Women’s Stories of Home:
Meanings of Home for Ethnic Women Living in Established Migrant Communities

Volume Three
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<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHRC</td>
<td>Australian Housing Research Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMCORD</td>
<td>Australian Model Code of Residential Development</td>
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<td>BBC</td>
<td>Building Better Cities</td>
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<tr>
<td>BCA</td>
<td>Building Code of Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>BIMPR</td>
<td>The Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBD</td>
<td>Central Business District</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSHA</td>
<td>Commonwealth/State Housing Agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>DUAP</td>
<td>Department of Urban Affairs and Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>EAPS</td>
<td>Ethnic Affairs Policy Statements</td>
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<tr>
<td>EPA Act</td>
<td>Environmental and Planning Assessment Act, 1979</td>
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<td>EPIs</td>
<td>Environmental Planning Instruments</td>
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<tr>
<td>LGA</td>
<td>Local Government Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>NES</td>
<td>non-English speaking</td>
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<td>NESB</td>
<td>non-English speaking background</td>
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<tr>
<td>NHS</td>
<td>National Housing Strategy</td>
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<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
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<tr>
<td>OMA</td>
<td>Office of Multicultural Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>SORA</td>
<td>Summary Oral Reflective Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSD</td>
<td>Sydney Statistical Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSW</td>
<td>University of New South Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWS</td>
<td>University of Western Sydney</td>
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ERRATA

p3, footnote 4: "NSW State Government Election" should read "NSW state government election"

p62, para 3, l2: "...the latter is expensive..." should read "...the latter is generally expensive..."

p92, para 2, l5: "...(Reinharz, 1992b: 428), but in terms..." should read "...(Reinharz, 1992b: 428). In terms..."

p98, para 4, l4: "...women in their home." should read "...women in their homes."

p148, para 2, point 3: "disciple" should read "discipline"

p161, para 1, l1: "women" should read "woman"

p246, para 2, l1: so big should read so big

p311, para 3, l5: "Fraser government" should read "Fraser Government"

p423, para 2, point 2: "...to emerge (in coming..." should read "...to emerge. (In coming..."

p431, para 2, l8: "...to hear." should read "...to be heard."
Part Three

Interpreting Meanings of Home
In Part Three of the thesis I turn to an interpretation of the women's stories. This represents the hermeneutic component of the research. I stand back from the richness and contextuality of the interviews in order to develop an understanding of the multiple meanings of home that have emerged.¹

In interpreting the women's stories, it is important to note that I cannot cover every aspect of their narratives. Another viewpoint may well reveal different interpretations.² I am also aware that my focus highlights the commonalities across the women, rather than their differences. Nevertheless, from my urban planning perspective, I have attempted a comprehensive and contextual interpretation of the data analysis presented in Part Two.

I am particularly interested in illuminating how the process of leaving one's homeland and establishing a new life in a different country impact on meanings of home. In the case of the younger women, my focus is the cultural context of their upbringing and how this has affected their concept of home.

Confirming the research presented in Part One, traditional multi-dimensional concepts of home exist for these women (Swenson, 1991; Sixsmith, 1986; Hayward, 1977 & 1975), with family and social relationships absolutely fundamental (Sixsmith, 1986). Ownership, and the resulting sense of security that this brings (Barclay et al., 1991; Cass, 1991), are also critical, along with expressions of self (Cooper, 1976) and even more importantly, culture (AHRC, 1985; Stanley, 1972). But my data reveal more. Part Three begins an exploration of these insights.

¹ Nevertheless, to illustrate my argument, I do quote from the women's stories. The notations used are equivalent to those that appear in Part Two.

² For example, I am aware that family is a critical element of home for these women. My interpretation encompasses aspects of family but does not treat it in its entirety. An alternative orientation would inevitably reveal different insights and emphases.
As well as drawing on evidence from the interviews, I return to the literature introduced in Part One. I show that this is inadequate to fully illuminate the meanings of home that I have identified. I introduce new discourses to take understanding further. It is important to note however, that there is no one overarching theory to explain the women’s meanings of home.

Loss is the fundamental and unifying thread that weaves through the narratives. I use the pervasiveness of loss as the interpretive link to understand the meanings of home. I examine the broader context of the women’s feelings of alienation and how they dealt with it in leaving and resettling. This leads me to an interpretation of home as a powerful place. It is a safe arena to display and act out difference, as well as a way of atoning for the profound experiences of loss.

Chapter Eight sets the broad parameters of dispossession, exploring different expressions in relation to the concept of homeland. This is an extremely complex and diffuse notion. It underscores the pain that many of the women continue to experience as they negotiate a relationship with two homes, geographically separated families and the knowledge that the once familiar has changed forever.

Chapter Nine focuses on the dwelling as an important site of power. Its physicality serves as an atonement for the losses incurred in the leaving and resettling process. The public sphere of neighbourhood is also discussed as a conflicting milieu of acceptance and rejection.

The concluding chapter of the thesis draws the research together. I discuss substantive and process outcomes, as well as suggesting implications for both housing and urban planning.
Chapter Eight

Dealing with Loss: Negotiating a New Belonging

Is that what it is? Is homeland not so much a place, is it more complicated a thing than air, water, land? Is homeland just a way of naming memory, perhaps? A compendium of memories, things of instantaneous sensory moment only, like a good time or pain, but powerful as a design? Is it an arrangement of the past, like a parcel, wrapped? Is the design a random one (if it's not a place), a chaotic thing and attractive for that? Or is its appeal in its order? Does that suggest an inevitable romantic edge? Is it even some sort of euphemism for something lost or stolen? Sometimes? But what about now? What is it we live in now? Again, is it a where? What is its summons? (Papaellinas, 1991: x)
INTRODUCTION

Loss is central to the women's migration experience and has important implications for their meanings of home. While individual responses varied, the pervasiveness of loss throughout the interviews is marked. In this and the next chapter, I explore the adaptive strategies used by the women to deal with their profound feelings of sadness.

I begin Chapter Eight by establishing the broad context of loss and bereavement. I examine the ways in which the opportunities afforded by the promises of the new nation were soon engulfed by reality. The women initially coped by focusing on what they had left behind. The country of origin was mythologised, as well as physically, emotionally and spiritually re-created in the private sphere. The dream of eventual return was omnipresent. Inevitably, time challenged the mythology as stories of change filtered back and the actualities of return exploded long-held hopes of continuity.

For the women in my study there has been a constant struggle with identity and belonging. In the second part of the chapter I examine how they continue to deal with feelings of divided loyalty. With their adaptive strategies in place, attachment to the new homeland gradually formed. The love of their old nation did not diminish, but took on a different form as they understood the impossibility of a permanent return.

The theoretical discourse on place attachment is helpful in understanding the multifaceted nature of bereavement that the women experienced. This literature has grown out of many considerations, including the ideas of attachment behaviour in childhood (Bowlby, 1974) and the consequences of loss, especially mourning responses after the death of a spouse or parent (Bowlby, 1980). Sense of place research is also important (Altman and Low, 1992; Tuan, 1977, 1974; Relph, 1976).
This is very much about the connectedness that one feels when experiencing or remembering a location. The migrant has to actively create this experience to enhance both the physical encounter with place and the memories that it evokes. Throughout the chapter, I explore literature in this area as a way of developing an understanding of my findings on the dominance and implications of loss.

HOMELAND: LEAVING, LOSS AND A CONTESTED BELONGING

*Human groups nearly everywhere tend to regard their own homeland as the centre of the world* (Tuan, 1977: 149).

Attachment to homeland is profound. Place is a permanent fixture, a buffer against the frailty and flux of life (Tuan, 1977: 154). Homeland nurtures its inhabitants and memories of place link the present with the past. When the strength of these bonds is broken, the implications are far reaching. Both migration and contemporary globalisation forces are redefining homeland, dislocating place and space, and fragmenting identity (Massey, 1992).

For the participants in my study, setting out to Australia was an adventure, but still represented an enormous wrench. With tears in their eyes, many of the women told me of the last night that they spent in their country of origin. Their decision to leave emerged out of necessity as the future held limited opportunities or meant living under an intolerable political regime.

The women embarked on their journeys with different expectations. These extended from making money and returning, to establishing a new life in a strange land. The Greek and Arabic women were told fantastic stories about life in Australia, especially the promise of abundant wealth. These tales both influenced and confirmed their decision to depart. The focus of the Vietnamese stories was more on escaping
political oppression. Many of these women did not know where their journey would take them and it was not until they reached the refugee camps in Asia, that they applied to come to Australia.

Stories in other migrant narratives also report both positive and negative expectations as migration was contemplated (for example, Thompson, Liz 1993: 25-33; Riemer, 1992: 29). Dreams were multifaceted, encompassing various aspects of their lives.

Immigrant workers in Australia dreamed of freedom: to have no boss or foreman above them, to be able to set their own work rhythms, to have autonomy in choice of tasks, methods of work and products, and hopefully to achieve prosperity. They also dreamed of freedom from racism and prejudice in the workplace. Migrant parents dreamed of a better life for their children: to have more time for them by combining residence and place of work, and to have enough resources to give them a good education and a start in life (Collins et al., 1995: 9-10).

In most cases, the reality of arrival and settling-in was traumatic. The women encountered unrelenting hard work in jobs that they did not particularly enjoy. They endured racist abuse, struggled with an alien language and faced difficulties in many aspects of daily living. They missed their families, a familiar way of life and comforting reminders of growing up. It was soon evident that the new homeland was not going to live up to its initial promise.

Homeland as mythology

The ramifications of abandoning their homeland took a while to emerge. The pressures of making a living, often with little or no family support, encouraged the women to mythologise the country that they had left behind. Their memories took

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1 Feeling comfortable in a place is often taken for granted. It is only when the familiar is removed that we realise the full implications of our loss (Dovey, 1979: 86).
on more and more importance. They told their children about the scenic beauty of the countryside and relayed stories of family warmth and community relationships. As refugees, the Vietnamese had a slightly different perspective. The political ostracism suffered after the fall of Saigon heralded the beginning of their loss of belonging. The escape to Australia reinforced this, but there was relief in surviving a dangerous and uncertain journey.

As well as reminiscing about its physical beauty, the women and their families followed a traditional way of life in the new land. Children felt the full force of this behaviour. They were reared in households driven by values at odds with those in the public sphere. They spoke languages other than English and practised social and religious customs that contrasted with those that dominated the school yard and neighbourhood.

Maintenance of their cultural, spiritual and emotional heritage is not surprising when one considers the powerful place that the homeland and childhood memories of it play. It fuses with home and family, symbolising familiarity and security (Hage, 1993: 79). Tuan (1977: 144-145) asserts that we are very defensive about the place where we grew up. Criticism is rebuffed, even if our home town was ugly and boring. It is the day-to-day activities that define this place as special, as well as the deeply embedded memories we carry.

*But over and beyond our memories, the house we were born in is physically inscribed in us. It is a group of organic habits. After twenty years, in spite of all the other anonymous stairways, we would recapture the reflexes of the first stairway...* (Bachelard, 1964: 14).

Mythologising the lost homeland can also be seen as a response to profound sorrow. In his classic study of forced relocation, Fried (1963) found that attachment to home is common and that the loss of this place is comparable to the grief experienced on the death of a loved one. He also identified individual variations in the mourning...
pattern, as well as different coping strategies before and after moving. Even though his study is more than thirty years old, the insights revealed are being used by contemporary theorists (see for example, Low, 1992; Giuliani, 1991). After reviewing the "residential attachment research", Giuliani (1991: 135) concludes that Fried's study is the most illuminating in terms of "individual differences in affective attachment to residential environment[s]".

Giuliani (1991) presents her own theoretical framework for dealing with psychological attachment to the home. She defines the attachment bond in terms of a psychological state, which is positively experienced as a result of the "mere presence, vicinity or accessibility of the object" (p134). Conversely, the absence, inaccessibility or remoteness of the object will engender a state of distress. Giuliani emphasises the need to look at the mental representations behind these different responses. She makes the assumption that "...individual differences in attachment to the home may be related to differences in the dimensions that characterise the mental representations of cognitions regarding attachment-related experiences and feelings" (p136). Three components make up these mental representations - the self, object and self/object relations. Each one has implications for understanding the women's meanings of home and their adaptive strategies in creating a new sense of belonging. The first component, dimensions of the self, is relevant to interpreting the women's loss of homeland.

Time is an intrinsic component of the self (Giuliani, 1991). Identity changes with the ageing process and is associated with life stages. The concept of time orientation describes an individual's identity in the future or in the past. Significant life events can be categorised in terms of this schema. Leaving the parental home for the first time with plans and visions is a future orientation, whereas the death of a spouse would most likely define a past orientation where memories and reminiscences dominate.
The women's process of leaving and resettling can be seen in relation to this orientation, although the past and future are not always easily separated. There is a longing for what has been left behind, but a growing realisation that aspects of their lives have changed, gradually facilitating a new attachment. Accordingly, Giuliani's assessment that a past orientation reinforces the existing bond and inhibits the formation of a new one is not adequate in dealing with the complexities of the migration experience. There can be a bonding in both directions. At first, the past is stronger, with the future orientation gradually gaining in importance with the passage of time.

Dreaming of return

The past orientation can be seen in the mythologising of the homeland. The women's stories are peppered with dreams of return.

... I wish I can go back... sometimes I dream I walk in Vietnam... sometimes I dream I went shopping in Vietnam... sometimes I dream I drive in Vietnam... (Diem, p26; 137)

There are other migrant narratives that tell of this longing to go back, to return.

My father's dream was to sit in the sun with the old men of his village and collect his Australian pension cheque every fortnight. My mother saw herself eating plums in the fields, gossiping with her sisters, lighting candles in the wind-swept church on Sundays (Dell'oso, 1991: 2).

My interviews reveal that return was considered on many different levels. Coming to Australia was viewed as temporary, a means to an end. Giuliani (1991: 141) suggests that the expected length of residence is a critical issue in experiencing loss and forming new attachments. When a new dwelling is perceived to be transitory, the development of attachment is difficult. This can be the case even if the period of residence extends over many years.
For the majority of Greek and Arabic women, the intention to return was just a matter of time. It depended on making sufficient money, as well as the situation improving back home. There was hope that things would change. At first, the orientation was to the past, with a pragmatic view about their situation in Australia. It was a means to an end. Even if home ownership was achieved, this was initially equated with economic success, rather than a feeling of permanence and belonging. As other life events took shape, attachment developed, but it was complex and involved a world of divided loyalties where they were torn between two homelands - the new and the old.

For the Vietnamese women, the dream of return was a fantasy of unfulfilled hope and longing. The manner in which they left made a trip home impossible. So too did the presence of an oppressive political regime. More recently, the desire to return can be realised as the country has been opened up to tourism (Lumby, 1992; Baker, 1995), but some are reluctant to go back, fearing that their visit would lend support to an oppressive government.

...we came here to be settled, we came as refugee status. As a refugee you have to prove that you are not safe in your country... if you always there for holiday... it looks like you lie to them [the Australian government]... I feel responsible to the people who still at refugee camps... So that's why we decide not to go to Vietnam as a holiday... (Van, p43; 157)

Contemplating return is further complicated when there are children to consider. Using Giuliani’s schema, this concern pulls the women into a future orientation, facilitating a growing attachment with the new homeland. The younger generation have grown up in Australia; they have been educated in this country, speak its main language fluently and are comfortable with the available lifestyles. It is unlikely that adult children will return with their parents. This reality is a factor in keeping the women here, given that family is a foundational cornerstone of their meaning of home.
Stories of return

Other dimensions orienting them to the future are the experiences of those who do go back, either for a holiday or with the intention of settling. These experiences, as well as stories about them, are important in re-shaping the mythology of homeland and helping to form a new attachment.

For the older women, there was shock and dismay at how much had changed. They were confronted with the loss of familiar and loved landmarks and on occasions, an unwelcoming community that they did not understand. Not only had many of their friends disappeared, there was a new moral, social and cultural landscape with which to contend. They experienced rejection; they were labelled outsiders. This was most devastating for those who returned, intending to stay.

...they found things had changed over there. It wasn’t like it was in the ’50s and they couldn’t adapt to the life and the system over there. They were displaced in both places. They ended up coming back here anyway. (Nina, p19; 131)

The return can also confirm the loss of belonging.

Even though I used to live in Vietnam for years, for 30 years... when I go back I don’t feel that’s my home any more. (Nhung, p55; 113)

Contrasting with the disillusionment of their mothers, the young Greek women were surprised to find a country at odds with their expectations. For some this was a liberating experience; others found a way of life that challenged the moral and religious principles with which they had been raised.

...we just couldn’t believe that we were of the same race. They [the Greeks in Greece] were just so rude... And their way of life is just different, their ideas are different, they live day by day... they don’t put money aside every
pay for the future... They go out every night, spend their money and whatever happens tomorrow, happens tomorrow. (Cassie, p52; 131)

The scars of loss fade over time as the new country slowly becomes another home.

LIVING WITH LOSS: HOME AS HERE AND THERE

...our parents can't really totally assimilate with the lifestyle here... they feel like they should be over there and then they go over there and they're out of place there too because everything has just progressed so far ahead and it's not how they left it. And people have changed and situations have changed and they can't fit in there either. So they're really on the fence, they're neither here nor there... (Nina, p58; 114)

Loss is further reinforced by the concept of home as a complex and shifting entity. "Being at home" and "belonging" are important feelings but they can be illusive when deeper meanings are fragmented and disrupted. Bammer (1992: vii) illuminates these contradictory notions.

Semantically, 'home' has always occupied a particularly indeterminate space: it can mean, almost simultaneously, both the place I have left and the place I am going to, the place I have lost and the place I have taken up... the place [where] you grew up... the mythic homeland of your parents...

Even though the majority of women interviewed have links with present and former homes, there is frequently a degree of discomfort with their inability to define a single home. The notion of having two homes and yet, having none, living in two worlds and yet being constrained and uneasy in both, are dealt with in different ways.

...put it this way, your roots are there but the trunk is here. ...you can say the tree is here because that's where your kids are. ...your life is here but your heart is there, ...and that's what makes it difficult because if I'm going
there, there is nothing for me there... you are split up between the two countries. (Doris, Focus Group, p4; 118)²

A close attachment to place constitutes our roots in that place. This involves feelings of familiarity that originate from deep care and concern. It also encompasses significant spiritual and psychological attachment. Without roots, there is no sense of security from which to view the world (Relph, 1976: 37). Homesickness is a symptom of the loss of familiarity, juxtaposed with the need to find new roots; a point between "loss and recuperation" (Bammer, 1992: ix).

The women in my study expressed feelings of homesickness even after living in Australia for some time. Sluzki (in Browne, 1992: 12) argues that women experience these feelings more than men. "... the female centres on present and past orientated activities that ensure a sustained connection with the previous environment". This has implications for the valuing of woman's role at home. She becomes the stabilising force, the entity that binds the family together and ensures the maintenance of its cultural heritage. The outside world acts as a constant threat to this continuity. By adhering to their former cultural, social and religious practices, the connection to home is insulated against change. This is most forcefully and comfortably expressed in the physical house, which becomes a microcosm of the domestic life left behind.³ In this way the debilitation of homesickness is alleviated, although it can never be fully resolved.

...even when I'm laughing, there is something... catching me in my heart. There is something sad inside of me, but what can I do? I can't go back, and I can't bring them [my family] here. (Ihsan, p4; 127)

² It is interesting to note that Giuliani (1991: 142) mentions the tree metaphor as being a common one in descriptions of close relationships with home.

³ I have discussed different expressions of this re-creation in Part Two. In Chapter Nine I take these ideas further in my interpretation of home as power.
Finding a place: children and belonging

Finding a sense of belonging can be very difficult for those who grew up in Australia, even if they were born here. The women belong to "cultures of hybridity" where they have renounced the dream of rediscovering a notion of "ethnic absolutism" (Hall, 1992: 310).

_They are the products of the new diasporas created by the post-colonial migrations. They must learn to inhabit at least two identities, to speak two cultural languages, to translate and negotiate between them_ (Hall, 1992: 310).

For the younger women, there is the ongoing stress of negotiating two familiar, but not necessarily accepting or accommodating, cultural landscapes. They are forced to live in two worlds, that of their parents and the dominant society. Feeling comfortable with both does not guarantee acceptance or a sense of belonging.

_You mix between two cultures. You've still got the values of where you come from or where your parents came from but then you've got the Australian culture. You've got to try and combine the two into one and that sometimes becomes difficult too._ (Claudia, Focus Group, p4; 18)

As young children, negotiating different cultures was particularly painful for the Greek women (see Chapter Five, page 180). Exotic food for lunches and "unfashionable" adornments on their clothing, marked many NESB girls out as different and so obviously apart from the others (Factor, 1992: 21).

For first generation Australians acceptance may not be forthcoming in either homeland. Other migrant narratives report similar feelings of dispossession (for example, Chryssides, 1995: 10-11). In my work, the sense of displacement emerged most forcefully from the Greek women's stories.
...it's been expressed too by others of my generation, that... we're a breed of our own. We're not Greeks - the Greeks in Greece don't see us as Greeks, they see us as Australians. And... some Australians don't see us as Australians. So what are we? (Rosa, p23; 129)

Even if one feels more at home in Australia, sustaining this sense of belonging is tenuous when notions of difference are imposed from outside.

