities as are needed so that I have contact and valuable chatting time which is very important to me" (9235) "Taking them down to the beach and things like that" (7505) "I read once in a baby book that you should talk to them - tell them tell them that you are changing their nappy. I just talk to her all the time" (9691)
13	33		"Yes and now my biggest group of friends now is the mums that had kids the same time as I did" (1604) "Yes, I had help from the ladies at the school you always get your support group don't you?" (7836)

New versus old friendships All participants (N=154)

Forming new friendships was, for some of the women, a fundamental step in the settlement process and a means to replace the social network they had left behind in the homeland. The new friendships in Australia differed from those in their homeland, however these friendships took on a different form. Data from all participants in the study showed that 40 (26%) women mentioned that they had or have had a long-standing relationship with "old" friends as they shared a history and experiences in the homeland. Thirty (19%) women mentioned that new friendships in Australia did not have this historical underpinning, and these new friendships are viewed somewhat differently. Table 5 shows how the women perceive their new and old friendships.

Interview group (n=40)

In relation to the women in the interview group 21 (53%) also supported that old friendships have an historical underpinning. Of these 21 women, eight (20%) mentioned that these friends originated from school days, and some were long standing or made through family. The participants were asked the roles that old friends played in their lives in the homeland, and 12 (30%) participants mentioned that they were a support - mainly because they shared the same experiences such as, working together, being mothers and childrearing. The

following quotes give some indication of how the participants regarded the important roles these old friendships played in their lives and old identity:

"I was really homesick then because these people here don't know me that well here my friends at home would and if I was down and I didn't call them they would call me but they don't know that side of me here" (5697);

"They (friends) played a community role. If our children were doing something that they weren't supposed to be doing and they were out of my sight they would get a good kick up the bum and sent home. Right through many streets, three or four streets on the way to school it was community parenting" (5658).

Table 5

All participants' (N=154) comparison of old friendships in the homeland to new friendships in Australia

Old versus new friendships	
Old friendships	New friendships
<p>"History, in the UK I have old school/nursing friends and friends through children and village activities" (1616Q)</p> <p>"Friends in England knew me longer and have a different outlook on life" (3815Q)</p> <p>"I don't have the same sort of friends over here that I would confide everything in them like I would old college friends, old school friends and things that you have grown up with and shared those years" (6763)</p> <p>"....it's not the same as the friends you grew up with cos they know you warts and all. Yes (laugh) but they know why you are the way you are, which is important" (7836)</p> <p>"they didn't know my background where I had come from what had happened to me previously,.... so you had nothing to talk about when you passed by....it was all very current" (8151)</p>	<p>"There isn't a shared history. Sort of like my life before isn't significant" (1021)</p> <p>"Not as bonding as childhood friends" (1629Q)</p> <p>"They don't know the real me – the me that is buried under marriage and children" (4423Q)</p> <p>"Lack of social history bases. Friendships in the present not the past" (5017Q).</p> <p>"We don't have a history we don't share the same confidences " (5697)</p> <p>"Nobody to contact at all, nobody to talk about 'do you remember when?' sort of thing and there was nothing for me to be able to try and butt into conversation, so you were just like an adjunct – in the early days" (9343)</p> <p>"I don't feel they know the real me. I've been feeling low for so long. Only one friend knows about the PND" (9691)</p>

Sense of belonging: The role of new friendships and the new self

The participants were asked if they had a sense of belonging to Australia. Responses indicated five categories of belonging to Australia in decreasing order of positive feelings; first Positive (P) 20 (50%); second, Transitional positive (TP) 7 (18%); third, Limbo 5 (13%); fourth, Transitional negative (TN) 3 (8%) and fifth, Negative (N) 5 (13%). For a detailed account of the five categories of belonging to Australia see Ward (2001). The following section presents the women's perception of old and new friendships and how these perceptions fit into each of the five categories of belonging.

Figures 1 show how the participants perceive their new friendships following migration and the role these new friendships play in the pursuit to replace their family left in the homeland, and therefore assisting re-invention of the self. Of the participants in the *positive* categories of belonging 24 (60%) viewed the new friendships as being supportive and 20 (50%) viewed the new friendships as like family. Within the *transitional positive* category the same number of participants (23, 57.5%) viewed friendships as both support and like family. Within the limbo category, the same number of participants (2, 40%) viewed friendships as both support and like family. In contrast, none of the participants in the two negative categories (*transitional negative* and *negative*) had this perspective of these new friendships.