...you get the feeling that an Australian won't accept and won't let you - how can I say it - they won't let you say you're Australian and leave it at that... it looks like there's more and there is more, and they want to know what more there is. And that... even just a little bit, it does sort of pulverise me, you know... I always say, "I'm Australian..." and they go, "No, no, no. No, you know, where are you from?" I feel like pushing the point that I'm Australian, I was born here, but that's not good enough for them... so you tell them you're Greek - an Australian born Greek, yeah, 'cause I'm not Australian. No-one will accept that, because I mean I don't even look it. (Anna, p11; 149)

Cultural heritage: claiming pride

The women in this study strongly identify with their cultural heritage. They are proud of their background and what their communities have contributed to this country.

I'm very proud of having an ethnic background.... I think the ethnics have done so much for this country... I mean [if] us ethnics didn't come out or migrate to Australia, I think Australia would be nothing. You wouldn't have these restaurants, you wouldn't have the fashion, you wouldn't have food - all the mixture. I mean what would you be eating - meat pies and sausage rolls all day? (Naomi, p11; 118)

4 Cox (1992: 63) recalls being similarly treated.

I was not allowed to belong. I was still defined as a reffo and a Jew and I wondered what it all meant, as my main sense of identity by now was as an outsider.
As they matured, the younger women left their childhood embarrassments behind and today actively claim their heritage. I discuss the women’s desires to maintain traditional customs especially around cooking and religious celebrations (see Chapter Five, page 201; Chapter Six, page 269; Chapter Seven, page 356). There are regrets at not persevering with linguistic instruction and for the younger Greek women, a new found commitment to teach their children the language (see Chapter Five, page 199). Returning to their parents’ country also served to strengthen family and cultural links. Marriage within their own communities is actively encouraged as a way of further ensuring continuity (see Chapter Five, page 205; see Chapter Six, page 275).

There are however, signs of change across the generations. Children are not attending religious instruction with the same fervour as their parents (see Chapter Five, page 208) and there are fears for the extended family, particularly its support for the elderly (see Chapter Seven, page 342). Traditional male and female roles are also being challenged (see Chapter Five, page 192; Chapter Six, page 257; Chapter Seven, page 343). In other discourses, there is concern that cultural diversity will fade away and be lost in a relatively short time. Travaglia (1993: 16) expresses her doubts about cultural continuation beyond her own generation.

Our children will carry little more than a name which indicates their origin... We may retain some of our heritage, but expediency will ensure that class and perhaps religion will become more important. Those of us who marry out will tend not to speak our language at home, so our children will know only the rudiments...

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5 The breakdown of the extended family is reported elsewhere (Moss, 1993: 42-43). The issue is complicated by economics and the changing role of women. Traditionally society’s carers, their participation in the work force increasingly precludes looking after elderly family members. Together with the lack of culturally appropriate services, ageing NESB men and women face isolation and poor physical and psychological health (Moss, 1993: 43).
Belonging here?

For us - all those who, in one way or another, have been displaced from some ordinary place where we once, perhaps 'belonged' - 'home' is, in every sense of the phrase, neither here nor there. Rather, itself a hybrid, it is both here and there - an amalgam, a pastiche, a performance (Bammer, 1992: ix).

Even though loss dominates much of the women’s lives, as the years pass there is a tendency to identify Australia as home. This does not mean that the sadness of separation is denied. Rather, it is expressed in different ways that help to ameliorate and dull its impact. Personal histories, grounded in a new land, gradually emerge as hard work reaps its rewards and children are born, educated and marry. This does not, however, negate strong bonds being maintained with the country where they were originally born.

...Australia is my own home. I used to living the style of life. And my children born here. I like to have holiday of course, but not to live... I feel like stranger there. Like never born in Greece. (Petroula, p16; 144)

For younger women, there is a conscious understanding that they have chosen to remain in, and identify with Australia as home.

I feel like Australia is home and although I probably would love living in Greece, I have to set my roots somewhere... I’ve picked a home and this is it. This is home... My life’s here - I’m not the type of person to be able to just pick up and move. (Nina, p17; 145)

In identifying Australia as home, there can be feelings of guilt. It is as though such a realisation is tantamount to rejecting the original homeland.

I couldn’t say that Vietnam is too poor for me to accept it as my country. I could never say that. But I could say that it’s not good enough for me now to live in. So for the rest of my life, I have to choose the better place, which country makes me feel more comfortable... happier... it’s a bit bitter for me.
when I say, "Should I say that? ...I wouldn't choose Vietnam, it's my home". I have a feeling, honestly and I appreciate more the life here... I prefer to accept this is my homeland. (Nhung, p53; 123)

In other cases, identification as Australian can only be dealt with by compartmentalising and separating the two identities.

...how I can handle both parts? ...at home I speak Lebanese with my husband - I have visitors I speak Lebanese with them. And when I go out and I meet Australian people or people that speak Australian - see that's another part. I'm a different person there because I'm talking Australian and we're not there sitting, talking about Lebanon, we're talking about the life we're living here... when you're with Lebanese people you're talking about Lebanon or Lebanese things you've done... (Faiza, p41; 137)

For some women it is possible to live comfortably with the notion of having two homes and taking the best from each.

I see myself as being both Australian and Greek... I was born in Australia, lived in Australia all my life. But I feel because my parents are Greek, that they gave me a lot... I've been brought up with the Greek culture and the customs, the traditions and the religion, so there's a lot of good things which I adopted myself... which I'm really proud of... But also I feel, because I've been... to Australian schools, I have both Australian and Greek friends... I'm not totally Greek. I'm also Australian as well... (Georgina, Focus Group, p13; 111)

ADJUSTING TO LOSS AND A NEW SENSE OF BELONGING

... I'm grateful that I came to this country... maybe I have a hard time, maybe I work hard, maybe I nearly cripple myself, but still I'm grateful because they give me the job, they give me the opportunity to live, to raise up my son, to have a good life. Doesn't matter if I work hard, still I can have anything I want. In my country I can't have these things... (Margarita, p5, 111)
Giuliani asserts that home can take on different spatial representations, which may invoke varying degrees of attachment. For example, a person could experience strong emotional links with her/his individual dwelling but not with the neighbourhood in which it is located. Other combinations are possible. Giuliani (1991: 139) argues further that the more numerous and varied the relationships between people and environment, then the stronger the sense of attachment. The more objects from which one must separate, the greater the sense of loss and corresponding difficulties in forging new attachments.

Gerson, Stueve and Fischer (1977) also emphasise a multi-dimensional model of attachment. Characteristics such as life cycle stage, social class, woman’s employment, length of residence and the quality of the neighbourhood itself influence, but do not prescribe, the level of attachment.

For the women here, loss is multifaceted and comprises the public and private spheres. Even for those who grew up in Australia, the strong sense of cultural identity with which they were reared, contributes to their sense of loss. Accordingly, the development of attachment in the new country is long and arduous. As Giuliani points out, it is possible to set up a house to bring back memories of the abandoned place. Indeed this is an important way of encouraging the development of a new attachment. It is not however, quite so easy to facilitate the same level of familiarity in the public sphere.

For the migrant and refugee woman there has been an enormous loss in her relocation - loss of dwelling, loss of country, loss of family support, loss of lifestyle and loss of cultural and linguistic comfort. The extent of loss (in Giuliani’s schema - loss of many objects) helps to explain the increased importance of the home in not

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6 This part of her schema is classified as "dimensions of the object".

7 The desire for familiarity helps to explain the attraction of established migrant areas where specialist food is readily available and familiar languages are spoken.
only serving as a reminder of what has been abandoned, but in playing a critical role in assisting with the attachment process.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I argue that loss is central to the women's lives. I have brought together the concepts of homeland, identity and the ways in which the old and new were, and continue to be negotiated. This does not imply resolution, but rather an ongoing process. The centrality of loss and its impact on these women's meanings of home are not adequately explained in the literature presented in Part One. The research on residential attachment provides an avenue for interpreting and understanding some of the issues encountered.
The house stands there, singing... The house sings about how the inhabitant has managed to come to terms with his [sic] environment; it radiates what he has obtained from the world. Some houses are mute, some shout. Others sing, and we behold their song (Norberg-Schulz, 1985: 9)
INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I explore the notion of home as a powerful place. Continuing the theme developed in the previous chapter, I contemplate how the richness of home, encompassing its multi-dimensional meaning, can help to atone for the losses incurred in the migration process. I am particularly interested in how the women in this study exercise power in the private sphere as a response to their overwhelming sense of loss. Adaptive strategies, or recuperative powers (Tuan, 1977: 150), include ownership of the house and garden. The physical presentation of the dwelling is an important component. The private domestic sphere is a comfortable and safe place in which to display cultural, linguistic, social and religious difference.

In the first part of the chapter, I discuss the concept of ownership as power and the ways in which the house and garden represent success. I then turn to a consideration of home as a site of personal power, emphasising the centrality of the private sphere in the context of an unfamiliar and alien public milieu. Finally, I move my attention to the neighbourhood as a component of home. I look at how power is appropriated here and the degree to which difference is accepted.

OWNERSHIP AS POWER

...space is fundamental in any exercise of power (Foucault, in Rabinow, 1984: 252).

Proving that they could achieve in the new country is central to the women's stories. There is a need to demonstrate personal success that comes about from giving up a familiar way of life and enduring the consequences of self sacrifice and denial. The home symbolises hard work in the context of loss.
As I have already highlighted, nearly all of the women expressed a strong desire to own their dwellings. Ownership is directly linked to feelings of security, as is well documented elsewhere (for example, Barclay et al., 1991; Cass, 1991; Richards, 1990). What has not been emphasised previously is the relationship between ownership and success in a new country. Attaining a home of one's own is very tangible proof to both fellow migrants and those still living in the original country, that the sacrifice was, on one level, justified. Not only did ownership enable the family to put roots down, feel secure and establish a sense of belonging, it was also a demonstration to the wider society of success in a form that could be understood and potentially admired.²

...it's also a symbol of achievement... all the years that you've worked hard and are here... you've got something to show for it. Otherwise what was the purpose of making such a long trip and being away from your family and your friends and where you grew up? (Nina, p11; 129)

Actually achieving home ownership as a migrant or refugee is an enormous feat of determination to succeed through hard work and sacrifice (see for example, Cleary, Lee and Chamberlin, 1989). Coming from NES countries, professional qualifications were not recognised in Australia, which meant undertaking any employment to survive. Poor English skills also limited job prospects.³ Not only did newcomers have to consider retraining, they had to learn another language in order to make the most of the opportunities in their adopted country.

² Interestingly, financial security does not feature in these women's stories. Beer (1993) and Saunders and Williams (1988) illuminate the current economic benefits from this form of tenure. However, as I mention in Chapter One, the advantages are related to structural impediments that render other tenure arrangements economically unattractive (Watson, 1988). Sommerville (1989) also argues that the relationship between ownership and increased power is not a simple one. There are instances where people are trapped in home ownership in areas where they are isolated and struggling to make repayments.

³ In Chapter Two I highlight the high ownership rates of long term migrants from NES countries.

³ Collins et al. (1995) examine the phenomena of migrants and small business. Many took up this option because of barriers to other avenues of employment.
Barclay et al. (1991: 41) acknowledge that home ownership is frequently seen by women as a reward for self sacrifice. For migrants, this relationship is exaggerated.

"I've got no one here. So for me my house is very important, what I put into it and all of that, it's my home" (German woman migrant in Barclay, et al., 1991: 57).

Success in the new country contrasted markedly with the poverty of the Greek village, the destruction of the war in Lebanon and the political upheavals of South Vietnam. These events meant uncertainty for their futures. The act of leaving this behind and settling in a new country, although risky, was about seeking a better future. Creating opportunities for their children was a principal reason for migrating. Academic and social progression was central to the meaning of home as success. The physical dwelling provided the setting for these achievements.

"It's our house, we work hard, and we pay for it, and it's where our children grow up and they're quite successful, they all have good jobs... it's our home really." (Van, p39; 19)

**Personal autonomy and freedom**

Ownership is also equated with freedom, pride and personal autonomy (Saunders, 1989: 191). Conversely, renting is associated with firstly, a constraining landlord, and secondly, financial hardship and waste. The renter perceives herself as being in a powerless situation. There is no long term security or the potential to improve an inappropriate physical structure. Nor is there anything tangible to show for one's hard work and sacrifice.

The women talk about the disempowering nature of renting. If an occupant improves the house in which she is living, there are rarely thanks given and in some cases, upgrading leads to increases in rent. As a tenant you are at the mercy of the
landlord, who may refuse to maintain the property adequately (Barclay et al., 1991: 97-8). For those with large families, renting can be a nightmare. The consequences for migrants include being forced into poor accommodation and in some cases, exploited with higher than standard rents (Sommerlad, 1988: 29). There is a loss of security and power if one is evicted and short term stays are problematic for children’s schooling.

As an owner, one has the ability to change the physical fabric of a dwelling. It can be adapted to meet special cultural and religious needs. In Part Two I highlight many stories about renovating unsuitable structures. Appropriate dwelling spaces facilitate both cultural continuation and family as an integral meaning of home. Not only does this lead to personal satisfaction (Saunders, 1989), it is an important ritual of home making.

Slowly it is becoming our house. With each new coat of paint, each box unpacked, each tile set into place, we begin to feel our presence in its past... We treat the house, the house which is slowly becoming ours, with some respect. We, after all, have moved into it. It may be our new house, but we are its newcomers... Yes, other families have settled here, other lives have been played out here. But now it is our time. We renovate, renew this structure, make changes. Slowly it is becoming ours. (Goodman, 1982 in Saile, 1985: 87).

Even in situations where a structure or landscape embodies alien cultural values, they can be manipulated to serve different purposes (see Chapter One, page 44). Monk (1992: 123) illustrates this point with the example of the seemingly constraining Iranian house. Even though its spatial segregation supports patriarchal Islamic principles, the layout can be used by women for uninhibited female socialising (Monk, 1992: 123). Huxley (1994: 183) argues that the built form is not rigidly prescriptive, offering "... multiple ways of using the same space". She further asserts that the architect’s plans for "correct" usage of space are frequently resisted (p185).

4 This is particularly important for migrants (Stanley, 1972; see Chapter Two, page 70).
Women's Stories of Home

Chapter Nine

Foucault takes this point further in his assessment of the architect’s power compared with that of other professions.

*After all, the architect has no power over me. If I want to tear down or change a house he [sic] has built for me, put up new partitions, add a chimney, the architect has no control* (Foucault in Rabinow, 1984: 247-8).

Nevertheless, the only way that this power can be claimed is through ownership, which has to be resourced.

The negative side of owning

The women in this study do not focus on the financial difficulties inevitably associated with achieving home ownership. They do emphasise the struggle in other ways, narrating how they worked incredibly hard and made many sacrifices. But the issue of affordability was not a dominant theme. Barclay et al. (1991: 37-38) report similarly that few challenged the financial burden of ownership. Nevertheless, the task of renovating and remodelling a dwelling is costly, takes time and often results in stress within the family.

THE PHYSICAL DWELLING AS POWER AND SUCCESS

*Space is never empty; it always embodies a meaning* (Lefebvre, 1991: 154).

More than anything else, the attainment of a house and garden was the ultimate goal of the women’s hard work. Barclay et al. (1991: 127) also report that both

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5 This issue did emerge in interviews with the Arabic women (see Chapter Six, page 300).

6 Barclay et al. (1991: 41) point out that the ideology of valuing home ownership and hard work to achieve it, overlooks the structural impediments to ownership. So too does Watson (1988).
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Australian born and NESB women perceive the detached house as their ideal accommodation. It is associated with the nuclear family (see Chapter One, page 39-40), even though a great variety of households are accommodated in this type of housing. Ownership is also strongly linked to the cottage and garden (Barclay et al., 1991: 31).

The dream of a house and garden

The house and garden provide the greatest opportunity to create a physical representation of the lost culture, a microcosm of the life that has been left behind. This helps to mitigate against the impact of a seemingly alien, oppressive and dominant culture, omnipresent in the public sphere. In this way the dwelling, surrounded by private open space, is a critical resource; a way of reinforcing values that are undermined elsewhere; a place where the old order can be re-established and different behaviour, religious practice and linguistic traditions asserted. Home becomes a powerful place in a country where personal influence is often limited, despite the rhetoric of multicultural policy. The latter has tended to extol the exotic, rather than the day-to-day demonstration of difference.

The house and garden form is also valued because of its generous proportions and the facilitation of privacy, compared with medium density housing. This is not confined to migrants. Barclay et al. (1991: 132) confirm that size and privacy motivate many house and garden acquisitions. Flats do not accord with the perception that Australia is a big country. The concept of the land being able to sustain development is not an issue. There is a mythology of limitless spaciousness, enabling everyone to have their own piece of this expanse. The economic and environmental realities of servicing sprawling suburbs are not consciously considered.

7 I discuss many examples of cultural representation in Chapters Five, Six and Seven.

8 This is well reported in other housing research (for example, Thorne, 1991a; Halkett, 1976). See Chapter One, page 44.
Women's Stories of Home

The mythology of the pioneer claiming the land also reinforces this perception (see Chapter One, page 45).

For the women in this study, privacy can create a climate of comfort, facilitating the expression of difference. The separate house maintains physical distance from those that might adversely judge such displays. In a flat, physical proximity can act as a reminder of difference. The migrant's separation from the dominant culture is reinforced, as are feelings of loss and inadequacy in the face of language difficulties and strange customs.

...they were confined [in a flat], and they had someone on top [the floor above] and a neighbour that couldn't speak to them in their own language. And they would be scared, you know, just in case they did the wrong thing and there would be more stress, yes. Whereas owning their own [house]... they've got a yard and... they could have friends... (Rosa, Focus Group, p9; 116)

Flats: inadequate and undesirable

Flats are seen as temporary dwelling spaces only. This is not confined to migrants and is a recurring theme in other Australian housing research (for example, Barclay et al., 1991: 128; Thorne, 1991). Cooper (1976: 438) believes that an explanation lies in the perceived need for "...a house form in which the self and family unit can be seen as separate, unique, private and protected". The high rise building does not provide any territory on the ground which violates a particular image of what a house should be. Added to this is the perception of a "...threat to one's self image as a separate and unique personality" (p438).

9 It is also "safer" to produce different cooking aromas from a distance. Tuan (1977: 159) highlights the importance of familiar smells in invoking the memory of home. Cooking not only directly links the migrant to her cultural heritage, but provides a powerful memory of the lost home in the aromas produced. See for example, Chapter Six, page 270.
Flats are physically constraining and for the women I spoke to, do not compare favourably with medium density housing in Greece or Lebanon. In Australia, apartments do not provide the same degree of autonomy over domestic space as a house. It is difficult to control entry to communal property and the lack of private open space renders entertaining for large extended family groups very difficult. See Chapter Five, page 217; Chapter Six, page 282; Chapter Seven, page 369.

In the quote below, Safie compares medium density housing here and in Lebanon. Her experiences mirror other women in my study, although her preference for a flat is unusual. The issue is not one of adamant opposition to this form of accommodation. Flats can be acceptable if the physical structure is spacious and well built.

... when I came here I choose to live in a flat, I didn't want to rent a house because I felt it's really scary for me to have this big place with no support, everywhere it's open from all sides... so I said I wanted to rent a flat and we did. But the structure of the flat in this country is totally different to the structure of the flat in our country. If I do have the same flat which I used to have in my country, I would not change it to a house. I prefer to stay there... I feel that there is someone to call on if I am in danger. I feel that if I leave my kids at the flat I won't feel as scared as much as I am leaving them now in the house... We used to have two or three bathrooms... we used to have lots of places for storage. Like you don't see all this mess everywhere. We used to have... a bedroom with a bathroom for it... it's totally different... there is lots of places for you to do your daily life. When I had my third baby I couldn't live in a flat any more. It was like a box... So I have to move to a house. Not because I like to be in a house but because I am forced to be there. (Safie, Focus Group, p9; l31)

The migrants' initial experience of medium density housing may also colour their opinion of this dwelling form. Due to financial constraints, it is unlikely that a well designed and built flat can be rented. Problems of insufficient internal space, poor noise insulation and inadequate common facilities are no doubt experienced. Even if they can afford a higher quality apartment at a later stage, the perception is that
this type of housing is unsuitable for their purposes. Consequently, a view of flats as negative remains, fuelling their aspiration for the house and land package.

Not surprisingly, units are generally rejected where children are concerned (see Chapter Six, page 284). Other researchers report women’s difficulties with confining youngsters to this form of accommodation (Barclay et al., 1991: 83).

The private sphere: facilitating difference

...having their own home was a sense of freedom... they could potter around the garden. They had their own property to call their own. They weren’t confined like they were in the community. [my emphasis] They were restricted with language, with culture, whereas in their own home they could do their own thing... (Rosa, Focus Group, p8; 158)

Being away from one’s homeland means that the onus is very much on the individual to maintain her cultural heritage. This further explains why the physical dwelling is so important for the women in this study. This private, separate space is controllable and can nurture the traditions that are not supported in the public space.

I think if you are away from your own country and your own culture, you’re going to try and keep it. It’s more important for you to make sure you keep it... The language becomes very important and your history becomes very important... all the traditions become even more important... your friends and your extended families... (Nina, p21; 120)

The physicality of the house is central to the migrant women and their appropriation of power. This intimate space facilitates the celebration of cultural festivals, religious practice and traditional entertaining. The formal dining and lounge areas are used on special occasions and display treasured furniture, ornaments and paintings. Throughout the rest of the house, internal decoration evokes cultural and
religious heritage. The dwelling is the site of religious worship for the Buddhist and the Muslim woman. See Chapter Six, page 266; Chapter Seven, page 353.

Interestingly, the outward appearance of the houses I visited did not reflect this heritage. Asmahan’s house (shown in the following photograph) was the only exception, but even its architecture was subdued compared with other dwellings I observed in the study area.¹⁰

This is not to say that the "migrant house" reflects dominant aesthetic norms. Lozanovska (1994) provides an insightful analysis of such architectural challenge, but this was not my experience. The expression of difference was principally confined

¹⁰ The issue of external physical appearance is an interesting one. Apperly et al. (1989) identify "Immigrant's Nostalgic" as a distinctive architectural style in late twentieth century Australia, predominantly found in domestic and religious buildings.
to the interior, suggesting that we need to caution against homogenising discourses which see the "migrant house" as other, in both its internal and external presentation.

The garden is an essential component of the physical presentation of the private sphere as a cultural representation.\(^{11}\) As well as facilitating recreation, children's play and large family gatherings, it is constituted as a reminder of home with the sights and smells of loved flowers and plants. See Chapter Five, page 215; Chapter Six, page 289; Chapter Seven, page 371.

Continuity is also manifested in non-physical ways. The domestic sphere is a safe place to speak one's first language and encourage children to gain fluency. There is a strong belief that language is the key to cultural continuation (see for example, Chapter Five, page 199; Chapter Six, page 265; Chapter Seven, page 348), a vehicle for claiming identity and reinforcing difference and separation (Daniel, 1992). Traditional value systems are maintained and in extreme cases, return to the original country is motivated by the threat of the broader public sphere in challenging these critical values (see Chapter Six, page 278).

**Continuing the familiar**

Building a familiar landscape in the private sphere is an important way of atoning for the losses in the leaving and resettling process. This desire to establish stability in the day-to-day environment provides an important link with the past and serves to ensure a feeling of continuity when every other aspect of life is disrupted and fractured. The centrality of the physical dwelling in these women's lives can be understood in relation to notions of creating familiarity.

\(^{11}\) Parham (1993b) argues for the use of urban green spaces in creating convivial cities. The private garden can play a role here. It is an important "outdoor room" where produce can grow for "gastronomic advantage".
At a fundamental level, the development and maintenance of self-identity is inextricably linked to place (Barbey, 1993; Proshansky, Fabian and Kaminoff, 1983). Although, as Barbey (1993: 105) asserts, the quality of the experience and depth of meaning determine the sense of place. Memories, feelings, meanings and experiences of significant childhood places continue into adulthood, reinforcing self-identity. In cases where a physical setting radically departs from what was previously understood, the self-identity of the individual may be threatened (Proshansky, Fabian and Kaminoff, 1983: 66). For children growing up in unstable domestic situations where there is very little sense of continuity, the development of self-identity will suffer (p67).

The migrant or refugee experience of settling in Australia results in the loss of familiar physical, emotional, spiritual and historical links with place. In order to mitigate against this overwhelming sense of dispossession, the domestic environment must be created around familiar understandings of place that evoke meaningful links with the past. This is essential in the maintenance of self-identity and psychological well-being.

*One dimension of the person’s experience of environmental stability lies in the affirmation of the belief that the properties of his or her day-to-day physical world are unchanging. The individual’s recognition of these properties at any given moment in a given situation serves to confirm their continuity from the past...* (Proshansky, Fabian and Kaminoff, 1983: 66).

Accordingly, the gradual but deliberate act of home making serves to establish continuity with the familiar (Dovey, 1979). It is not only in the physical set up of the dwelling that this is achieved, but also in its other meanings of family and cultural continuation (see Chapter Five, page 186; Chapter Six, page 265; Chapter Seven, page 348). The home provides the greatest opportunity for the expression of self in place (Barbey, 1993). The loss of familiarity in the public sphere necessitates this emphasis on the private. This space, over which the women exercise some
control, has to compensate for the non-supportive world that greets them when they leave the dwelling.\textsuperscript{12} It is out here that there are few comforting reminders of their childhood homes.

In the women's stories are examples of the loss of familiarity and comfort. Diminished or non-existent family and community support networks are probably the most difficult with which to deal (see Chapter Five, page 188; Chapter Six, page 255; Chapter Seven, page 340). For the Muslim women there is the loss of social, relational and moral infrastructure to support Islamic religious values (see Chapter Six, page 275 and page 278).

Nevertheless, the women talk about diminishing feelings of loss over time, attesting to the notion of home as fluid. There are examples where the women have taken from both cultures and ways of living (see Chapter Seven, page 358). Younger women, particularly from Greek backgrounds, are bridging the two cultures, modifying the physical dwelling as they define a new style of decorating and keeping house (see Chapter Five, page 228). Nevertheless, notions of family and cultural continuation are still honoured, and pride in their heritage is strong.

**HOME AS A SITE OF PERSONAL POWER**

...power is not to be taken to be a phenomenon of one individual's consolidated and homogenous domination over others, or that of one group or class over others. What, by contrast, should always be kept in mind is that power, if we do not take too distant a view of it, is not that which makes the difference between those who exclusively possess and retain it, and those who do not have it and submit to it. Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of

\textsuperscript{12} One does not have to leave the confines of the dwelling to experience the unfamiliar. Television and radio ensure that the public intrudes on the private domestic space. These and other technologies re-define the notion of space and the degree to which it is controllable.
a chain. It is never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. In other words, individuals are vehicles of power, not its points of application (Foucault, 1980: 98).

Foucault sees power as neither positive or negative, with both enabling and repressive potential. This notion is useful in understanding the way in which these women appropriate power within a particular cultural context. On one level, the home represents a powerful site. It is here that the women can exercise power over both the physical form, family relationships and cultural continuation. At another level, the women’s power must be exercised within a cultural context that retains elements of structural repression and entrenched patriarchy. But even within this milieu there is evidence of change as traditional roles are challenged and broader social and cultural influences make their impact (see Chapter Five, page 192; Chapter Six, page 257; Chapter Seven, page 343).

Women and domestic skills: contested territory

The older women in my study speak proudly of their domestic traditions and the level of skill that they demand (see Chapter Five, page 201; Chapter Six, page 269; Chapter Seven, page 356). While there is some sharing and occasional resentment that the domestic responsibility falls on their shoulders, overwhelmingly, they value their domestic skills. Cooking is a powerful vehicle for maintaining cultural links.
and plays a key role in family and religious celebrations (see Chapter Five, page 201; Chapter Six, page 269; Chapter Seven, page 356). The clean and tidy house is also critical to the majority of women (see Chapter Five, page 227; Chapter Six, page 286; Chapter Seven, page 369). Daughters do not deny this is important, but for them it takes on a slightly different form (see Chapter Five, page 227). The younger women are also interested in learning traditional cooking skills, although there is an acknowledgment that time consuming tasks may no longer be taken on so readily (see Chapter Five, page 203).

The notion of ritual in home making is an interesting one to contemplate here. In her reading of particular fictional texts, Romines (1992) argues that women’s domestic ritual has been honoured. And yet, these tales have been largely ignored in literary critique. The recent interest in women’s writing has revealed a rich and complex body of work, although it has tended to be obscured by ideological concerns about the inequality inherent in domestic responsibility.

Bachelard also pays tribute to the ritual of work at home, focussing on cleaning as a transportative act.

Objects that are cherished in this way really are born of an intimate light, and they attain to a higher degree of reality than indifferent objects, or those that are defined by geometric reality. For they produce a new reality of being, and they take their place not only in an order but in a community of order (Bachelard, 1964: 68).

He goes on to identify women as being entrusted with this special task.

A house that shines from the care it receives appears to have been rebuilt from the inside; it is as though it were new inside. In the intimate harmony of walls and furniture, it may be said that we become conscious of a house that is built by women, since men only know how to build a house from the outside, and they know little or nothing of the ‘wax’ civilisation (Bachelard, 1964: 68).
Contemporary feminist theorists have started to identify the private sphere of home as a legitimate site of power.15 "...we cannot reify ‘the public’ as the one area which contains most explanatory weight in terms of power" (Vasta, 1991: 177). This is critical in appreciating the constraints and opportunities of power suggested by Foucault. It is also a recognition of the narrow conceptualisations of migrant women that the earlier feminists took, ignoring the heterogeneous nature of woman. As Bottomley (1992: 150) writes, "...responses were somewhat monistic in their efforts to resist what were seen as traditional definitions of ‘women’s roles’". Ideology intruded as family, home and domestic work were pushed aside in the quest for equality in the public realm. The domestic environment was increasingly devalued (see Chapter One, page 35). For the migrant, "...it was in this [public] area that they had least power to effect change" (Vasta, 1991: 159). Without power there or at home, the earlier feminists were denying migrant women any power base from which they could effect change (Vasta, 1991: 163).

Family life

Earlier feminist discourses overlooked the important struggles of ethnic women within the family as they negotiated more independence, better relationships with their children and resisted racism (Vasta, 1991: 159). In the stories I heard, the family was an important arena for exercising power. For the older women, their influence was significant.  

_I don’t know if you can call it power. You do have that, you know, well I suppose you can call it power! Control because it’s yours, and whatever is in there, well of course you control it. That includes your children, your husband and whatever is in there..._ (Doris, Greek Focus Group, p3; 152)  

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15 This has been identified in non-migrant feminist writing. For women, Duruz (1994c: 203) identifies the garden "...as compensation for a diminished positioning within gendered relations of power".
The younger Greek women exercise power within the family dynamic, while simultaneously questioning traditional values about marriage, gender roles and interpersonal relationships. With this comes a challenge to the centrality of home, but given their relative comfort with the public sphere, compared with their mothers, this is not surprising.

THE PUBLIC SPHERE AS POWER?

Confirming much of the mainstream literature, the meaning of home for these women extends beyond the dwelling into the neighbourhood. My respondents talk about the importance of having access to shops where they can buy specialist ingredients for traditional cooking. They enjoy moving about in suburbs where they can hear their mother tongue and where easy access to social and religious institutions is available (see Chapter Five, page 213; Chapter Six, page 302; Chapter Seven, page 361).

For some interviewees there are physical reminders of their lost home in the public sphere. These bring comfort and feelings of familiarity, enhancing the bonding process. Even for the younger women who grew up in Australia, their cultural heritage is reinforced by these images.

... when we go around the harbour... I associate Greece with water for some reason. It's got a lot of islands and the climate's really beautiful... So seaside places remind me of Greece, and... outdoor cafes and stuff which they didn't have before here in Sydney. That type of thing we might get in Greece. And then when we go to Greek dances, taverns... that reminds me of Greece. (Anna, p34; 157)

The importance of access to ethnic community support networks is confirmed elsewhere (for example, AHRC, 1985). My research indicates that physical proximity to family is also extremely important. Many of the women visit their
mothers daily and do not want to spend vast amounts of time travelling. Others speak of the comfort they feel knowing that there are people in the street who come from their country.

Meaningful relationships are formed and/or maintained within the neighbourhood as the public realm of home. The importance of relationships with other community members is stressed in many of the stories. This is where cultural expression extends into the public realm, and from where a sense of communal belonging can emerge. It is also another potential source of power for these women.

Nevertheless, the neighbourhood is not always supportive and nurturing. Reinforcing their loss, lack of community caring is always difficult.

Communication. With your neighbourhood, with your parents, with your family, with your friend. It's totally different. Like in our country if you walk in the street which you grow up in, you know every single person living in the street. I've stayed here in the one street for seven years, believe it or not I hardly knew my neighbour in the same flat...because I was in Australian area...I did not know anyone and I tried to introduce myself with my little English when I came here but no-one would... accept me...take me as a neighbour or as a friend. After maybe six years I got one or two of my neighbours to be a good friend of mine. But otherwise there is no communication, there is no relation and it was hard. (Safie, Focus Group, p5; 151)

Racism contributes to feelings of alienation and rejection in the public sphere. Even though it is entrenched government policy (Moss, 1993: 254), multicultural ideology does not necessarily translate into tolerance and acceptance. This continues to permeate the public sphere, thwarting feelings of belonging and power. Although

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16 Barclay et al. (1991: 88-89) report that ethnic women felt lonely in their neighbourhoods. This is contrary to my findings, but underscores the contested nature of the public sphere and the heterogeneous nature of migrant women.

17 Acts of racism are endured by people of colour on a daily basis (see for example, Smith, 1996).
change is evident, empowering the neighbourhood as the public realm of home is a long term process.\textsuperscript{18}

\textit{I always feel, like I feel at home. I would be feeling exactly the other way around if I moved to my own country. I would feel like a foreigner there, than what I am here now. But this is now, the present. I am not talking about... 36 years ago when I did come to Australia, that wasn’t the case. You can see the changes in people that have been here for say 30 or 35 years. They don’t mind if they don’t go to the corner shop or to the Greek shop to do their shopping because they can get all the shopping in Coles, Franklins or Woolworths. But in the ’50s and the ’60s, those shops did not exist. (Doris, Greek Focus Group, p14; 117)}

CONCLUSION

\textit{I love the word home, I’m going to relax, I’m finished, I’m there because I can do whatever I want, it’s my place to be in, it’s my shelter. (Safie, p40; 19)}

In this chapter I have continued to explore the theme of loss and its implications for the women’s meanings of home. I argue that the physical dwelling is a powerful atonement for their feelings of dispossession and alienation. For the younger ones who were reared in Australia, their upbringing necessitates a constant negotiation of two worlds.

Ownership of the house and garden, and its adaptation as a cultural representation of the once familiar, are ways in which the women invest the home with power. It

\textsuperscript{18} The migrant narrative is an important way of helping to break down the stereotyping and homogenising the migrant experience. Real-life stories, presented in both text and photographs, encourage the reader to confront personal suffering, sadness and disappointment as well as celebrate festivities, colour and tradition. I am optimistic that as more and more migrants tell their story, an environment for change can be created. My story here is about enabling the migrant woman to be heard within an academic discourse.
is also a powerful symbol of their success wrought from hard work and sacrifice. The dwelling is the site where they are at their most influential, where they can display their considerable domestic skills and continue cultural, religious and linguistic traditions. Stepping into the neighbourhood is less comforting, given its contradictory messages of belonging yet different, accepted yet apart.
Chapter Ten

Planning, Multiculturalism and Home

...the best we can do about home at this point in time is to bring it, in all its complexity, out into the open (Bammer, 1992: xi).

...there is a challenge and it does not lie in an abstraction called social science, nor in the nature of academic institutions or a male power structure. The central challenge is closer to home. It lies in what each of us chooses to do when we represent our experiences. Whose rules will we follow? Will we make our own? What is the nature of the self, the 'I', that so many of our prohibitions bury? How can we unearth some of the inner worlds that we learn so very well to hide? Are we willing to do this within social science? Do we, in fact, have the guts to say, 'You may not like it, but here I am' (Krieger, 1991: 244).
INTRODUCTION

Chapter Ten draws the study to a conclusion. I summarise the major findings, showing how they relate to the research questions posed at the beginning of the thesis. In doing this, I demonstrate how the study makes a contribution to knowledge in two areas. These are substantive or content issues and process or methodological concerns. In the latter part of the chapter I suggest avenues for further research which will broaden understanding and help overcome some of the limitations of the present project. I conclude by discussing implications of my work for urban planning and housing policy.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

At the beginning of the thesis I established a research focus. Principally, I wanted to ascertain meanings of home for established women migrants living in the middle ring suburbs of Sydney. Part Two of the thesis is devoted to an explication of these multi-dimensional meanings. The richness and contextuality of the narratives, grounded in lived experience, is heard through the women's voices. Their stories are told in the context of my thematic schema, derived from analysing the interview material.

From the central question came nine related points of inquiry, focussing on both substantive and process considerations (see Introduction, pages 15-16). The conclusions in both areas are summarised below.
Substantive Outcomes

A multi-dimensional meaning of home

This research has illuminated multi-dimensional meanings of home for migrant women. I have found that home is an enormously significant concept, encompassing family relationships, the dwelling's physical structure, cultural expression and psychological well-being. For these women, the concept of home extends beyond the house and garden into the surrounding neighbourhood.

Meanings of home in the original country

The childhood home, as directly experienced or through their parents' memories and mythology, has shaped contemporary meanings. The themes of family and culture continue across time, although change is emerging as the old order is challenged and re-negotiated.

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1 Research questions one, four and five are addressed here.

Do established migrant women from the identified ethnic groups have a multi-dimensional meaning of home? What is it and how does it accord with the literature on home?

Is there a relationship between multi-dimensional meanings of home and the physical manifestation of the dwelling?

What role does the neighbourhood play in the meaning of home?

2 Research question two is addressed here.

What are the women's meanings of home in their original country? How can this inform meanings of home in Australia?
Migration stories informing meanings of home

The migration story provides the interpretive link for understanding the women's meanings of home. Loss is central to their leaving and re-settling process and subsequently, the key to my interpretation.

Throughout the stories, the pain of migration is evident. The realities of arriving and settling soon engulfed their initial perceptions of Australia as the land of opportunity. They came with dreams, hopes and aspirations and most found that the reality was different. The road to material success was long and difficult, requiring considerable personal sacrifice and hardship. In turn this extracted a toll on both the women's and their children's lives. There was little time for sharing, helping with the homework or being together as a family.

Interspersed with stories of bereavement, is an unfulfilled yearning for a lost home and denied culture. The belief that migration was only a temporary state, coupled with the promise to return one day, sustained many of the women and their families. However, as this dream slipped further from realisation, the Australian home took on even greater importance. In the few cases where migrants did return, they found a changed countryside, friends gone and different cultural practices.

The experience of migration has significant implications for the women's meanings of home. Explicating this relationship in both the phenomenological and hermeneutic components of the thesis, has furthered understanding of this complex notion in a way that has not been done previously.

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2 Research question three is addressed here.

What is the women's migration story? Can this help to inform their present meanings of home?
Women's Stories of Home

Chapter Ten

Theoretical understandings

* The physical dwelling

The physical house and garden are key components of the migrant and refugee women's meaning of home. This finding challenges multi-dimensional models of home, which declare the physical to be the least important (see Chapter One, page 27).

These stories suggest that the women's struggle in Australia enhances the importance of the physical house and neighbourhood in symbolising achievement and evoking "another place". The owned house and garden enables cultural continuation in physical ways and is the most comfortable form in which to display difference. Home becomes a vehicle of atonement, although the pain of migration and loss of culture always remain.

* Home as a site of power

The private sphere of home is a site of power for the women studied. In established migrant areas the neighbourhood can also reinforce this power, but only with the passage of time. Accordingly, home is the principal locus of power, the controllable space afforded to the women by the dominant society. In this arena she is able to be different by speaking another language, practising her religion, teaching her

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4 Research questions four, five and seven are addressed here.

Is there a relationship between multi-dimensional meanings of home and the physical manifestation of the dwelling?

What role does the neighbourhood play in the meaning of home?

What theoretical understanding of the meanings of home emerges from the women's stories?
children values that are not supported in the public sphere, engaging in the ritual of domestic home-making and celebrating traditional festivals and special occasions.

My findings challenge the early feminist models of home as negative and restrictive. Such an ideological stance resulted in an over simplification of the issues because of the inability to understand the ethnic woman’s experience in its totality (Pettman, 1992; Johnson, 1994: 57; Bottomley, 1992: 146-148). As Stuart (1990: 35) argues,

... marginal women's experience of oppression introduced themes that rendered invalid or incomplete the accepted feminist account of feminist issues like patriarchy, family, work and reproduction.

In illuminating these women’s stories, my work contributes to the "...need to build a more complex notion of ethnicity" (Herne, Travaglia and Weiss, 1992: 1).

Process outcomes

The use and development of a qualitative approach has been as important as the understandings of home that have emerged from my research. In focussing the study, I saw this as a key component, and asked:

*How can women's stories and their ways of knowing be heard in planning research? Can I develop a methodology that empowers and values women who have been marginalised in traditional research? (Research Question Six).*


* A picture is painted whereby they appear totally helpless, oppressing themselves and their families with their onerous traditions and cultures, illiterates who must be helped to develop a 'critical faculty' and who remain totally passive in the face of changes imposed on them. In short, wide-eyed peasant women, finding it extremely difficult to negotiate their way around the big, bad concrete metropolis.
Methodological approach

I came to this study wondering why urban planning research was driven by models of inquiry that did not value experiential knowledge of place. I was also concerned that ethnic women had rarely been heard in the discipline. My disquiet led me to an exploration of qualitative research. Over the course of the project, I have been able to work through the complexities of the method, both philosophically and practically, demonstrating its appropriateness to the current study. By valuing the women’s narratives of their lived experience (my phenomenological position) and not imposing a pre-determined set of questions on them, I was able to establish that loss was central to their experience as settlers in a new country. The method also facilitated the development of trust between interviewer and interviewee, a critical element here. The women’s story telling process was a powerful vehicle for their own reflections and allowed them to come to realisations that would have been impossible using a positivist survey technique.

In developing an empowering methodology in this context, I have found that:

1. Qualitative methods are a vital tool in understanding the complex and rich nature of people’s attachment to place (in this case, women’s relationship with home);

2. Qualitative methods allow unforeseen issues to emerge (in coming from the meaning of home literature, I was not aware that loss would be so central to the women’s stories);

3. Qualitative methods value different ways of knowing (understanding through lived experience) and different ways of expressing knowledge (through experiential story telling).
A new approach to data analysis

As part of my work in developing a practical and appropriate methodological approach, I devised a new tool for qualitative research analysis. My efforts resulted in the conceptualisation of SORA (see Chapter Four, page 137), which will be of use to other researchers for adaptation and enhancement.