Table 6 shows the number of incidences that the participants, in all the five categories of belonging, mentioned the types of activities - pre- and post migration. Pre-migration strategies are divided into three types; first, activities which involved participants *gathering information*, such as reading books and newspapers, looking at maps and watching videos, and second, those related to *social* factors such as investigating housing, employment and visiting Australia prior to migration, and, third, *mementos* - representing the old country - which the participants brought with them to Australia such as, books, pictures, photographs, ornaments and furniture. In relation to the post-migration strategies (*solitary, social, country* and *culture*) participants in the limbo category engage in solitary and social activities the most. Comparing the positive and negative categories of belonging, participants in the positive categories incline toward social activities whereas participants in the negative categories use more solitary activities.

Figure 1

Participants' (interview group) perception of new friendships related to the five categories of belonging

Pos = Positive sense of belonging (n=20)

TP = Transitional positive sense of belonging (n=7)

Limbo (n=5)

TN = Transitional negative sense of belonging (n=3)

Neg = Negative sense of belonging (n=5)

Table 6

Pre and post migration strategies (interview group) across the 5 categories of belonging

CATEGORY	POSITIVE	INTERMEDIATE POSITIVE	LIMBO	INTERMEDIATE NEGATIVE	NEGATIVE	TOTAL NO. OF INCIDENTS
Number	20	7	5	3	5	
%	(50%)	(17.5%)	(12.5%)	(7.5%)	(12.5%)	
Post-migration						
Solitary activities	8 (40%)	1 (14%)	2 (40%)	1 (33%)	3 (60%)	(1.85)
<i>Plan stay 2 yrs</i>		1 (14%)	1	1 (33%)	1	
<i>Plan holiday</i>	5 (25%)	5 (71%)	(20%)	2 (66%)	(20%)	
<i>Kept busy</i>		1 (14%)	4 (80%)	1 (33%)	2 (40%)	
<i>Letters/emails</i>	8 (40%)	2 (29%)	2 (40%)	1 (33%)	1 (20%)	
<i>Self help groups</i>		2 (29%)		(2.0)		
<i>Read books</i>	9 (45%)	(1.7)	3 (60%)		1 (20%)	
Sub-total			1 (20%)	1 (33%)	1 (20%)	
Social activities	3 (15%)	1 (14%)	(2.6)	1 (33%)	(1.8)	
	1	2 (29%)		1 (33%)		

<i>Met mothers</i>	(5%)	3 (43%)		2 (66%)		(2.8)
<i>Employment</i>	(1.7)	1 (14%)	3 (60%)		1 (20%)	
<i>Education</i>		1 (14%)				
<i>Joined clubs</i>	7 (35 %)	1 (14%)	2 (40%)	(1.6)	3 (60%)	
<i>'Phone home</i>		3 (43%)	3 (60%)		1 (20%)	
<i>Videos photos</i>	11 (55 %)	4 (33%)	1 (20%)	2 (66%)	2 (40%)	
<i>Inv. With school</i>		(2.3)				
<i>Inv. With c'ren</i>	3 (15 %)	3 (43%)		(0.6)	2 (40%)	(1.9)
Sub-total		2 (28%)	4 (80%)		1 (20%)	
Country activities	9 (45 %)	5 (71%)	3 (60%)	2 (66%)	(2.0)	
<i>Read books</i>	9 (45 %)	1 (14%)	(3.2)		3 (60%)	
<i>T.V.</i>		(2.1)	1 (20%)	1 (33%)	3 (60%)	
<i>Traveled</i>	3 (15 %)		3 (60%)	(1.0)		
<i>Prefer South</i>					2 (40%)	(1.0)
<i>Prefer North</i>	12 (60 %)	2 (28%)	3 (60%)			
Sub total			2 (40%)		(1.6)	
Culture activities	10 (50 %)	4 (33%)	(1.8)			
(Aboriginal)	(3.2)	1 (14%)				
<i>Knows more</i>	9 (45 %)				3 (60%)	
<i>(Read books/ talked to people)</i>			1 (20%)			
<i>Sympathetic</i>	10 (50 %)				3 (60%)	
Sub total			3 (60%)		(1.2)	
<i>Link to land</i>	13 (65 %)					

	7 (35 %)		(0.8)			
	2 (10 %)		1 (20%)			
	(2.0)					
	12 (30 %)					
	8 (20 %)					
	(1.0)					
	1 (5%)					

Number of strategies used pre and post migration used by the participants within each of the five categories of belonging and the total number of participants across the five categories.