Reflexive approach

In adopting a reflexive stance as part of my feminist position, I have been able to better understand the expression of power in my own discipline, both in terms of its hegemony and epistemological base.

Specifically, I have found that:

1. The concerns of planning and its principal research methodological bases are largely defined by patriarchy and capital (not women and lived experience); 6

2. The home is considered a micro environment outside the "big picture" issues that "should" dominate planning;

3. Qualitative methods are viewed by some in the planning profession as at best, an adjunct to the "objectivity" of positivist research, and at worst, not suitable for any academic inquiry (See Chapter Four which details my experience of these attitudes);

6 Over the course of the project, I have discovered glimmers of hope that suggest this is changing (for example, Sandercock, 1995; Watson and McGillivray, 1995; Gibson and Watson, 1994; Sandercock and Forsyth, 1992).
4. Feminist concerns (that is, gender specific studies) and theoretical positions (for example, empowerment and valuing lived experience) are considered marginal by certain members of the planning profession.

LIMITATIONS OF THE PRESENT STUDY

Every research project is limited to what it can eventually achieve. This reality is about time and resources. It is a fact which needs to be acknowledged (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992: 147). In identifying limitations, the research process is re-created as possibilities for further study emerge. Thus, what may seem to be a limiting factor, becomes another avenue for inquiry; another chance to contribute to understanding.

In my case, there are two broad areas of constraint. These are discussed before I consider possibilities for further research.

Definitional boundaries of the study

1. In this study, I have investigated three ethnic groups - Arabic, Vietnamese and Greek. While there were good reasons for selecting these groups (see Chapter Four, pages 113-114), other ethnic communities were not studied.

2. The study was geographical defined, focussing on established ethnic areas in middle ring suburbs of Sydney (see Chapter Four, pages 111-112). I have not considered other areas of Sydney, nor localities where migrant communities are not well established.

3. I have confined myself to interviewing women in private sector housing. I did not include anyone from public housing in the sample.
4. I have restricted my interviews to women. In one way, I do not see this as a constraint, given the invisibility of ethnic women in urban planning. Nevertheless, I am conscious of a wealth of understanding that would flow from studying meanings of home for children and men, as well as their relationships with women as partners, friends and mothers.

Methodological constraints

Given that I have used qualitative research exclusively, it could be argued that my findings cannot be generalised. Whether this is the case or not is subject to considerable debate in the literature (see for example, Silverman, 1993: 166; Glesne and Peshkin, 1992: 148; Patton, 1990: 486-490). Indeed, Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that generalisations are highly suspect in any social research given the complexity of contemporary society.

While the jury is still out on this question, I am not claiming generalisations from the outcomes of this research to other migrant or refugee women. Nevertheless, my work illuminates the complexities of meanings that contribute to similar cases (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992: 148). Accordingly, the study has implications for urban planning and housing policy (see page 428).
IDEAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

With every study, new questions emerge. This project suggests many rich avenues for further inquiry. Some are obvious from the definitional constraints outlined above, while others emerge from the findings. I suggest a few possibilities below.

1. It is important to examine meanings of home for migrants residing in suburbs where ethnic communities are largely invisible. Do migrants and refugees living in these localities have the same relationship with their home as the women in my study? Is there an increased emphasis on the private sphere in this context? Why have people located in these areas?

2. Will the passage of time alter meanings of home for those from NESBs? In what ways will subsequent generations express their cultural and linguistic heritage in both the private and public spheres? Will there be a blending of cultures and lifestyles as traditional family roles and responsibilities are challenged and contested? Children’s and men’s meanings of home would be interesting adjuncts to a study of this kind, with comparative possibilities using my data.

3. How can different cultural needs be better accommodated and acknowledged in the public sphere? Is this related to enhancing and nurturing expressions of power outside the private domain for people from NESBs? Given my findings about the importance of home as a site of power and contemporary concerns regarding alienation in the community, it is important to consider ways of reducing this apparent imbalance. Academics such as Armstrong (1994) and Hayden (1995) are doing this in relation to the recognition of historically and socially significant sites for minority groups. This seminal work must continue and be augmented in different ways, focussing on lived experience.
4. How can planners and policy makers be better equipped to use both qualitative and quantitative research techniques? What are the inhibiting factors in relation to the adoption of qualitative approaches? Is it more than simply expanding the planning curriculum and exposing students to qualitative research early in their careers?

As well as these possibilities, the interview material I have collected could be further interrogated for more insights. It is rare for qualitative data to be fully exhausted in an extensive study such as this. Of particular interest are the differences between the women. My focus here has been on the commonalities across the three communities, rather than their contrasts. Drawing out and analysing the differences would prove a fruitful next step. As well, I am interested in following up several issues of an interpretive nature. These include the meaning of neighbours and neighbouring and the changing role of the family at home and in the broader community.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING AND HOUSING POLICY**

I have been presenting the implications of my work during the course of the project. As well as speaking at several conferences and numerous seminars, I have published material in both academic and practice arenas (see Chapter Four, page 144 for details). Not only has this provided me with an important source of ongoing feedback about the study, it has assisted my understanding of the implications for both housing and urban planning policy. I summarise these below.

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7 Research questions eight and nine are addressed here.

*How can this theoretical understanding inform housing policy both generally and specifically?*

*How can multicultural values be incorporated into housing and planning policy?*
Housing policy

A broader view of housing policy

A broader view of housing needs to be incorporated into policy statements and review. Currently, the focus is on the value of housing as a physical commodity - its role as shelter and economic investment. Housing has not been seen as a site for emotional expression, sentimentality, continuity or belonging. In order to be more effective, housing policy must consider the implications of both physical and non-physical concerns. This is essential if we are to encompass the variety and richness of human experience and the ways that this can be expressed within the dwelling.

Ownership

The role of ownership in symbolising achievement for the new settler needs to be considered in both housing policy and tenure reform. So too does the sense of personal autonomy that ownership brings. Dwellings can be altered to meet cultural and religious needs, albeit with the necessary financial resources. In this way, ownership affords the greatest opportunities for individualisation of the dwelling. Can other forms of tenure provide the same perception of freedom? If it is not possible to do this, how can ownership be strengthened to provide new settlers with feelings of success, as well as the ability to live in a physically appropriate dwelling? Given growing economic difficulties, industry restructuring and employment uncertainties, it is becoming difficult for some people to meet mortgage repayments. In view of these trends and the importance attached to home ownership, should policy be redirected to enable people to continue in this form of tenure?
The house and garden

My work reveals that the house and garden is the most powerful residential form, enabling the expression of difference in a comfortable setting. It also facilitates the continuation of family in terms of extended family living, regular gatherings and special cultural and religious functions. Australian housing policy must recognise non-Anglo lifestyles and the imperative to re-create lost cultures in an individual way. We need to understand more about the real advantages that the house and garden afford. At the same time, different possibilities for providing equivalent advantages in other housing styles require attention. Of course, we cannot ignore issues of city form and size. Flexible accommodation is part of the solution here.\(^8\)

Flexible housing design

Different cultural preferences and lifestyles demand flexibility in housing design. The arrangement of internal rooms, their size and personal expression in the form of physical decoration, both within and outside the dwelling, are all relevant issues here. A degree of flexibility in building and planning codes may well be warranted. Individualisation of flat buildings should be addressed, along with our predisposition for order and unity in the streetscape. This has implications for how heritage and neighbourhood planning are viewed, where white, Anglo, middle class values predominate. Planning policy should be encouraging the market to provide affordable, larger and better designed units so that people have a greater variety of medium density housing options.

\(^8\) Decentralisation, as an alternative to continued urban sprawl, is another issue to be seriously reconsidered.
The neighbourhood

Physical access to adequate services and facilities remains important. Planning safe residential neighbourhoods should continue as a cornerstone of equitable housing policy. These things help us to feel at home in our local community. For multicultural groups the ability to purchase special food, to be able to speak one's own language, and to use social and religious facilities in the local neighbourhood are essential. Community use of outdoor public space needs to be reconsidered to ensure activities, retail markets and eating places reflect and meet the aspirations of the local community. This will go a long way to enhancing the feeling that home extends well beyond the boundaries of the dwelling, providing a sense of belonging, as well as encouraging the development of an interactive, diverse and rich community.

Urban planning policy

Sensitivity to multiculturalism

My work contributes to the emerging realisation that planners must attune themselves to the needs of different ethnic groups who live in contemporary Australia. It is no longer appropriate to use the Anglo-centric values of a by-gone era. Nor is it sufficient to essentialise difference in terms of a homogeneous "other". Diversity within different groups must be acknowledged, researched to enable understanding and fed into planning policy and practice. Issues of gender also have to be considered from a multiplicity of positions. The power brokers of ethnic lobby groups are not the only voices to hear.
Qualitative methodologies

My research demonstrates the power of qualitative methodologies in bringing about a deeper understanding of the relationship between people and place. It is essential that planning practitioners embrace different qualitative approaches. I am not advocating an abandonment of other methodologies, but rather an addition to the tool bag of investigative skills. With a broader range of methods from which to choose, understanding will be enhanced and the profession equipped to deal with the complexing issues facing society today.

Urban consolidation policy: a broader perspective

My findings suggest that urban planners need to take a broader perspective in the current ideological push for urban consolidation. The women in my study expressed a strong desire to live in a house and garden because of the many opportunities afforded by this residential form. It symbolises success, facilitates cultural expression, can be physically modified and provides a comfortable environment in which to be different. Some women specifically articulated their disappointment with medium density accommodation in Australia compared with where they lived before, reinforcing their desire to acquire a house.

Although planners cannot ignore the future implications of sprawling, low density cities, they have to acknowledge the complex role that housing, as both house and home, plays in an individual’s life. If we approach policy with a simplistic world view and proceed to formulate myopic strategies, positive social and environmental changes are unlikely. I am also suspicious of economists’ pricing policies to effect change in a humane and equitable manner. Planners need to recognise the potential

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9 There are others suggesting a re-think here, highlighting the simplistic arguments in the rush to consolidate. See for example, Tabakoff, 1996; Lloyd, 1994/5; Troy, 1992.
of creative thinking, both within the profession and the broader community, rather than being seduced by the economic rationalists and their seemingly "quick-fix" solutions. Consideration also needs to be given to improving acoustic designs and spatial allocations in flats and town houses.

But planners cannot do it all. Other professions, individuals and groups must be encouraged to contribute to the growth of community spirit. Neighbourliness needs to be nurtured and supported by all. This is fundamental to successful close living and the creation of an environment where difference and diversity are accepted and celebrated, and conflicts dealt with openly and appropriately.

CONCLUSION

Taking research outcomes to the women

The dissemination of research findings beyond the academy is a vital part of the inquiry process (Roberts, 1984: 199). Returning study outcomes to the participants is germane to feminist research (see Chapter Three, page 90). The social change objective of inquiry and its inter-personal nature demand that research is appropriately returned to those who enabled it to happen. In my case, this is the women who agreed to be interviewed, openly and honestly sharing their meanings of home.

10 Katz, Peter (1994) presents a plethora of creative ideas in this regard.

11 A Sri Lankan mother took her life and those of her children in an outer Sydney suburb last year. This tragedy was linked to the victim’s feelings of alienation and loneliness in a home where she had no sense of belonging or community (Bearup, 1995).
There are two ways in which I plan to return my findings to the women individually, the communities from which they come and the broader Anglo society.

Firstly, I will prepare a short report for each woman. This will include her "story" from the relevant chapter in Part Two (either the Greek, Arabic or Vietnamese chapter). An easy-to-read introduction will be incorporated, as well as an overview of the study outcomes. It is my intention to present this to the women at an informal gathering, but this will depend on their response and interest. Indeed, they may have an alternative suggestion. Of course, copies of the different women’s stories will be available to every participant.

Secondly, I hope to convince a non-academic publisher of the worth of taking the women’s stories to a broader audience. My ideas around this are still embryonic, but two publishing houses have expressed an interest and will be my first port of call. It is feasible that a more academic tome could be produced, focussing on methodological concerns, theoretical interpretations and implications for planning and housing.

**A more humane approach to planning**

Planning and design professionals, responsible for shaping individual dwellings and the communities that surround them, need to be much more open to an appreciation of the intense emotional relationship between people and place. It is no longer adequate, if it ever was, to dismiss this as too difficult and impossible to translate into the physical realm. The dwelling is the most intimate and important of all spaces with which we interact on a daily basis. Planners and architects must understand multi-dimensional meanings of home and how they can be incorporated into their work with communities and individuals.
The emotional and spiritual relationships that we have with our most familiar environments are complex and intriguing. Whilst these have traditionally been beyond the scope of rational planning considerations, at an academic level there are signs of a shift in thinking. My work is part of this movement, as is Sandercock's (1995) recent contribution. In listening to "voices from the borderlands", she finds a wealth of understanding about future directions for planning. The "limits and distortions of scientific and technical knowledge" are well established, as are "objective, disembodied, abstract systems of reasoning" (p85). We are left with a new approach which values "experiential, embodied, contextualized knowledge", as well as "communicative skills, openness, empathy, and sensitivity". In order to bring about a "truly inclusive and democratic planning" (p85), class, gender and ethnic diversity are respected, together with different ways of knowing and researching.

There is a growing urgency to challenge the planning profession's preoccupation with the physical environment and its reluctance to acknowledge human feelings, emotions, aspirations and dreams as significant concerns of the discipline. The development of a qualitative approach for planning theory, which in turn informs practice, is integral to this challenge. If we can manage to do this, then there is hope that urban planning can meet the complex and diverse needs of human beings in a multicultural world.
ON STOPPING WRITING...

It is almost impossible to believe that I am typing the last words in my thesis. Is this the end? Have I finished? It seems that there is so much more to be said; so many more books to read; so many more ideas to explore and understand. This can hardly be the finish. When I read Milne-Home’s (1992: 22) words, I realised I was not alone in grappling with the impossibility of completing.

What was exquisitely liberating for me was the idea that I could produce a thesis without burdening myself with ending all conflict and debate: delivering a tome that said it all. I would write only what I had come to understand and there would be more debate and more conflict along with some clarity and some new areas of understanding. It was important to honour my efforts without being absurd with claims of a definitive thesis. My voice would echo the many voices that had informed my thesis and no doubt there would be more questions arising from the effort than answers to questions posited at the outset of this quest.

It took me a long time to realise that I would never actually "finish" my thesis. The concept of "stopping" gradually emerged as the only possible end point. And even "stopping" is not an end in itself. More like a pause. A semi-colon. A time to reflect on what I have been through. A time to give thanks to the women for sharing their stories; a time to feel their pain, loss and sadness. A time to honour my learning through this process and celebrate my achievement in drawing it together. A time to feel my own fear in finally letting this part of me go. Releasing it into the world.

It is also important to reflect on how I would do this work differently if I had my time over again.

Firstly, I would undertake another qualitative project collaboratively. I would work with supportive, but not acquiescent, research colleagues, as well as the community. The richness of the research path needs to be shared, lived in communion with
others, not in solitary confinement. I have been fortunate in finding supportive networks during the course of my study, but this has not always been easy and at times, lacked ongoing commitment. A collaboration from the outset is my preference for the future. In working more closely with the community, an action research framework would also be possible.

Secondly, I would ensure that the research time frame enabled a more interactive process between data collection and analysis. Ideally, interviews would proceed in tandem with detailed data analysis, which in turn would form the basis of collaborative dialogue. Due to my part-time candidature, this has not been possible here. A more integrated process would make the analysis phase more enjoyable and such pleasure in the work would be reinforced by collaboration.

Thirdly, I would seriously consider the need to transcribe all the interview data before committing myself to such a course. The advantage of transcribing everything is that the possibility of interrogating the data using new themes remains an immediate possibility. However, with summaries of what was covered in an interview, it would be possible to transcribe material not initially treated in this way. The advantage of not doing everything at once would be a saving in resources (time, money and energy), which could be used in other beneficial ways. Nevertheless, a decision of this type would have to be made collaboratively, accounting for the particular research project and the expectations of the community.

Finally, I would embrace the task with confidence and a firm belief in the legitimacy of the method and my feminist orientation. I needed to go through the process recorded in these pages to come to this place.
The hour is late. The night time air, still and quiet. Its coolness comforting and chilling at the same time. The cursor blinks on the screen, waiting to move along. One of my furry companions emerges from his sleep to nuzzle my ankle, bringing me back to another world. A world where I am stopping writing to begin anew. Thank you for sharing in this journey with me.
Part Four

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Part Five

Appendices
APPENDIX ONE

Initial Contacts

I gained an enormous amount of vital information from different people in the initial phases of my work. I list my contacts by their position (I did not have permission to reveal names) and a brief summary of what we discussed.

1. Interviews with postgraduate students and academics

Purpose of Interviews

- To determine appropriate research methodologies.
- To establish contact with relevant groups and individuals for interviewing purposes.
- To firmly establish the direction of the research.
- To gain assistance with references.

Contacts

A/Professor in the School of Town Planning, UNSW
Discussed the topic and its viability; relevant references.

PhD student in the School of Town Planning, UNSW
Discussed this student’s work in housing and how she went about the practicalities of obtaining data.

Lecturer in the Department of Social Work, University of Sydney
Discussed my topic and appropriate research methods.

Senior Lecturer, School of Social Work, UNSW
Discussed her work on Vietnamese migrants in America. She provided copies of this work and valuable insights into the Vietnamese community. Also gave me contacts in the community.

Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Architecture, Sydney University
Discussed her work on women and housing, including the deeper meanings of home.
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Appendices

PhD student, Behavioural Sciences in Medicine, Sydney University
Discussed interviewing methodologies. Contact made through a women's group at Sydney University.

Social worker, previously an academic
Discussed feminist literature in the housing field. She provided me with many references.

Lecturer, School of Behavioural Science, Macquarie University
Discussed qualitative methodologies, with particular reference to the use of phenomenology.

Consultant and Lecturer, Department of Social Ecology, UWS
Discussed early work on the meaning of home and qualitative research.

Lecturer, Department of Social Ecology, UWS
Discussed her work on home and journeying, as well as qualitative methods.

Lecturer, School of Social Work, UNSW
Discussed qualitative methods. She gave me enormous encouragement to pursue this path, as well as invaluable help in understanding the technique.

2. Interviews with community workers, real estate agents and migrants

Purpose of Interviews

To gain background knowledge about the nature of home for the three groups to be studied.

To gain background knowledge about the nature of the culture of the three groups to be studied.

To establish contacts for the main study.

General

Worker for the Aged, Canterbury Council Community Services Department
Background information about the Vietnamese community as well as useful contacts for the study.

Ethnic Worker, Canterbury Council
Useful contacts for the three ethnic groups.
Women's Stories of Home

Appendices

Director, Canterbury Housing (A local housing cooperative)
Overview of the different cultural groups to be studied and particular housing issues that affect them.

Worker from Women's Immigrant Speakout
Useful contacts as well as background information on migration issues.

Vietnamese

Male Vietnamese Migrant (contacted through Worker for the Aged at Canterbury Council)
Wonderful insights about the Vietnamese concept of home.

Female Vietnamese Migrant (contacted through Director of Canterbury Housing)
Information about the Vietnamese concept of home.

Worker at the Vietnamese Women's Association
Information about culture and useful contacts in the community.

Lebanese

Worker from the Australian Arabic Welfare Council
Information about culture, the meaning of home and useful contacts in the community.

Female Lebanese Migrant (contact made through mutual friend)
Indepth interview about being a Lebanese Migrant in Australia. This turned out to be a "practice run" for my interviews with the women. I gained a great deal of understanding of the general issues for migrants negotiating a different way of life.

Worker from the Lebanese Welfare Council
Information about culture, the meaning of home and useful contacts in the community.

Greek

Greek real estate agent working in the study area
Useful background information about all groups concepts of home, with an emphasis on the Greek community.

Female Greek migrant (contact made through my work at the time)
Insights into Greek customs and traditional values.
Women’s Stories of Home

Greek community Worker from Canterbury/Earlwood Caring Association
Information about Greek culture, the meaning of home and useful contacts in the community.

Worker with the Greek Welfare Centre
Information about Greek culture, the meaning of home and useful contacts in the community.
APPENDIX TWO

Back in the Pool: Reflections on the Process

Yet it is in our idleness, in our dreams, that the submerged truth sometimes comes to the top (Woolf, 1977: 32).

Shortly before I started this thesis I discovered the joys of swimming regularly. It was a slow start. I had flippers to help keep me afloat and feelings of inadequacy to overcome as the competent swimmers swished passed me effortlessly. Gradually I gained confidence and started to swim laps unaided, lap after lap, up and down, breathing at the surface of the water. During this time I let my thoughts wander, sometimes to work out my program for the day, at other times to think through a particular thesis problem that I was grappling with at that point.

My swimming has been one consistent activity through these years. Swimming time helps to put everything into perspective, calming me and preparing me to face the next set of challenges. Indeed, I have come to some major breakthroughs in the pool when I have stopped intellectualising. Somehow the water speaks, connecting me with my inner creativity.

Reflecting on the thesis, and my process through it, has been an integral part of the research. I weave my reflections throughout the thesis. It is as though I take the reader to the pool, my source of inspiration and connection with creativity. Reflection has enabled me to recognise that I bring my whole self to the research - my intellectual capacities, my emotional knowing, my personal feelings and passions; my self doubt, my hopes for change and my dreams of a different academy where nurturing and support are valued as highly as criticism and challenge.

Reflection has also enabled me to deal with self doubt, terror, negativity and feelings of being overwhelmed. I have not had to pretend that these do not exist. They have moved in and out of the process over time. Had I not reflected on these "negatives"
I would not have grown, nor would my story have evolved in the way it has. In reflecting on these tensions, I have been forced to really question my work in a way that has revealed its great strengths, meaning and worth.

I am conscious that owning self doubt could be interpreted by some as an admission of not knowing, weakness and stupidity. In rejecting this interpretation, I am arguing for more honesty in the research process. Until we publicly begin to acknowledge the inherent messiness of the process, we will continue our deception, masquerading research as neat and tidy. We will fail to learn from each other’s difficulties and problems. Accordingly, I am asserting that we have to stop seeing the difficulties and problems as "negative", but rather as steps in the process that enrich, enliven and deepen the research experience and our subsequent discoveries of knowledge. Owning doubt and admitting to having feelings about one’s research runs contrary to the dominant positivist paradigm which holds intellectual knowing as the only legitimate key to understanding. Self doubt in such a context, exposes the researcher to ridicule and ostracism; indeed a risky business. In such a context it can also be interpreted as saying, "I have failed".

Reflecting on the research has facilitated my learning just as much as any other activity. In some cases, more. Not only have I critically reviewed the women’s stories, the literature and personal interactions during the course of the project, I have thought about my interpretations and the biases that I bring to the study. I believe that this has enabled a greater understanding than would have been possible had I rejected this knowing at the expense of only honouring the intellectual side of myself. In many ways the reflective aspect of the thesis is about my lived experience on this journey, which I have discussed elsewhere (Thompson, 1993b).
APPENDIX THREE

Community Contacts to Identify Potential Interviewees

The following community workers approached women on my behalf, asking if they would be prepared to take part in the study. These community workers provided the first contacts, some of whom subsequently referred other people to me.

The workers contacted were able to locate women in the study area.

Housing Officer: Bankstown Community Housing
Community Officer: Immigrant Women’s Speakout
Welfare Worker: Muslim Women’s Association
Community Worker: St George Migrant Resource Centre
Community Worker: Vietnamese Women’s Association
Vietnamese Community Worker: Marrickville Community Health Centre

There were two other sources for respondents from the Greek community.

Greek real estate agent in the Canterbury LGA
Planning officer at Canterbury Council
APPENDIX FOUR

Confidentiality Agreement

Participation in Home Research

This is to certify that I, ____________________________, of ____________________________, have been interviewed by Susan Thompson from the University of New South Wales about my meaning of home.

I also understand that I will be paid $50 for my participation in this research project. This participation may involve two indepth interviews with Susan Thompson and follow up phone calls.

I agree to be involved in this research project on the understanding that what I say is confidential and will only be used by Susan Thompson for her research into the meaning of home.

__________________________
Signature

__________
Date
APPENDIX FIVE

Letter to Prospective Participant

Dear (woman's name)

I am writing to you to explain more about my research project and why I would like you to take part.

The research project is called: What does home mean to women from different ethnic backgrounds?

I am responsible for the whole project. I am a lecturer in the School of Town Planning at the University of NSW. I am conducting this research as part of a doctoral thesis and my research duties at the university. I am also very interested in housing issues, particularly how they affect women and the impact of culture. I am committed to feeding the results of my work back into the community and am willing to do this in a variety of ways.

Aim of the study: I want to understand what home means to women from different ethnic backgrounds. This understanding is at a deep level and goes beyond the physical house and its surroundings. I want to know how women see their home in the Australian setting and to what extent their culture, background and values, as they have developed over time, influence their meaning of home. I want to understand how the women’s Australian home concept has evolved and why.

Respondents: I am talking with women from the Greek, Lebanese and Vietnamese communities. I wish to contact women who have been in Australia for some length of time. Perhaps they came here as children or teenagers. Perhaps they were born here of first generation migrant parents. The women that I interview for this part of the study will need to be fluent in conversational English.

I am interested in talking to women who have left their parental home and are, or have been, in relationships. They will have established their own home as renters or purchasers at some stage in their lives. They may have children, although this is not critical. There is no age requirement, although I would envisage that the women would be somewhere between 20 and 60 years of age. I would like to interview women living in the Canterbury - Bankstown area, where there are established ethnic communities.

The Process: I will be interviewing women over several hours. It may be necessary to meet a couple of times. I will ask a number of questions about the meaning of home and the woman being interviewed will be free to elaborate and discuss ideas.
at length. The interview will be very informal and I hope, an enjoyable experience. The interviews will be recorded on tapes. This is necessary for the type of research I am doing. I will also need to interview the women in their own homes, unless this is impossible. Each woman participating will receive a $50 payment for her time and cooperation. This is one way that I can say thank you.

Confidentiality: All interviews will be strictly confidential. The women being interviewed will not be identified on the interview tapes, other than on a first name basis, provided this is acceptable. The tapes will be used for my research purposes only. The research will be written up in a thesis which will not identify the women.

Any Questions? Feel free to contact me at home on 798 0295 or at the University on 697 4837.

I will give you a call in a week or so to see if you would like to be interviewed.

Many thanks for considering this request.

Yours sincerely

Susan Thompson
APPENDIX SIX

Question Schedule

This is the final question schedule that I used in the interviews. It evolved to this format during the course of my meetings with the women.

Introduction to the study and the interviews, including ongoing commitment, questions to be covered.

Introductory Details

1. Identification.

2. Age.

3. Place of birth.

4. How long in Australia?

5. History of moving, both here and in other countries.


7. Outside employment.

8. Education level.

9. Religion - at what level do you practice?

Childhood home

1. Describe your most important childhood home in your country of origin (or with your parents when they first moved to Australia).

1a. Describe your childhood homes.

2. Who lived there?

3. What did you like about it, did not like about it (positive and negative)?
3a. What sort of things did you do in your home - help with housework, play, study, spend time with your family?

4. What things do you want to recreate in your ideal home?

5. What things don’t you want to recreate?

6. What did this home mean to you?

7. What is your favourite room or place in this house (outside and inside)?

8. What was the local neighbourhood like?

9. Did you have relatives and/or friends in the neighbourhood?

11. What sort of things did you do in the local neighbourhood?

12. How important is this home for you now?

13. Can you remember your last night in your country? Can you tell me about it and what was significant?

**Present home**

1. Describe where you live now.

2. How does it differ from your ideal home and your childhood home?

3. Why?

4. What influence does your background/culture have on this place?

5. How could you improve it?

6. How did you come to live in this place?

7. Do you want to stay here?

8. In what ways is the place where you live important to you?

9. What does this home mean for you?

10. What is your favourite room or favourite place in this house?
Women's Stories of Home

11. What is the local area like?

12. Do you feel safe in this area; in this house/flat?

13. What do you do in the local area?

14. Do you have many friends and/or relatives in the local neighbourhood?

Practical Issues

1. What things do you do in the place where you live?

2. How do you organise household chores?

2a. How much time do you spend doing housework?

3. Who is responsible for decorating the place where you live?

4. Who is responsible for decisions about household finance?

5. Who makes decisions about whether to move into a new place?

6. Describe a typical family gathering in your home -

   What activities happen?
   
   Who comes?
   
   How is it organised?
   
   Who participates and in what ways?

Issues of Loss, Sadness, Bereavement and Memories - The Migrant Experience

1. Do you go to any places that remind you of your home country?

2. Do you want to go back and live in your home country? Why?

3. Do you want your children/grandchildren to speak your original language? Why? What about later generations?

4. Do you think that maintaining your original culture is important?
5. Do you have Australian born friends? Do they come to your place; do you go to their places? etc

6. In what ways is this physical house important to you?

7. Is the home just as important in this country as in your country of origin (or parents' origin)?

8. If someone asks you what is your nationality, what do you say?

9. Do you cook a lot of food from your country? Do you think that it is important to cook food from your country? Does it have a role to play in maintaining cultural links and continuation of the culture? Why?

10. If someone asks what is your nationality, what do you say? (Theme - identity, belonging)

11. How do you feel living in this area? (Theme - difference)

12. How do you feel about participating in this interview? How do you feel about me interviewing you?

**Your ideal home**

1. Describe your ideal home for you at this point in time.

2. Where is it located and in what sort of community?

3. What does it look like - inside and out?

4. Who lives there?

5. How big is it?

6. What sort of structure is it?

7. Is it new (did you build and design it) or is it old?

8. What are your favourite rooms in this ideal house? Do you have your own special room?

9. Do you own or rent it?
10. What is the local neighbourhood like?

11. How much does your background/cultural background influence this ideal place and the surrounding neighbourhood?

12. What does this home mean for you?

Other Issues

Have the following issues been covered in the interview:

Attitude to flats?

Attitude to home ownership?

General Themes

These are for my purposes only in checking the interview coverage

1. What are the most important things for you in a home?

2. Do any of the following themes describe your meaning of home

   * material security and individual control, which comes about from physical, financial and/or emotional involvement with a dwelling;

   * reflection of the self, including personal status;

   * permanence and continuity, bringing about familiarity over time;

   * personal relationships with family and friends;

   * centre of activity;

   * refuge from the outside world; and

   * material structure (Despres, 1991)

3. Other themes/ expansion of above themes (to be used if and when necessary)

   * Feeling of acceptance

   * Feeling of understanding
Women's Stories of Home

* Privacy
* Choice
* Memories
* Independence
* Family relationships
* Symbolism
* Customs

Migrant Experience

* Sense of loss

* Identity crisis - which country do I belong to

* Divided loyalties - I like Australia (it has given me opportunities, freedom etc) but I still love my country

* Relationships in the host country - importance of family presence

* Reminders of home - selected memories happy childhood home
APPENDIX SEVEN

Post Interview Reflections

After each interview I reflected on the process. The following example reflections were recorded after my interviews with Dora. I met Dora on two occasions. These reflections have not been edited.

Reflections

Prior to the interview (over the phone when I was arranging the interview time) Dora expressed concerns about the way that the community is treating Vietnamese migrants today. She actually said that the older migrants are doing bad things to the Vietnamese and other more recently arrived groups. She believes that the situation is easier for migrants today, but says that it is still hard coming to a new country. She believes that the older, more established migrant groups are envious of the perceived easier situation that new migrants have today.

She also expressed an opinion that she believes that Australian born people - going back some generations (probably white Anglos) - are very jealous of the new Australian’s ability to own their own home. She told me that these Australians do not realise what the new Australians went through to get their houses. There were many sacrifices. Dora also said to me that the Greeks (I do not think that she was speaking for any other groups) give a lot to their children and that this is not understood by the Australian community. The Greeks work very hard for their children and do not spend their money on entertainment or things for themselves. Accordingly, the Greek parents then have the money to give to their children.

Post Interview Checklist

The atmosphere at both interviews was very comfortable and cordial. Dora is a very friendly and hospitable woman. She is also a good talker and told me a lot of detail. The first interview was four hours and the second, just over one hour.

There were some interruptions at the first interview. There were quite a few phone calls, which Dora did not cut short. She asked after the people on the phone and after she had finished, explained who it was and that she had not spoken to them recently.

At the second interview, there were no interruptions. Towards the end of the interview, Dora’s daughter came in to say hello and was very interested in the interview and what we were doing. She said that she would be interested in being
interviewed and would like to know some books about migrants in Australia. She may well be a good contact for me, particularly at a later stage.

Dora was very attentive and interested in the project. She said that she enjoyed the experience of remembering her childhood home and her parents. I gathered that she had a happy childhood and in many ways would like to go back to that time in her life. Perhaps it is the notion of being carefree and without responsibility.

Dora was very attentive throughout both interviews. I got tired before she did and had to stop the first interview after four hours. She was happy to go on! Dora is a good talker, but I felt that what she was saying was "to the point". She gave me lots of detail. The only time I felt a bit frustrated was when she kept on talking as I was trying to leave. She told me several stories, which are detailed below.

In relation to having a second interview, I marked the questions that we had not dealt with and so was able to ask them. I did find however, that I could not remember certain things and kept on wondering whether I had asked some questions. In the end, I basically stuck with the marked questions. The problem of not remembering was exacerbated because I had been interviewing all morning and even though I only interviewed Dora on Sunday (today's interview was on Wednesday), it was difficult to recollect many of the answers. I really should have re-listened to the tapes.

Dora was interested to know whether she had helped me. I do not know if this was an actual concern about information being given, especially as her comments came after I had said that the interview was great.

Dora did not invite me to inspect the house. I decided not to ask. I saw the living areas, which comprise kitchen, dining room (separated from the kitchen by a bench) and lounge room. The latter is open to both the kitchen and dining room.

Both interviews were held in the dining room, which is part of the kitchen. I asked to sit at the table, rather than in the lounge room, where we would have been much further apart.

Physical Characteristics of the room - the dining room is quite messy compared to the other Greek houses that I have visited. This is partly due to the fact that the living area is completely open. It is also due to the fact that there are many things out on shelves and on top of cupboards - boxes of appliances, huge jars of home made olives and bits and pieces. There are a lot of family photographs around, including graduation photos of the son and photo of the baby grandson. In the lounge room is a large wedding photo of Dora and her husband.

Acceptance of payment - Dora was happy to accept payment and did not ask questions about where it came from.
Physical dwelling checklist

Type of house - brick house with open front porch, surrounded by typical Greek columns.

Number of bedrooms - I think there are three bedrooms - this is on the tape.

Traditional furniture - the furniture is traditional, although modest.

Paintings/prints - I do not remember any thing outstanding.

Ornaments - there are ornaments around the house. It has the feel of a busy "Greek" house, although it is a messy house.

Musical Instruments - I do not recall any.

Curtains/window coverings - a mix of curtains and venetians.

Potted plants - I noticed a large plant in a pot in the lounge.

Spacious/lots of clutter - the house is full of clutter, it is not particularly spacious.

Floor coverings - carpet in the living areas and vinyl on the kitchen.

Books - there were quite a lot of books around the living area.

Television/stereo equipment - the television is in the lounge room. I did not notice stereo equipment. It may well have been there.

Desk/study accoutrements - none in the living area.

Religious icons/paintings/altar - Dora has a small glass box like object that looks like a little house. It has a cross on the front and at the first interview, there was a light on inside. She pointed this out to me and explains the object's significance on the tape.

Standard of house cleanliness and tidiness - this is one of the messiest houses that I have been in. It has a lived-in appearance and is not at all spotlessly clean. It looks as thought ordinary mortals live in the house! There a dishes draining in the sink, and lots of clutter all over the place.

Level of English competency - Dora's English is excellent. She talks about her desire to learn English inside a year of her arrival and of her love of mixing with lots of people. She is a very outgoing woman and has made a lot of Australian born friends. A high level of competency in English is important to Dora. She does
however, understand that it is hard for some migrants to learn English if they have been confined to their homes for various reasons.

Dress of respondent - Dora was dressed very casually for the first interview. This was on a Sunday afternoon. I felt quite appropriate in my jeans and jumper. On the second occasion that we talked, she was more dressed up in a skirt and jumper. Even though I was in jeans, I felt comfortable.

Themes

The happy migrant - making the most of opportunities.

The hard working migrant - working hard for the children and their opportunities in a new country.

Stories after the tape was turned off

After the second interview, I turned the tape off but Dora kept on talking. I do not think she talked on because the tape was not on. She is very talkative and not at all shy about the tape. She told me several stories, that I wrote down as soon as I had left the interview. The stories were around the themes of non-acceptance of the migrant by others and her acceptance of the migrant (of difference).

1. Builder Story

Dora had a builder doing work in the house. She asked him to stay for dinner and he accepted the invitation. He sat at the table and as Dora was serving the meal, he said, "Do you use a knife and fork to eat with?" Dora asked him what they ate with and he said that he did not know. She looked at me and said that she found it incredible that such attitudes exist. She did not say when the story had actually happened, although I gather it was a while ago, but in the last ten years.

2. Radio Story

Dora was listening to the radio. There was a talk-back show and a man was talking about migrants in a very dismissive and rude way. Dora felt that he obviously had no idea about what he was saying. She was so incensed, that she phoned the radio station up to tell the compare of the show what she thought about the ignorance of the male caller. She put in terms of her experience and how can any one be so critical if they have never had the experience. She also said that "... it really hurts. They do not know what it is like".

This is an interesting story and links in with Dora's attitude to many issues. She has a great affinity with people, but has a perception that life is complex and that to
understand, we have to be aware of what people have been through. We cannot judge others, especially when we have not experienced what they have been through.

3. Traffic Story

Dora was stopped at the lights just as the light turned orange. There was a male driver behind her who blasted her on the horn and told her, "Why don't you go back to where you came from?" He also swore at her and was generally horrible. Dora told me that she stood her ground. I cannot remember if she said anything to the man - she may have, but it does not alter the substance of the story given that she felt hurt by the experience. She said that these sort of incidences do not worry her now, but I wonder.

4. Tolerance Story

Dora told me that she is happy for her children to inter-marry in the society. She relayed some stories of friends and their experience of mixed marriage and how difficult the parents found this situation. She emphasised her tolerance and happiness in mixing with many different people throughout the interview. She said that she would prefer that her children marry Greeks, but she accepts that living in a multicultural community, a mixed marriage is quite possible. She acknowledges that there are difficulties in mixed marriages because there is no commonality in terms of culture, but this can happen when people from the same nationality but different religions, marry.
Thank You Letter

Following each interview, I sent a thank you letter to the woman. The letters followed a similar format, but were individualised. Two examples appear below.

Letter One

Dear (woman’s name)

This is just a short note to thank you for talking to me the other day. I really appreciated you giving me so much of your time and for being so open with me about what your homes mean, and have meant for you. The information that you gave me will be invaluable for my research project.

I will be in touch in the next few weeks to discuss the first interview and whether or not we will need to meet again.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to ask any questions about the project or feel that you would like to add anything to what you said. My home phone number is 798 0295.

Once again, many thanks and I look forward to being in touch soon.

With best wishes

Susan Thompson
Dear (woman’s name)

This is just a short note to thank you for talking to me yesterday. I really appreciated you giving me so much of your time and for being so open with me about what your homes mean, and have meant for you. The information that you gave me will be invaluable for my research project.

I really enjoyed having lunch with you and sampling some of your delicious cooking. I also enjoyed meeting some of your family and seeing over your house.

I will be in touch in the next few weeks to discuss the first interview and when we can meet again. I would really like to take some photographs of your beautiful house.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to ask any questions about the project or feel that you would like to add anything to what you said.

Once again, many thanks and I look forward to being in touch soon.

With best wishes

Susan Thompson
APPENDIX NINE

Invitation to Afternoon Tea

Dear (woman’s name)

Research on the Meaning of Home for Women Migrants

I am writing to you to invite you to an afternoon of tea and discussion about the results of the interviews that you assisted me with by locating respondents. This is one small way that I can thank you for your invaluable help with my research project. I am inviting all of the women who participated in the interviews.

We will get together on Sunday afternoon 16 August, 1992 starting at 2.30pm. We will probably finish around 4.30pm, but if you have to leave earlier than that please still come. I will talk about some of the findings of the interviews to give some feedback about the results and to seek reactions. I also want to set up some discussion groups that could meet later in the year. This is an important part of the research and I hope that both the women respondents and some of the workers will be able to join in. You will also have a chance to meet the women who took part in the research.

The afternoon tea will be held at the Lethington Community Centre, 133 Smith Street, Summer Hill. This is within easy walking distance of the Summer Hill Station.

Could you let me know if you are able to come? Please ring me at home on 798 0295. If I am not here you can leave a message on my answer machine.

I am really looking forward to seeing you on August 16.

Best wishes

Susan Thompson
APPENDIX TEN

Letters Encouraging Continued Interest

Letter one for those who attended the afternoon tea

Dear (woman’s name)

I would like to thank you very much for coming to the afternoon tea at Summer Hill.

Thank you too for contributing to the discussion and for your continued interest in the project. This is very important. Your support means that I can continue to check out the results with you. This will ensure that they are meaningful and able to bring about a better understanding of the different communities in the study.

Thank you too for your delicious plate of goodies that you very kindly brought. It was wonderful to sample so many different tastes from Australia, Lebanon, Greece and Vietnam.

I will be in touch again some time later in the year. Unfortunately I am very busy teaching at the moment, so will be unable to get back to you as soon as I would like. I will be setting up the smaller discussion groups that I mentioned so that you can help me to understand some of the details of the individual interviews better.

I really appreciate your contribution to the study and look forward to seeing you soon so that we can talk some more. My mother really enjoyed the afternoon tea too and was very pleased to meet and talk with you.

Until soon, my very best wishes.

Susan Thompson
Letter two for those unable to attend the afternoon tea

Dear (woman’s name)

I was very sorry that you were unable to come to the afternoon tea at Summer Hill.

We had a very enjoyable time, talking with one another and together in the group about some of the results of the project. We also had a chance to sample some delicious foods from Australia, Lebanon, Greece and Vietnam.

Your continued interest in the project is very important. Your support means that I can continue to check out the results with you. This will ensure that they are meaningful and able to bring about a better understanding of the different communities in the study.

I will be in touch again some time later in the year. Unfortunately I am very busy teaching at the moment, so will be unable to get back to you as soon as I would like. I will be setting up some smaller discussion groups and I hope that you will be able to be involved. The purpose of the groups is to help me better understand some of the details of the individual interviews.

I really appreciate your contribution to the study and look forward to seeing you soon so that we can talk some more.

Until soon, my very best wishes.

Susan Thompson
APPENDIX ELEVEN

Example Transcript Sheet

Each transcript was typed in a particular format. Many of the interviews went for over a hundred pages of text.