Sense of belonging: Country and culture strategies

In relation to information about the *country*, 18 (45%) watched television programs and 15 (38%) had read books (see Table 4). Twenty- five participants (63%) mentioned that they had travelled, either North or South, within Western Australia (WA). Of these 25 women who had travelled, 8 (20%) mentioned a preference for the Southern aspects and 5 (13%) mentioned preferring the Northern countryside of WA. Fourteen (35%) participants stated that the Southern countryside reminded them of their homeland because of the greenery

and cooler climate. Eleven (28%) participants described the Northern countryside as vast, amazing, different, scary and daunting. One (2.5%) participant mentioned having *arespect for the land*, and three (7.5%) participants mentioned *feeling a connection* with the land (see Table 6).

Cultural information was related mainly to Aboriginal culture, as this was perceived to give a "sense" to Australia as a place. Twenty (50%) participants mentioned they knew more about Aboriginal culture and their cause through reading and talking to people. Nineteen (48%) participants mentioned that they felt empathy for the Aboriginal cause - especially in relation

to land rights and the stolen generation. Of these 19 participants, seven (18%) mentioned they understood the Aboriginal perspective of having a link to the land and six (15%) mentioned being in awe of Aboriginal people's ability to live in such a harsh land.

Significantly, participants in the limbo category engaged in both social and solitary activities, however these women do not profess a sense of belonging to either Australia or their homeland. Perhaps in the future a sense of belonging will develop. With regard to country and cultural activities, all participants had undertaken some form of information gathering about Australia and the Aboriginal people. All participants have traveled within W.A.; however, the majority mentioned a preference for the Southern part of the State, stating that the scenery is similar to the homeland. Except for the women in the transitional negative category all have gathered information relating to the Australia. Participants in all the categories of belonging mentioned that they now know more about the Aboriginal culture and were sympathetic to their cause (i.e. reconciliation and land rites). Three participants (one each from the positive, transitional positive and limbo category) mentioned they felt a link to the land - this feeling may be another indicator of a sense of belonging.

Discussion

Findings from this study are in line with Fried (1976), Hertz (1988) and Lee (1994) who suggested that to achieve settlement in a new place appropriate strategies are required. The majority of the women in this study did undertake some form of preparation: Some more than others. Results suggest that the variety of strategies appeared to serve three purposes; first, keeping busy stopped the women thinking of home; second, a means to achieve settlement and a sense of belonging; and third, a means to form a new identity.

Finding from the study show that all participants in all categories of belonging used a assortment of strategies; pre and post migration. Even with extensive preparation, as proposed by Hertz (1988) and Lee (1988), this did not work for those participants in the negative category of belonging. It could be suggested that pre-preparation may instil the belief that they "know" the country well; therefore, no problem will be encountered.

Post-migration strategies used by the participants were either *solitary* or *social activities*. Proportionally, the participants in the limbo and negatives categories of belonging engaged in more solitary activities than the women in the positive categories. Women in both positive categories used more social strategies than those women in the limbo and negative categories of belonging. Further, women in the positive categories engaged in a wider variety of social activities than women in the limbo category. According to Fried (1963) a sense of group identity is essential to ensure the individual feels a sense of belonging and become part of the larger community. Thus, engaging in more social activities, rather than solitary pursuits fosters closer contact with other people/mothers within the community. Further, within friendships, women place a higher emphasis on emotional sharing, support and intimacy (Buunk, 1983; McCollum, 1991) and according to McCollum (1991) friendships provide the person with the necessary mutual trust, a confidante and the knowledge that they have shared life experiences. The results suggest that formulation of new friendships was a significant component to rebuild a new identity in the new country.

When comparing the old and new friendships the participants mentioned a lack of history in relation to new friendships. Participants were unable to reminisce with new friends as they did not share the same history - they did not know the "old me". Findings suggest, however, that these new friends played a significant role in the participants endeavour to re-invent the self. For the participants in both positive categories and the limbo category of belonging

these new friends were taking the place of family they had left in the homeland. It is questionable whether these new companions could ever fill the void incurred by multiple loss.

Taft (1965) observed that migrants who adjust and settle in the adopted country "tend to be person who actively order their lives" (p. 69). Results from this study has identified that specific strategies may be a means to buffer the impact of migration on the psychological and physical wellbeing of the individual and support re-invention of the self. Strategies were a means to culture a new identity and for some participants this may not be a immediate, thus reflecting Erikson's (1980) concepts of identity change and identity formation transcending over the lifespan.

The study has implications for future migrants in assisting them to adjust and survive in the new country. It also has implications for all people/agencies who are involved with the education or care of migrants. Further, immigration and social services and the general population should recognise and provide for the psychological and physical needs of migrants of all origins – English speaking as well as non-English speaking.

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