The format is illustrated on the next page. A wide right hand margin was left for comments. Each line is numbered so that quotes can be referenced.

Disc copies of all transcripts are held in my office at the University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia.
And houses were very - they were very funny built, this stone on the outside, and there’d be all the like different rooms - the lounge room would be separate to the bedroom and you’d have to go out and walk out into the other room. It wasn’t like a house on the inside. Like it’s all in one. So if you wanted to change from one room to another, you’d have to actually go outside and you’d be just opening out there, and then into the other room. Yeah, it was really - it was fun. *(So there’s no sort of halls or interconnecting rooms)* No, it was all - no because there was no - there was roofing on each separate room. You know just like when you’re going into a classroom or a hotel - each one is on its own, you see. Bathrooms and kitchens - the bathrooms there weren’t very good. I can still remember we used to have to go out if we wanted to go to the toilet, sort of in the bushy areas, and showers - there was no showers - there was - we used to heat up the water on the gas thing and you know, Mum would sit us down and pour with a little can in her hand, or whatever, and wash us down. They didn’t have showers. And up until this day, people don’t. It’s a very primitive sort of - Yeah, and even the cooking - I remember my auntie used to cook - also now there was no stoves or anything like that - just the gas thing, put the pot on on whatever she was cooking.

So it sounds like you have happy memories?

Yeah, yeah, very, yeah. Because like I said I don’t remember much of Kuwait. I mean I was only a baby. And my childhood seemed quite happy. I haven’t had much of a - yeah, making up for it now though.

Oh we can talk about that in a few minutes. *(Yeah)*

Why did your parents decide to come out here?

Dad always said to us you know he thought it would be much better for the education, because being Christians in Kuwait, you’re not allowed to take up Kuwaiti citizen - you’re not allowed to become a Kuwaiti citizen unless you’re actually Kuwaiti - there’s no such thing as citizenship there, and being a Moslem country, it’s very hard. Mum used to tell us, you know, she wasn’t allowed to go out and Dad had to buy everything - [phone ringing] Excuse me. *(Alright)* Okay, going back to what I was saying...
APPENDIX TWELVE

Thematic Schema

Major themes are shown in bold and capital letters. Sub-themes come next in bold lower case lettering and indented once. Sub-sub-themes follow, not bolded and indented once again. Further indenting indicates a lower order heading. A summary of major themes and sub-themes has been compiled on page 568.

HOME AS POWER

Safe to act out difference (re dominant culture)

Speak own language

Celebrate festivals

Safe to display difference

Decoration

Cultural treasures

Religious icons

Continuation of culture

Cultural practice (site of cultural/religious practice)

Safe to be different

Realm of personal power (re own ethnic group/personally)

Influence over other family members

Control over the physical dwelling

Control of the running of the house

Control over finances

Equally shared roles
HOME AS POWER (ctd)

Ownership

Security

Personal freedom

HOME AS OPPRESSION

Hard work

Financial pressures

Patriarchal domination

HOME AS HAPPINESS/CONTENTMENT

HOME AS SADNESS AND DESPAIR
HOME AS FAMILY

Presence of family members in Australia

Maintaining connections

Support/advice

Reason for staying

Relationships within the dwelling

Parental role

Mothering

Family type

Extended

Difficulties

Nuclear

Emotionally close

Family gatherings

Supportive behaviour

Control

Compliance

Children’s behaviour

Pleasing/not pleasing

Relationships within the neighbourhood

Proximity of extended family

Family gatherings
HOME AS FAMILY (ctd)

Absence of family members in Australia

Loss and sadness

Maintaining connections

Support/advice

Inhibits the settling process

Caring values
HOME AS PHYSICAL DWELLING

Decoration

Typical of background

Dislikes/likes - Personal taste

Personal privacy

Medium density dwelling forms

Safety

Economically viable

Uncomfortable

  Lack of privacy

Comfortable

  Proximity of family

Spatiality

  Easy to clean

  Minimal maintenance

Claustrophobic

Lack of private open space

Access to garden

Too small
Detached dwelling form - house and garden

Aspiration
Luxury/comfort
Clean and tidy
Preference for the new
Attachment
Individuality
Enjoyment of the spaces
Interior
Exterior

Importance of the garden
Recreation/social uses
Utilitarian uses

Description of garden
Personal taste
Spacious
Inside
Outside

Suitable for families
Area for children to play
Inside
Outside
HOME AS PHYSICAL DWELLING (ctd)

Detached dwelling form - house and garden (ctd)

Suitable for families (ctd)

Noise won’t disturb neighbours

Suitable for special occasions/gatherings

Inside

Outside

Privacy

Free to be yourself

Autonomy to do what you want to

Noise will not disturb neighbours

Autonomy to change

Renovations/building

No more scope for change

Economic considerations

Physical separation

Safer to be different

Different cooking smells

Different sounds

Different customs
HOME AS PHYSICAL DWELLING (ctd)

Detached dwelling form - house and garden (ctd)

Cultural representation

Re-creation of a lost culture

House

Decoration

Potential to alter

Spatial character

Facilitates traditional activities

Garden

Potential to landscape

Adaptation for use

Recreation/social

Utilitarian

Cultural Representation

Re-creation of a lost culture

Decoration
HOME AS SUBURB

Presence/absence of friends

Ethnicity

Emotional response

Role of neighbourhood

Comfortable area

Own language

Own food

Own cultural and religious institutions

Special schools

Physicality

Amenities/services

Convenient

People

Ethnicity

Helpful and caring

Emotional attachment

Familiarity

Reinforces own culture

Safe to play

Uncomfortable area

Culturally alien

People alien/judgemental/unfriendly
HOME AS SUBURB (ctd)

Role of neighbourhood (ctd)

Feel unsafe

Undesirable area

Alien values

Environmental conditions

Cannot buy own food

HOME AS CITY

Ability to buy own food

Ability to meet with friends

Enjoying the opportunities of the city

Unsafe everywhere
HOME AS ATONEMENT

Making up for loss

Pain of migration

Yearning for the lost home

**Disrupted notions of home**

Conflicting feelings of attachment

Emotionally torn between two countries

Belonging

Australian nationality

Identification as belonging

Importance of English language competency

Feeling of comfort

Significant places

Reminder of another land

Significant events

Aspirations

Presence of family members

Not belonging

Outsider imposition of difference

Identification as other

Reluctant

Accepting

Physical attributes (personal)
HOME AS ATONEMENT (ctd)

Disrupted notions of home (ctd)

Outsider in original country

Conflicting values/practices

Difficulties with living

Feeling of discomfort

Role of physical dwelling

Absence of family members

Conflicting feelings of attachment

Desire to return

If things improve

Reconnect with family

Return

Belonging

Sadness
HOME AS SUCCESS

House and garden best display

Ownership

Hard work

Self sacrifice

Physical appearance

Beautiful things

Cleanliness

Display

Suburban location

Hard work
HOME AS CONTINUATION

Friendship

Across space and time

Other homes

Familiarity

Memories

Emotional attachment

Loss

Positive

People

Place

Things

Negative

People

Place

Things

Places/things as representation

Reminders of a lost/another home

Dreams

Dreaming of a lost/another home

Children’s homes

Continuing culture
MIGRATION STORY

Promise of a better life

Preparation to come to Australia

Deciding

Temporary stay

The journey

Residential history/experience

Positive Experiences

Feelings

Experiences with people

Experiences with place

Learning new skills

Employment

Negative Experiences

Loss

Feeling/emotionality

Language difficulties

Hard work

Sacrifice

DIFFERENCE

Feelings

Actions
Women’s Stories of Home

HARD WORK

To survive

For children’s sake

For own success/advancement

Children’s hard work

Blessing

CULTURAL CONTINUATION

Education

Schooling

Special ethnic schools

Out of school activities

Special ethnic schools

Role of marriage

Role of language

Role of accepted values

Role of religion

Role of culture

Role of cooking

Interior decoration

Different values/tastes to parents
DREAMS / ASPIRATIONS FOR CHILDREN (GENERAL)

PERSONAL HISTORY

Residential history/experience

CULTURAL PRACTICE / CUSTOM

ATTACHMENT TO PLACE

Financial considerations

DOMESTIC DUTIES

Shopping

Responsible

Shared roles
SUMMARY OF MAJOR THEMES

**Home as power**

Safe to act out difference
Safe to display difference
Continuation of culture
Realm of personal power
Ownership
Independence from parents

**Home as oppression**

Hard work
Financial pressures
Patriarchal domination

**Home as happiness/contentment**

**Home as sadness and despair**

**Home as family**

Presence of family members in Australia
Relationships within the dwelling
Relationships within the neighbourhood
Absence of family members in Australia
Caring values
Cultural obligations

**Home as physical dwelling**

Decoration
Dislikes/likes - personal taste
Personal privacy
Medium density dwelling forms
Detached dwelling form - house and garden
Cultural representation

**Home as suburb**

Proximity of family
Presence/absence of friends
Role of neighbourhood
Women's Stories of Home

Home as city
Ability to buy own food
Ability to meet with friends
Enjoying the opportunities of the city
Unsafe everywhere

Home as atonement
Making up for loss
Dreaming of another home
Disrupted notions of home

Home as success
House and garden best display
Ownership
Physical appearance
Suburban location
Hard work
Business success

Home as continuation
Friendship
Other homes
Memories
Places/things as representation
Dreams
Children’s homes
Parents’ home
Creating a home for children

Migration story
Promise of a better life
Preparation to come to Australia
Deciding
The journey
Residential history/experience
Positive experiences
Negative experiences
Women’s Stories of Home

Difference

Feelings
Actions
Comments on multiculturalism

Hard work

To survive
For children’s sake
For own success/advancement
Children’s hard work

Cultural continuation

Education
Role of marriage
Role of language
Role of accepted values
Role of religion
Role of culture
Role of cooking
Role of gift giving
Interior decoration
Role of facilities

Dreams / aspirations for children

Personal history

Cultural practice / custom

Attachment to place

Domestic duties

Shopping

Appendices
APPENDIX THIRTEEN

Example of SORA

The following is an excerpt from a SORA of one of the Greek women’s interviews. The analysis was taped and then typed. It has not been edited for inclusion in this Appendix. The analysis ran to 12 pages in total. On page 574 I provide an excerpt of an line-by-line analysis to illustrate the difference between it and the SORA.

SORA

This analysis is of ***, a 25 year old Greek woman who came to Australia when she was 3 years old. The reason for migrating, her parents heard that Australia was the place to make a life and that was the stated reason to the children, why they moved to Australia. ** does not have any memories of when she first came here.

Home as family is an interesting theme here. Home in Australia, she does not have any Greek family here only her own family, her husband and her two children, two boys, she talks about going back to Greece, she has only been back once, when she was ten. Quote page 1

"... it was nice, that’s all I remember. The aunties, the uncles, the relatives, the cousins, missing all of them"

That really epitomises the idea of family in her memory of going back to Greece, that is what she remembers. The issue of language quickly comes up in the interview, ** speaks Greek but she mostly speaks English at home and her two boys only speak English. She does say that they understand it but they don’t speak it, she took her oldest boy to Greek school but her only lasted two months, it seems that there was a problem, he did not want to do his homework, he did not like Greek school and did not understand it, she took him out of Greek school, however her parents said she would regret this, this underlines a generational difference certainly in this family, the emphasis starting to wane in terms of having to pass on the Greek language. This is different to many of the other interviews, it is a point which I will have to look into more closely, the other interviews suggest that continuation of language, particularly at home is an important concept in terms of cultural continuation. There is also an element of power, her power in ** saying to her parents, I am not going to force something onto my children, so she reclaimed her power in allowing her child to leave Greek school which was in opposition to her parents wishes. It is interesting that she has a negative perception of Greek school.

"I mean I went to Greek school, what did I get out of it you know. I can’t sit down now and write a letter. I find it very hard to read it. I hardly speak it. If I do, it’s just to my parents or to another relative that does not understand English. That’s the
only time I use it. And now and then I use it at home with hubby."

[Note ***’s husband is Greek]

Personal Details

*** is a carer in a child care centre and reached forth form school certificate education level, followed by an early childhood certificate. It is interesting to note that when questioned about her level of education *** says.

"I just only got up to - as far as forth form"

She judges this in a negative light. I need to ask myself if this has to do with my position there as a University educated woman interviewing her, and her perception in that comment that her education is not as long and as formal as mine.

In talking about her choice of career she says that she loves the work that she does. She recalls that she always wanted to be a teacher and said that because she had a family when she was young she could not attend university. Again there is this tension around not having a higher level education I may be reading to much into this but the is an interesting point in the relationship between researcher, and researched.

*** is not a religious person, and does not identify herself as being a religious person. She was brought up in the Greek Orthodox Church and now would only go on occasions like Christmas and Easter, however she does believe in the teachings of the Greek Orthodox Church grounded in her early childhood and the education that she would have received in that period.

We started to talk about her childhood home and she said that she did move quite a lot to at least four houses but she chooses to tell me about the house where they spent the most time, her and her parents. That was an old house She mentions that the house was in a [quote] "top area" and this area is an area that she aspires to now, she wants to move to Bexley, she finds it difficult to recall a great deal about the house, although she does recall, without prompting, that there were a lot of kids around the house and that everyone was friendly

House as a Physical Entity

She talks of how the childhood home was renovated. it was brick veneered and extended extensively she says that now it is practically a brand new old and has changed significantly from what it was. *** had her own room in the house and this was very much her hide way and she was able to escape the tensions of the
household, she could go there if there had been a fight between her and her mother or her father, she could go to her room. It was very much a refuge, a place where she could be herself where she could do what she wanted to do without interruption. She said that she wanted a telephone that but this never eventuated. These sentiments were similar to what is expressed in the literature on teenagers and there room within the home.

**Home as Power**

This featured in her reflections on the childhood home. She wants to have a house similar to her mother and father’s in the St George area. She once said that it is a nice area and the house is really nice. Quote

"'Cause it is really nice now from what it was to what it is now"

This is very interesting because when I ask her why the area is so nice, she says that it is because the house is what her parents made it. This goes back to the concept of power. Owning a home means that you are able to change it and renovate it and make it the way you want it. Quote starts end of page 5 starting "No it would be because..." and finishing in the first paragraph in page 6.

Recalling the childhood home and what it means today brings out the themes of continuity, she still sees it very much as her home and home to her children as well, it was where she lived when she first married it has featured a lot even since she has left the physical confines of the house, she says that it is very much around happy, fond memories of family life, living in a nice house with a warm family and in a nice area. So there the themes coming out there are home as family, home as physical dwelling, home as suburb.

**Home as Suburb**

This is a very important concept in the childhood reflections there is a great sense of familiarity and belonging. Familiarity with everyone around, she says that they all knew each other, they all went to school together and grew up together, there is the notion of shared experience. She compares the childhood area with where she lives now which is west of Bankstown, in Villawood and her perceptions of the area where she lives now are overwhelmingly negative. Quote page 6 line 9.

"... there's more unemployed people here, there's more fights going on here, there's more robberies, there's more of everything out here in the west, whereas in the St George area it is not like that at all. You know, it is a homey area down there. ...people like neighbours would sort of meet each other outside and they would go on forever talking whereas here you don't have that"
Women’s Stories of Home

Line-by-line analysis

Following, is an excerpt from a line-by-line analysis to illustrate the difference between the two approaches.

Home as physical dwelling
Detached dwelling form - house and garden
Enjoyment of the spaces
Interior

What’s my favourite room? ...the kitchen and the living area. It’s comfortable... You’ve got the sun coming through in the morning when you sit here and the yard, you can overlook the yard.

Note: This is her favourite space in the house. The area that she spends most of her time in (previously she said she is always in the kitchen) and the space from where she can look out. She can look out on the yard and the garden, a place that she loves, but also she can look out for her daughter who plays outside while her mother is working inside. There may be some interesting ideas here about the nature of women’s space being working space and looking out from space - space that is appropriated by others, not exclusively for the woman, but nevertheless her most important space in the house.

Home as physical dwelling
Detached dwelling form - house and garden
Luxury/comfort

...maybe just luxury, just luxury...

Note: Here she is talking about her ideal house and what it would mean to her.

Home as suburb
Role of neighbourhood
Comfortable area
Emotional attachment

Comfortable... everything is around you, everything you need is here. And I’m used to this area too. I feel good living in this area... The only time I haven’t lived in Campsie is probably about 4 years out of the time I’ve been here.
Attitude to being interviewed

Happy to take part. Likes to be helpful but is concerned about the standard of the information that she has given me. Not good enough - classic for this type of woman, her devaluing of herself.

_If I can help someone with whatever they're doing... that's fine... But like I'm not a very talkative person, so I hope you've got... information... I'm not good expressing myself when I'm talking... So I hope... you got something out of this. I hope everything's all right._

The interview has given her the opportunity to reflect on her everyday life, issues that come up every day but things that she has not given a great deal of thought to before.

_When you asked me - some of the questions I have never ever thought about it. I've never sat down and said oh what about this and that... But... they probably come up every day of my life, but I've never sat there and sort of actually thought about what they mean..._
APPENDIX FOURTEEN

Biographical Details of the Greek Women

**Pseudonym: Rosa**

*Age:* 36

*Marital status:* Rosa is married to a Greek man.

*Children:* Rosa has two children, a son and a daughter, both of primary school age.

*Religion:* She is a Christian and attends the local church. She sometimes attends the Greek Orthodox church.

*Education:* She completed high school in Australia.

*Occupation:* Rosa works four days a week in a community agency.

*Migration status:* Rosa was born in Australia. Her parents migrated to the country in 1959. They came separately as single people and met on the ship coming out here. They married in Australia.

*Residential situation:* Rosa lives in the house that she and her husband bought and renovated. It is located to the north of the study area. The house is federation style and freestanding. It does not have any distinguishing features that mark it out as a "Greek" house.

*Additional Details:* In Australia her parents worked in their own mixed businesses and the family lived either behind or above the shops. They had premises in Sydney and this is where Rosa grew up. Her parents worked extremely long hours. Rosa feels that this robbed the family of her father because he was never home. Her mother also worked incredibly hard, both in the business and at home, slavishly cleaning the house. Irene does not continue her mother’s total preoccupation with cleanliness.

Rosa has a brother who is six years younger than herself.

Both Rosa and her husband have immediate and extended family in Australia.

She has visited Greece and relatives there. Most of her family live in Australia.

Although her children do not speak Greek, the family follows Greek traditions.
Pseudonym: Petroula

Age: 48

Marital status: Petroula is divorced but was married to a Greek.

Children: She has two sons who are both adults.

Religion: She is Greek Orthodox, although she does not attend church regularly.

Education: She completed primary school in Greece.

Occupation: Petroula was a dressmaker in Greece and now works as a volunteer in a local neighbourhood centre. When she arrived in Australia she worked in a factory.

Migration status: Petroula was born in the Northern Greek capital. She has been in Australia for 26 years. She followed her future husband to Australia against the wishes of her family. When they first arrived they shared a house with two other families. There were considerable financial difficulties establishing themselves in a new country.

Residential situation: Petroula owns a small two bedroom unit that she shares with her sons. She does not like it and feels restricted financially, however ownership is very important to her. The unit is tastefully decorated and exceptionally neat and tidy.

Additional details: Petroula lived in both rural and urban settings in Greece. Her family had a farm. The residential accommodation was primitive compared to what she has today.

Petroula does not have any family in Australia apart from her sons. She is very lonely and misses her relatives.

Petroula has gone back to Greece for holidays but considers Australia to be her home. She would not like to return to live.

Petroula is challenging the traditional roles of men and women in the Greek community. She hopes that when her sons get married they will be good husbands and will help their wives with housework. This is a contrast to her own husband.
Pseudonym: Evangelia

Age: 25

Marital status: She is married to a Greek man who is from Egypt.

Children: They have two sons, aged five and eight.

Religion: She is nominal Greek Orthodox, although she was taught in the Greek Orthodox church as a child. Consequently, religion is not as important as it once was.

Education: She completed year 10 at high school and then did an early childcare certificate.

Occupation: She is a childcare worker.

Migration status: Evangelia was born in Greece but does not remember very much about it. She migrated to Australia at the age of three. Her parents heard that they would have a better life in Australia.

Residential situation: She lives in the western region of the study area. She resides in her own house, purchased five years ago. With her husband, Evangelia is renovating the house, hoping to make some money when it is eventually sold. This may enable her to move back to the area where her parents live.

Additional details: Evangelia’s family lived in four different houses in Sydney before she got married. Her favourite is the family home in Sydney’s southern suburbs, where she aspires to live one day.

She comes from a moderately sized family. She has twin brothers. Her immediate family live in Australia and she has many relatives in Greece.

She visited Greece when she was ten years old and would like to go for another holiday in the future. She would not like to live there because the lifestyle in Greece is very different to the lifestyle in Australia.
Pseudonym: Akrivi and Antigone

Age: Akrivi is 50 and Antigone is 26.

MARITAL STATUS: Akrivi is married and Antigone is single. She still lives at home with her mother.

Children: Akrivi has a daughter, Antigone, and an adult son.

Religion: Akrivi is Greek Orthodox and still goes to church. Antigone is also Greek Orthodox but does not go to church as much as her mother. She will attend on special occasions, especially to please the family.

Education: Akrivi was educated up to sixth class in Greece.

Antigone has had a university education in Australia. She is fluent in both English and Greek.

Occupation: Akrivi worked doing domestic duties at home in Greece and worked in a factory upon arriving in Australia. She also worked as a dressmaker. She retired when she suffered an injury at work, which has had a devastating effect on her mobility.

Antigone works as a professional in the community sector.

Migration status: Akrivi was born in the Greek city of Carinthia. She has been in Australia for thirty years. Her sister wrote and told her that she would have a better life in Australia. Akrivi only intended to stay for three years but married a Greek man and has remained ever since. They lived in Australia for twenty years before buying a house. Her husband is a handyman and enjoys fixing up houses. Once he has done everything he can and wants to sell the house and start again. This causes problems for Akrivi who likes having a clean and neat house.

Antigone was born in Australia.

Additional details: Akrivi comes from a family of five children. Her father died when she was two and a half and her mother raised the children. This was very difficult and the family experienced financial hardship. Akrivi was raised in a village where her mother grew crops to support the family.

Akrivi has close relatives in Australia, her brothers and sisters.

Antigone returned to visit her father's city in Greece and to get to know her relatives. She would like to return to live, but her boyfriend does not want to. This keeps her in Australia for the moment.
Akrivi and Antigone have conflicts about independence and the traditional values of the older generation. This is common for children of Greek parents who are brought up in Australia. Greek daughters are expected to remain at home until they get married.

**Residential situation:** Akrivi lives to the west of the study area. The family own a house, which has been renovated extensively.
Pseudonym: Dora and Georgina

Age: Dora is 52 and Georgina is 26.

Marital status: Dora is married and Georgina is single. She lives at home with the family.

Children: Dora has two children, Georgina and a son.

Religion: Both Dora and Georgina are Greek Orthodox. For Dora, religion was a very important part of her village life in Greece.

Education: Dora had a primary school education back in Greece. Her teacher wanted her to go to high school but such an option was out of the question as it involved considerable expense. Dora is still sad about this missed opportunity and has encouraged her children to study hard. They have both gone to university.

Occupation: Dora learnt dressmaking in Greece and worked in her village. She supported herself by sewing for people and working on the family farm. When she arrived in Australia she worked in factory jobs. She is currently employed as a part-time cleaner.

Georgina works in a professional capacity in the local community sector.

Migration status: Dora was born in a village in Greece. She has been in Australia for thirty years. She migrated because of military conflict near her home. As she was from a poor family, her uncle’s assurances that life was good in Australia encouraged her to leave Greece. Her uncle had already migrated. Dora intended to come to Australia for three years and then return to Greece. She stayed, married and raised her family here.

Residential situation: Dora and Georgina live with the rest of their immediate family. They own a house in the southern part of the study area.

Returned: The family went back to try and live in Greece. They stayed several months. Georgina went to school there but faced many problems. It was difficult for Dora and her husband to find employment. Different values existed and it was hard to adjust. They felt like strangers in Greece.

Additional details: Dora experienced both urban and rural residential situations. The family was poor and had a difficult time, especially after Dora’s father died in an accident. Her mother worked very hard to support the children.

Dora came from a family of four girls and one boy.
Dora's mother still lives in Greece. She came to Australia about four years ago and the family hoped that she would stay. However, she did not like it here and returned to Greece even though she lives on her own.

Apart from her mother, Dora has other close family relatives living in Australia.
Pseudonym: Athina

Age: 52

Marital status: Married to a Greek man.

CHILDREN: Athina has two adult daughters.

Religion: She is Greek Orthodox and attends church most weeks.

Education: Athina attended primary school in Greece. She then went to a residential college where she learnt sewing (no equivalent in Australia). For this part of her education, she moved away from her family and lived in the city.

Occupation: She worked as a dressmaker in Greece. When she arrived in Australia she worked in a factory. She is retired now, having suffered repetitive strain injury from her job.

Migration status: Athina was born in a village in north west Greece. She came to Australia in 1965, aged 24. Her sister came here one year before and encouraged Athina to migrate. She wrote and told her that life here was better and that there were more jobs. Athina spent two months learning English and then she came here. She came with the intention of staying a couple of years and then returning to Greece. She met her husband and remained in Australia.

Residential situation: Athina lives in a house in the centre of the study area. The family own the house and have been renovating it over a sixteen year period.

Returned: The family went back to Greece with the intention of living there again. Athina was not happy in Australia and desperately wanted to live there again. She decided to return when her father became ill but she did not arrive in time to say goodbye. Her husband followed and they lived in Athens with Athina’s brothers and sisters. She was very happy being reunited with her family.

Nevertheless, the return did not work out. Employment was very difficult and their money did not last very long. After about a year, Athina’s husband decided to return to Australia. He intended to stay for a few years to save money. This was in 1974 and the family is still here, resolved to stay. In 1981 Athina returned with her daughters for a holiday. This was a very enjoyable time but she was content to come back to Australia.

Additional details: Athina is from a family of ten children. They lived in a village where her father did farming work, although they did not own a farm. Life was financially difficult but her memories of childhood are happy. The family was very important.
In Australia she does not have any close family, which is very sad for Athina. Her sister returned to Greece not long after Athina’s migration. Her husband has two brothers here.
Pseudonym: Katina

Age: 61

Marital status: She has been a widow for five years. She was married to a Greek man.

Children: Katina has three adult children of whom she is very proud. One son is an electrical engineer and the other son a vet. Her daughter works in computers.

Religion: Greek Orthodox.

Education: Katina finished her education at the end of primary school. Her family could not afford to send her to high school. Her brother had this privilege. She is sad about this loss of educational opportunity. When she left school, she learnt how to be a dressmaker.

Occupation: She has mostly worked at home. Before her children were born she was a factory worker. When her youngest child turned 21 she returned to work but she has since retired.

Migration status: Katina was born in a large village in Cyprus. She is a Greek Cypriot. She has been in Australia for 40 years. Katina came here in 1955 with her parents. Her brothers had arrived several years before and then sent for her and her parents. They lived in rural NSW at first and then moved to Canterbury (the study area). She has lived there ever since.

Residential situation: When she married, Katina and her husband bought a house across the street from Katina’s parents in Canterbury. She lives there still with her children. She and her husband bought a block of land on which to build a dream home but this never eventuated because of her husband’s unexpected death.

Additional details: Katina’s father was a builder and constructed their house in Cyprus. Her mother was a dressmaker. She has four brothers. They were a very sociable family and Katina remembers people always visiting.

Katina grew up in a rural village where the family owned a plot of land which they farmed. It was located about half an hour away from their house.

Katina has many family members in Australia. Some of these live close by. Family proximity has helped with her settling-in process.

She went back to Cyprus in 1986 but could not return to her village because of the Turkish invasion. Many of her relatives have died and there is not much for her there any more. She would not like to live in Greece and is happy in Australia.
Katina is very sociable. People are always visiting her house and having coffee. She sees this as a continuation of the lifestyle that the family had in Cyprus.
Pseudonym: Margarita

Age: 45

Marital status: She is married. She met her husband in Greece.

Children: She has one son.

Religion: She is Greek Orthodox but does not attend church regularly.

Education: She finished her education at the end of primary school in Greece. She learnt a trade as a dressmaker.

Occupation: When she came to Australia she worked in a factory. She suffered repetitive strain injury due to over work and poor work practices. She had to leave the factory and now works one day a week in a shop. She is also a volunteer for an international Greek charity organisation.

Migration status: Margarita was born in a urban area in Greece. She has been in Australia for 23 years.

She and her husband initially migrated to Germany from Greece. Margarita was very unhappy there and insisted that they return home to Greece. But things were not good. It was difficult to get work and so they decided to come to Australia. They lived in Melbourne first, but shortly after, moved to Sydney. They both had to work and Margarita tried to find adequate childcare for their son. She could not find anyone suitable and so made the incredibly difficult decision to send their son to live with Margarita's parents in Greece. After four years, when they could afford a place of their own, they sent for him.

Residential situation: Margarita and her husband own their house in the centre of the study area. The cottage has been extensively renovated and a formal lounge and dining room have been added. They also own a holiday house near Newcastle where they spend the summer months.

Additional details: Margarita grew up in the city. The family lived in a rented flat, which she described to me as beautiful. Margarita's family consisted of two boys and two girls. Her father worked for a tobacco company and collected the tobacco from the farms. He was away from home a lot. Margarita's mother was the central figure in the family home.

With her family in Australia she is struggling with the different ideas that her son brings home. Of particular concern is his fondness for a non-Greek girl. Margarita does not feel comfortable with her and the cultural differences that constantly emerge.
Pseudonym: Nina

Age: 36

Marital status: She is single and lives with her family.

Children: She has no children.

Religion: Nina is Greek Orthodox. She attends the local Greek church regularly.

Education: She was educated in Australia and did a drafting course. She did not go to university.

Occupation: She works as a draftswoman.

Migration status: She migrated to Australia with her family when she was one (in 1957). Her father came to Australia twelve months before the rest of the family. He suffered a great deal during World War Two which was the main reason for leaving Greece. Nina’s uncle, her father’s brother, was already living in Australia and so it was the preferred destination. The family first lived in Adelaide and then in 1960, moved to Sydney.

Residential situation: Nina lives in the centre of the study area in the house that her parents own. Her brother also lives there. Nina contributes to the upkeep of the house on a day-to-day basis. She also helps with longer term projects involving decorating and renovating. She feels that the house is very much hers as well as the rest of the family’s.

Additional details: Nina’s parents are from villages near the port of Patra in Greece. When they arrived in Australia they shared houses with other Greek migrants. This was a difficult time, but they eventually bought their own house in the centre of the study area. Nina’s father worked hard in factories as a process worker. He was a policeman when they lived in Greece. Her mother worked from home as a machinist.

Nina’s family is small. She has one brother.

Nina does not have many relatives in Australia. She has two cousins and an uncle. The rest of her family live in Greece.

Nina’s father has often returned to Greece since his retirement. His focus is very much on Greece. As a child, Nina was told that it was always the family’s intention to return. It is only in the last ten years that her father has stopped talking about going back permanently.
Nina went to Greece for a holiday for six weeks after she finished high school. This was a great success. She realised that she was missing out on life as part of a large and supportive extended family.
Pseudonym: Anna

Age: 27

Marital status: Anna is married to a man with a Greek background. He is a medical specialist. They have been married for three and a half years.

Children: At the time of the interview, she was expecting her first child.

Religion: Both Anna and her husband are actively involved in the Greek Orthodox Church.

Education: Anna is university educated. She studied medicine in Sydney.

Occupation: Anna is a general practitioner. She is taking a break for the birth of the baby but intends to return to work.

Migration status: Anna was born in Randwick in Australia. Her father came to Australia from Hungary. He was sent there in 1956 as a child by the Communists in Greece. After a few years in Australia he wrote and asked his father to find him a suitable wife. Anna’s mother came here and after a while they got married.

Residential situation: Anna lives to the west of the study area. She and her husband purchased their house before they got married. They have decorated the cottage, but have not had to do major renovations. Anna sees this house as their first, and hopes to move one day.

Additional details: Anna’s parents worked very hard when they first arrived in Australia. They owned a shop in Eastwood. Her parents made sacrifices for their children, by working very long hours. They helped Anna and her brother to buy their houses and their cars.

When the family made some money, they moved to the study area. Anna’s father changed work and studied to become a real estate agent.

Anna’s mother thought that it was important for her daughter to have a career so she would not be dependent upon a husband. Her father encouraged Anna to study medicine.

Anna comes from a small family. She has one brother.

Anna lives five minutes from her parents and her mother-in-law. Her father’s uncle and brother live in Australia as does her mother’s sister. They have family gatherings on the weekend.
Anna and her husband wish that they spent more time at Greek school as youngsters. They intend to do further study so that they can pass the language onto their children.
Pseudonym: Cassie

Age: 27

Marital status: Married to a Greek man.

Children: She has one child, a baby boy.

Religion: She is Greek Orthodox and occasionally goes to church.

Education: Cassie completed high school in Australia.

Occupation: Cassie worked in a government department as a clerk before she had the baby and will return to work soon.

Migration status: Cassie was born in Australia. Her parents migrated from Greece in 1956. They were both 16 when they came here. They came in search of jobs, to make a better life. They left families back in Greece. In time, they sponsored relatives to also migrate to Australia. They both learnt to speak English very quickly living in a country town running their own business.

Back in Greece, Cassie’s mother worked as a dressmaker and her father worked in factories.

Returned: When Cassie was nine the family returned to Greece for a holiday. She met relatives for the first time and remembers having a wonderful holiday. Her father wanted to stay, but her mother wanted to come back to Australia (which they did). Cassie does not think that her parents would want to return now. She went back again in 1990 for a holiday. This visit confirmed for her that Australia is definitely home. She found the Greeks rude and their values at odds with her own.

Cassie believes that the Greeks in Australia have not changed their values or traditions, while the Greeks in Greece have become more westernised. This causes conflicts across the generations.

Residential situation: Cassie and her husband own their house in the eastern region of the study area. They bought the dwelling before they were married and rented it for a few years prior to moving in. Owning is very important and she hopes to have the house fully paid for soon. They are planning renovations and may live with a relative for a while to improve their financial situation. The house is located close to her parents. This is especially helpful now that she is at home with a small child.

Additional details: Cassie grew up in country NSW. Her parents ran a business in the town where they lived. Although there were only a few Greek people living in the region, they were able to celebrate special occasions together.
Cassie has a small immediate family but a large extended family network, mostly living in Australia. Her mother’s family now live in Australia and about half of her father’s family are here. The rest live in Greece.
Pseudonym: Vasiliki

Age: 64

Marital status: She is married to a Greek man.

Children: Vasiliki has three adult children; two boys aged 28 and 27, who live with her and one daughter, aged 34, who is single and lives in her own flat. Leaving the parental home while still unmarried is unusual in the Australian Greek community. Vasiliki is not happy about her daughter living on her own, but she has reluctantly accepted the situation.

Religion: Greek Orthodox.

Education: Vasiliki was educated to primary school level in Greece. She was not able to go to high school because her family could not afford to send her. She learnt how to be a dressmaker and taught this trade before coming to Australia.

Occupation: In Australia she worked in clothing factories. She has been retired for a few years.

Migration status: Vasiliki migrated to Australia in 1956. She came to join her husband-to-be who arrived in the country two years before. They first lived in a house in Redfern and then bought a cottage, with her husband’s brother, in Surry Hills. Vasiliki’s early residential history is about hard work and struggling to make enough money to buy their own house.

Residential situation: Vasiliki and her husband own their house in the study area. They have undertaken extensive renovations and it is very comfortable. They have a large vegetable garden in the back yard.

Additional details: Both Vasiliki and her husband were born in Russia. Their parents were Greek and had migrated to Russia. In Vasiliki’s case, the family moved back to Greece when she was ten. Her father tragically died when Vasiliki was only eight. When the family went back to Greece, they lived with her father’s family in a country town. They had a semi-rural lifestyle, growing much of their own produce.

She came from a family of two brothers. A relative’s orphaned child grew up with the family and was like a sister to Vasiliki.

Her mother remarried after returning to Greece and still lives there.

Vasiliki does not have a lot of family in Australia, although some of her husband’s family live here.
Pseudonym: Doris

Age: 51

Marital status: Doris is a widow. She was married to a Greek.

Children: Doris has three adult children; a son and a daughter aged 24 and 26, who live at home and a son 29, who is married with a baby.

Religion: Greek Orthodox.

Education: She attended primary school in Greece and then worked on her family’s farm.

Occupation: Doris has worked in factories since coming to Australia. She is a long term employee of a local factory and regularly liaises between management and the workers. She is well respected by the people at the factory. She has not worked all the time she has been in Australia, but returned to the work force after her husband’s death.

Migration status: Doris was born in Cyprus. She came to Australia in 1958 when she was 16. Three of her older brothers were already in the country and sent for her. They needed a housekeeper and someone to provide them with good company. The brothers had been in Australia for ten years. Doris lived in Darlinghurst at first when her brother had a restaurant in Kings Cross. She later moved to Maroubra Junction to live with her married brother. She met her husband in Australia through friends.

Residential situation: She owns a house in the eastern region of the study area. She has lived in this dwelling for over thirty years. She has a small vegetable garden in the back yard. Doris grows her own herbs and spends time drying them. As well, she bottles olives and tomato puree for her Greek cooking.

Additional details: Doris is one of 11 children. She spent her childhood in a rural district. Her father owned the largest farm in the region, growing olives, tobacco, cotton and carob. All of the children worked on the farm.

As well as being a successful farmer, Doris’ father was very popular in the village. Their home was frequented by many people and her father sought out to give advice. He was also a good cook!

Going against the tradition of their day, her parents did not have an arranged marriage. Her parents visited Doris in Australia for a year in 1970 and loved it.
Today, all of her husband's family live in Australia. She has four brothers and one sister living here.
APPENDIX FIFTEEN

Biographical Details of the Arabic Women

Pseudonym: Fatima

Age: 36

Marital status: Fatima is divorced. Her marriage lasted four years. Fatima married in Australia. She liked the man but was uncertain. Her parents encouraged her to go ahead. It transpired that her husband had lied about his situation, wanting to marry to obtain permanent residency in Australia. He was secretive about his past life (he was married before). Fatima told me he took her money and did not support her financially.

Children: She has two children.

Religion: Muslim.

Education: Fatima completed high school and two years of tertiary education in Australia.

Occupation: Fatima is a bilingual manager of a government home care service.

Migration status: Fatima came out to Australia with her parents because of the war. She was a young child. Her father came first and then sent for the family.

Residential situation: She lives in a unit, around the corner from her parents. They give her support with the children. The unit is rented.

Additional details: Fatima is originally from North Lebanon. She grew up the urban area of Tripoli. She is from a large family of nine children. Her grandmother lived with the family in Lebanon.

During her interview, Fatima gave me a lot of information about religion, culture, and politics in Lebanon. She also talked about the problems of coming to a new country and wanting to keep the culture. This results in pressure on girls to marry, sometimes not knowing the person very well. She believes that this problem is due to the breakdown of family and traditional ways of courting.
Women’s Stories of Home

Appendices

Pseudonym: Zekia

Age: 53

Marital status: She is married to an Arabic man.

Children: Zekia has five children. Three have left home and a daughter and son still live with her. The youngest boy is at school and her daughter attends university.

Religion: Zekia is a devout Muslim. She prays at home on a special prayer mat in the front tiled hall.

Education: She finished high school in Lebanon but has no formal education in Australia.

Occupation: Zekia worked as a welfare officer in the United Nations in Lebanon. She does not work outside the home in Australia. Zekia is a wonderful cook and is constantly entertaining friends and family. She prepares traditional Arabic food. She spends time growing herbs and olives which she dries and bottles. Home and family are central to her whole life.

Migration status: Zekia was born in Tripoli. She came to Australia in 1963 when she was pregnant with her first child at the age of 25. Her husband was already here. She could speak English and settled into Sydney very quickly.

Residential situation: She lives in a suburb to the west of the study area. Her house has very traditional formal and informal areas. The family own the house. From the street, Zekia’s dwelling is no different from surrounding cottages. It is a two storey structure and has several fruit trees in the back yard. An olive tree and jasmine bush grow in the front garden.

Returned: She returned to Lebanon for four months when her father-in-law was dying. The war was on and it was a sad time. Zekia, her husband and youngest son returned again in 1990. They spent two months in Jeddah and two months in Lebanon and then visited relatives in Europe and Canada. The trip was very enjoyable because of the reunion with old friends and relatives.

Additional details: Zekia grew up in a large family (ten children in the family). Her father was a businessman and is still working at the age of 90. He owned a shop and they lived in a house on the premises. The family was well off.
Women’s Stories of Home

Pseudonym: Nouha

Age: 60

Marital status: Married a family friend in an arranged marriage.

Children: She has five adult children.

Religion: Muslim.

Education: She attended school up to year 10 in Lebanon.

Occupation: She worked in the family’s shop in Australia and later helped establish a Muslim women’s welfare group in Australia. She works hard at home, keeping her house clean and the family comfortable. She cooks traditional Arabic food.

Migration status: Nouha was born in Syria. She came to Australia with her husband in 1956. It was his decision, not hers, to come. When they arrived there were only a few Muslim women in Australia. She found it very difficult to settle. Even her own country folk were different, having values that were at odds with her own.

Residential situation: She lives in the central part of the study area in her own house. The house was purchased using money borrowed from their children and friends. Produce is grown in the backyard.

Returned: She returned to Lebanon for eight years because her husband wanted to go back. He did not want to be away from family who were dying. They eventually returned to Australia, which she missed a great deal during the time away.

Additional details: Nouha grew up in Tripoli with her parents and siblings. Prior to that she spent time with her auntie and grandmother.

Nouha has no family in Australia, apart from her children. There are financial difficulties, which were compounded by returning to Lebanon and then deciding to come back to Australia. She feels settled now. Her role in establishing a Muslim women’s welfare group was very important in this process.
Pseudonym: Safie

Age: 32

Marital status: Her marriage, at 15 years of age, was arranged because of concern about the war in Lebanon and what would happen. It was considered dangerous to be a young single woman at the time.

Children: Safie has three daughters aged 10, 14 and one.

Religion: She is a devout Muslim.

Education: Safie has a university degree in French literature from a university in Syria. When she arrived in Australia she undertook courses in English, computers, maths and accounting. She is currently doing a part-time course in welfare studies.

Occupation: In Lebanon she worked for an association to help war victims. In Australia she is a welfare worker with Muslim women.

Migration status: Safie was born in Tripoli. She migrated to Australia with her husband eight and a half years ago. The war in Lebanon was the motivating factor.

Residential situation: She is currently renting a house. The family has established a vegetable garden out the back. Safie lived in a unit before but moved because it was too small. She quite likes living in a flat, but finds medium density housing in Australia very inferior compared with that in Lebanon.

Additional details: The war in Lebanon interrupted Safie’s childhood. She was brought up by her grandmother in an urban situation. She is very close to her grandmother, who still lives in Lebanon. She wants to return to look after her grandmother. She also wants to go back for the sake of her children’s upbringing. She wants them to experience living in an Islamic country. Safie is concerned about western influences eroding her children’s values and religious code.
Pseudonym: Ihsan

Age: 37

**Marital status:** Ihsan is married. She met her Arabic husband in Australia. Her parents gave permission for the marriage.

**Children:** She has five children aged between 12 and two.

**Religion:** Muslim.

**Education:** She finished high school but could not go to university in Lebanon because of the war.

**Occupation:** Ihsan does not work outside the home. She is extremely busy looking after her family.

**Migration status:** Ihsan was born in Tripoli. She came to Australia as a single woman. The war split the family up and they had to move away from Lebanon.

**Residential situation:** The family is renting a house in the centre of the study area. Ihsan would like to own a house because it would provide her with more security. She has always rented in Australia and has experienced difficulty finding accommodation for her large family.

**Additional details:** In Lebanon Ihsan lived in an urban situation in a large family. She is one of ten children. She would like to return to Lebanon to visit relatives but would not want to live there. Her children have grown up in Australia and this is their country.

At the time of our meeting, her husband was not working, resulting in financial hardship for the family.
Pseudonym: Faiza

Age: 19

Marital status: Faiza is married to a man who came out from Lebanon.

Children: She has a baby son.

Religion: Muslim. Faiza does not wear a scarf but considers that she will do this in due course.

Education: Educated to year 10 in Australia.

Occupation: She does not work outside the home.

Migration status: Faiza was born in Lebanon and came to Australia when three months old.

Returned: The family went back to Lebanon intending to stay. They sold their house when they returned. It did not work out so they came back to Australia. This was like beginning the whole migration process again and was difficult for the whole family. The return was a strain on their previously adequate financial resources. Faiza would like to return to Lebanon for a holiday but not to live. She feels as if she belongs in Australia. She has a lot of relatives here.

Residential situation: Faiza lives in a rented flat in the centre of the study area. The flat is comfortable but modest. Faiza wants to have her own house one day.

Additional details: Faiza grew up in Sydney. She has one younger sister. Her father had a successful cleaning business in Australia, so the family was reasonably comfortable. Before they returned to Lebanon, they lived in a big house in an established migrant area and were very happy. She is very close to her mother and visits every day. Religious and cultural values are very important to her.
Pseudonym: Claudia

Age: 25

Marital status: Claudia is married to a man from her village in Lebanon.

Children: She has one baby girl.

Religion: Christian.

Education: Claudia completed year 10 in Australia. She started a secretarial course but left because of a job offer.

Occupation: Claudia works as a clerk in a federal government department.

Migration status: Claudia was born in a village located in the mountains south of Beirut. She came to Australia with her parents when she was ten years old.

Residential situation: She and her husband own a house in the centre of the study area, which is close to both of their families.

At the rear of the house is an open yard where Claudia’s husband is doing a lot of work, planting produce and ornamental shrubs and flowers. They have only been in the house for a fairly short time, but are extremely keen to improve it. They have planted lemon and olive trees, a gardenia bush and will put some jasmine near the back door. A large part of the rear yard is grassed. There is formal lounge at the front of the house where Claudia has several large pieces of china. The rest of the room is taken up with chairs to accommodate family gatherings.

Additional details: Claudia lived in an extended family situation in Lebanon. Her uncle had the upstairs section of the house and her grandmother lived with Claudia’s family on the ground floor. She was raised in a village, where the family grew fruit and vegetables for sale in the city markets. Claudia’s father worked as a taxi driver in Lebanon. Even though the family was poor, Claudia has fond and vivid memories of Lebanon and her life there. She was sad to leave her family when she came to Australia.

She has three brothers, but tragically, one was killed in a car crash in Australia.

She would like to return to Lebanon with her daughter and husband. However, she does not consider it to be safe because of the war. Given that close relatives are in Australia, it is doubtful that she would ever return permanently. She is bringing up her daughter with the values that her mother gave to her. The family is very important to her.
Pseudonym: Waad

Age: 41

Marital status: Waad is married to an Arabic. She married in Lebanon at the age of 16.

Children: She has seven children. Their ages range from 23 to six years old.

Religion: Muslim.

Education: She completed basic primary school education in Lebanon.

Occupation: Waad used to do commercial sewing but does not work outside the home any more.

Migration status: Her uncle, father and brother came to Australia in search of work opportunities. They sent for her later on. She has been here for 16 years.

Residential situation: Waad owns her house in the western part of the study area. Owning is very important to her because of the security.

Additional details: Waad was born and reared in the city of Tripoli. She is one of eight children. She highly values family and lived close to relatives in Lebanon.

Waad stopped wearing the hijab for many years when she arrived in Australia but felt able to wear it again after more Muslim women arrived and became visible in the public sphere.
Pseudonym: Naomi

Age: 27

Marital status: Divorced from her husband. She was married to an Arabic.

Children: Two girls aged two and a half and one and a half.

Religion: Christian.

Education: She studied for her Higher School Certificate at technical college. She did this in Australian while she was working.

Occupation: Clerk in a federal government office.

Migration status: Naomi came here as a young girl at the age of five. It was hard for her parents being Christians in a Muslim country. They came to Australia so that the children would have more opportunities. They were sponsored by friends. The migration was an adventure.

Returned: Naomi has returned twice to Lebanon and Syria. She went back with her grandmother at the end of her holiday in Australia. She had a wonderful time, so much so that she convinced her father to sell their house and return. Unfortunately, this did not work out for the family. Naomi met her husband in Lebanon, staying for ten months before going back to Australia. Her marriage did not last and she talks about the reasons in her interview. She believes that had she been living in Lebanon, it would not have ended as family and relatives would have been able to offer support to keep the couple together. In Australia she only has her immediate family, making it very difficult. She is very conscious of not having a large family around her.

Residential situation: In order to pay off her debts, Naomi is trying to sell the house that she owns in the western part of the study area. She will rent a house for the children’s sake, rather than buy a unit. She does not consider living in a flat suitable for children.

Additional details: Naomi was born in Kuwait but lived in urban areas of Lebanon. She has two older brothers and a younger sister who was born in Australia. She remembers that the living conditions in Lebanon were more primitive than in Australia. Nevertheless, she has happy memories of her childhood.

As a divorced woman, Naomi relies a lot on her parents for emotional and practical support. She has a wide circle of friends and is very sociable.
Pseudonym: Sarah

Age: 31

Marital status: Married to an Arabic man.

Children: She has three children; two girls and a boy under seven years of age.

Religion: Christian.

Education: Sarah was educated to Year 10 in Australia. She then did a secretarial course.

Occupation: Sarah worked as a secretary until she had children. At the time of the interview, she was not working outside the home.

Migration status: Sarah came to Australia with her mother and younger siblings when she was 12. Her father and the older children had already been in the country for three years.

Residential situation: Sarah and her husband live in a house which they are renovating. It is located in the eastern part of the study area. The house is a free standing, federation style cottage. Inside it has tiled floors and typical Arabic decoration, including a formal salon.

Additional details: Sarah was born in Tripoli in Lebanon. Her grandparents lived close by. The family was reasonably well off, owning a holiday house in a village. They went there every year for the summer holidays.

There were ten children in the family, five boys and five girls. Life was not always happy because her father gambled, which caused arguments between her parents.

All of her family live in Australia and Sarah would only return to Lebanon for a holiday. She is very happy here.
Pseudonym: Asmahan

Age: 31

Marital status: Married. Her husband is Arabic but they married in Australia.

Children: Asmahan has three children, two sons and one daughter, aged ten, nine and five. They attend a local Muslim school.

Religion: Muslim.

Education: Asmahan attended high school in Australia up to Year 10. She then did a book keeping course part-time at technical college.

Occupation: She does not work outside the home.

Migration status: Asmahan came to Australia in 1976 with her mother and some of her brothers and sisters. Her father died in Lebanon. They moved because of the war. Several of her older brothers and sisters were already in Australia.

Returned: Asmahan returned to Lebanon in 1985 with her husband and visited her old home. The war was still on, which was very frightening. She is considering returning permanently because of concern about her children growing up in a secular, non-Muslim society.

Residential situation: She lives in a house that she and her husband own. It is located in the western region of the study area. From the exterior, the house is different from surrounding dwellings (see photograph, page 406). Inside it is tiled throughout and decorated with expensive furniture and ornaments. There is a formal lounge and dining as well as a large informal space for the family. The house is spotless and beautifully presented.

Additional details: Asmahan was born in Tripoli. There were five girls and three boys in the family. Her father died at the age of 80 when Asmahan was ten years old.

In Australia, the family owns a very successful fruit shop in Sydney’s eastern suburbs. Her husband runs the business and works long hours.
Pseudonym: Yasmin

Age: 28

Marital status: Yasmin is married to an African man.

Children: Yasmin has two sons aged two and a half, and one year old.

Religion: She is a Christian, as is her husband.

Education: She completed high school in Australia.

Occupation: Yasmin does not work outside the home on a regular basis. She does some casual work for a multicultural youth centre and teaches pottery in the school holidays.

Migration status: Her parents migrated to Australia before she was born. Yasmin was born and reared in Sydney.

Residential situation: Yasmin rents a flat to the east of the study area.

Additional details: When her parents migrated to Australia they lived in a unit above the family’s shop in a suburb of Sydney. This accommodation was very confined. Due to mounting debt the family sold the shop and shared a house with another family.

Yasmin has two sisters and one brother. Most of her family now live in Australia. She has returned to Lebanon for a holiday but never with the intention of living there.

Yasmin is politically active and involved in different community groups. She is also interested in gender and identity issues. When she married she kept her surname and her children have her name.
Pseudonym: Samia

Age: 56

Marital status: Samia is a widow. Her husband came from Palestine. They met when he came with the army to Lebanon. She married him when she was 14. He died 12 and a half years ago.

Children: Samia has three adult children, two daughters and a son. They do not live with her.

Religion: She is a Christian and her husband was a Muslim.

Education: She completed the early years of primary school in Lebanon.

Occupation: Samia worked in a factory located in the study area. She is now retired.

Migration status: Samia has been in Australia for 40 years. She followed her husband who came to Australia to earn money.

Residential situation: Samia owns the house that she lives in. She is supported by the pension and her children.

Additional Details: Samia was born and grew up in a rural village in Lebanon. She was one of eight children. The family was very poor and her father died when she was only 12 years old. Her father worked as a stone mason and her mother was at home bringing up the children. This was not easy due to their difficult financial situation.

She has never returned to Lebanon since migrating here and feels that Australia is home.
APPENDIX SIXTEEN

Biographical Details of the Vietnamese Women

Pseudonym: Huong

Age: 43

Marital status: Huong is married an Anglo Australian.

Children: Huong does not have children.

Religion: She is a Buddhist.

Education: In Vietnam Huong completed a Bachelor of Science, majoring in Geology.

Occupation: Huong worked in Vietnam as a geology and sports teacher. She did an English course when she arrived in Australia then worked in a factory. She has worked in community organisations and now works full time as a teacher.

Migration status: Huong was born in Saigon and has been in Australia for seven years. She was one of the last ones in her family to leave Vietnam. After the Communist government took over Sth Vietnam, life was very difficult for Huong. She was very worried and saw no future for herself in Vietnam. She tried to escape several times and was captured and put into prison. She was gaoloed for a period of three months and then six months. Finally, she lost her job.

Eventually she was successful and escaped on a small boat. She spent nine months in Indonesia in a refugee camp. When she finally did arrive in Australia she was unhappy. She expected her family to spend a lot of time with her, however they were busy working.

Residential situation: Huong and her husband own their house in Canterbury. It is a large federation cottage with a well developed garden. Huong has planted shrubs and trees that remind her of Vietnam. Huong and her husband have decorated the house and plan to eventually renovate.

Returned: Recently, Huong went back to Vietnam with her husband for a holiday. This trip was very emotional and brought back many memories of her childhood. In some ways she would like to return but her husband does not speak Vietnamese and he would not like it there. The government also continues to worry Huong.
Additional details: Huong spent her childhood in urban Vietnam. She comes from a family of six girls and one boy. Huong's father worked as a school teacher. The family was well off, owning several houses. They also had servants. Her father was unusual in that he enjoyed cooking.

Almost all of Huong's family now live in Australia.
Pseudonym: Loan

Age: 21

Marital status: Single

Children: Loan does not have any children.

Religion: Catholic. She goes to church regularly.

Education: Loan has done her final year of schooling in Australia and is studying at university to become a welfare worker.

Occupation: Loan is a student.

Migration status: Loan was born in a city in Sth Vietnam. She came to Australia in 1986 at the age of 15. The family tried to escape once before they were successful. When they were caught the first time, her father was imprisoned for two years. Loan escaped in a boat with her uncle and some of her brothers and sisters. They went to Malaysia where they were accommodated in a refugee camp for nine months. They were sponsored to Australia by an auntie. Loan lived in Australia with different relatives. Her parents remained in Vietnam until recently.

Additional details: Loan spent her childhood in a semi-rural environment in Vietnam. She is one of nine children. Her parents were farmers, working in fields a short walk away from the family’s house. Loan’s mother sold produce in the market. As well as farming, her father built boats and went fishing.

All of her father’s family live in Australia but her mother’s family live abroad.

She would like to visit Vietnam for a holiday but would not return permanently.

Residential situation: Loan lives with her parents and seven siblings in a rented house to the east of the study area.
Pseudonym: Ha

Age: 30

Marital status: Ha has been married to a Vietnamese man for four months.

Children: Ha does not have any children.

Religion: Ha attends the Vietnamese Catholic Church every Sunday.

Education and Occupation: After high school Ha studied social work at university in Vietnam. She worked in that field for one year and then studied accounting.

When she arrived in Australia she studied accounting at Bankstown Technical College and now works for the a Vietnamese women’s association as a social worker.

Migration status: Ha was born in Saigon. She has been in Australia for three years. After the Communist takeover in Vietnam her father lost his job in the army and was forced into a re-education camp for three years. Her father worked very hard there and tragically died of lung cancer. Her four brothers were sent into the army once they turned eighteen. Her parents were worried about their children’s safety and thought that they would have a better future in another country. Ha and her siblings escaped by boat to Indonesia and after seven months in a refugee camp, came to Australia.

Residential situation: Ha and her husband rent a furnished granny flat to the west of the study area. It is small and modest. If they have children it is likely that they will move.

Additional details: Ha comes from a family of four brothers and two sisters. Her mother became the breadwinner in the family after her husband lost his job. She sold groceries in the market.

Ha grew up in the city of Saigon.

Ha has most of her family in Australia. Her sister and brother-in-law arrived several years ago and saved for the rest of the family to escape. It costs a great deal of money (between $3,000 and $4,000 per person) and there is no guarantee of safety or success. One brother is still in a refugee camp.

Ha would like to return to Vietnam but not permanently. She considers that the living conditions and education prospects are better in Australia.
Pseudonym: Diem

Age: 44

Marital status: She is married to a Vietnamese man.

Children: Diem has two sons of high school age.

Religion: She is a Buddhist.

Education: Diem finished high school in Vietnam and was doing her fourth year in medicine when the Communists took over. She was not allowed to continue her studies.

Occupation: Diem is a community worker within the Vietnamese community. She specialises in working with the aged in home and community care.

She has been in business in Australia, running a restaurant, an acupuncture clinic and a haberdashery shop. Her businesses collapsed financially, forcing her to sell her house.

Migration status: Diem was born in Vietnam. She has been in Australia for 15 years.

Diem and her husband escaped from Vietnam on the ship of which he was in charge. This was a government vessel and he was only allowed to sail in domestic waters. They took the ship and landed in Darwin. Diem does not think that she will ever return to Vietnam given her family’s history and the fact that they escaped in a government boat. The only scenario that would alter her mind is the Communists losing power.

Residential situation: Diem has lived in the study area for most of her time in Australia. Before the collapse of her businesses she owned and lived in a house. This is something she hopes to do again. When I interviewed her she was living (temporarily) in a rented flat in Sydney’s eastern suburbs.

Additional details: In Vietnam, Diem lived with a large extended family. Her father held a high government position in South Vietnam before the Communist takeover. The family was well off and had servants. Her father owned four houses and several factories. They lived in the city but owned a farm about 60kms away. They went there on the weekends and obtained fresh fruit, vegetables and eggs from the chickens.

When the Communists took over South Vietnam, the family suffered great hardships because of Diem’s father’s high position within the government. They had to live
in one of the factories after their houses were taken away. Her father could have escaped in a US helicopter the day Saigon fell, but he decided against this because he did not want to leave his family behind. This was the wrong decision for Diem’s father. He was arrested shortly after and died in prison. The rest of the family was constantly harassed by government soldiers and their property searched over and over again.

In Australia, Diem works with elderly people and is aware of the difficulties that they face because of the breakdown of the extended family in Australia. Perceptions of privacy are very different in their adopted country and many elderly have problems dealing with family life in a western residential structure.
Pseudonym: Fuong

Age: 31

Marital status: Fuong is separated from her husband.

Children: She has two children, a son and a daughter, aged seven and five. One was born in the refugee camp and the other was born in Australia.

Religion: She is a Buddhist.

Education: Fuong finished high school in Vietnam. In Australia she studied to become an interpreter.

Occupation: At the time of the interview, Fuong was looking for work. She has worked in Australia in a clothing factory.

Migration status: Fuong came to Australia at the age of twenty. She was born and raised in Saigon. Prior to her arrival in Australia she lived in a refugee camp in Thailand for three years.

Fuong decided to leave Vietnam because of her family’s history and the difficulties that this posed for her after the Communist takeover. To get a job in Vietnam, it is necessary to provide the government with a resume which has to include details of parents, grandparents and great grandparents. As Fuong’s parents had originally come to South Vietnam to escape the Communists in the north, the new government would not favour her being employed. Consequently, she could not get a job.

Fuong escaped from Vietnam with her two brothers. She met her husband on the boat. They got married in the refugee camp. Her husband was sponsored by someone in Australia, so they came out here.

Residential situation: Fuong and her family rent a townhouse to the west of the study area.

Additional details: Fuong grew up in Saigon where her mother worked in a clothing shop as a dressmaker and her father was an electrician, repairing TVs and radios.

Fuong comes from a family of two boys and four girls.

Since coming to Australia, Fuong’s father and two sisters have also migrated. Fuong currently lives with her children, brother, father and sister.
Fuong would like to return to Vietnam when she is older. She does not think that her children would want to go back because they are growing up in Australia and enjoy the lifestyle here.

When there were troubles in her marriage she did not have any community or family support. There was no-one for her to talk to. She now feels ostracised from the Vietnamese community because of the break up of her marriage.
Pseudonym: Nhung

Age: 42

Marital status: Nhung is married. Her husband, born in Vietnam, is an academic, researching linguistics and the problems of learning a second language. He also runs a private business.

Children: Nhung does not have children. However, her husband has two daughters who stay with them from time to time.

Religion: She is a non-practising Buddhist.

Education: Nhung’s grandfather taught her basic subjects such as spelling, maths and writing when she was a little girl. She started primary school at the age of seven. She went to high school and learnt French and English. Her University education was interrupted in 1975 when the Communists took over Sth Vietnam. She was unable to continue studying English and many of the social science subjects because they were banned by the new government. She wanted to study overseas.

Occupation: She is employed as an interpreter in the telephone service and the state ethnic affairs commission. She also teaches Vietnamese part-time at the University of Western Sydney and helps her husband in his business.

Migration status: Nhung was born in North Vietnam, in the third largest city and migrated to the south at the age of three because of her father’s job.

Nhung came to Australia in 1979 at the age of 28. She did not like living under the Communist regime. She escaped in a boat with her brother and sister. Her mother paid government officials to allow them to leave. They were robbed by pirates on the way over and lost their jewellery. When they arrived in Indonesia they slept on the beach for several weeks. In spite of the hardships endured on the trip, it was a time of great adventure. Nhung felt a sense of freedom escaping from Vietnam. She was also glad to be more independent, away from the watchful gaze of her parents.

Residential situation: Nhung rents a two bedroom flat to the west of the study area. Nhung did not find renting a problem, unlike the other women. Nevertheless, some time after the interview, she purchased her own house.

Additional details: Nhung’s family lived in Saigon while she was growing up and attending school and university. She did experience rural life as her father bought a farm when he retired.

The family lived in three houses and were quite wealthy. They had servants to do the housework. Nhung’s mother was a very strong business woman, a successful
salesperson in foods and medicine. In 1968 her father retired from the public service and her mother became the family’s principal breadwinner. Her parents still live in Vietnam but are no longer well off. Nhung supports them financially.

Nhung comes from a family of five boys and four girls. One of the boys was lost in 1968 in the war.

Nhung has a younger brother living in the United States and a sister who she sponsored to come to Australia. She has some family in Australia and some in Vietnam. Nhung would prefer it if her parents moved to be with her in Australia.

Nhung has returned to Vietnam for a holiday, which she enjoyed. She was particularly overjoyed to see her relatives again.
Appendices

Pseudonym: Van

Age: 49

Marital status: Van is married to a Vietnamese.

Children: Van has four adult children, two sons aged 26 and 19 and two daughters aged 22 and 24. Her eldest son is a general practitioner. The others have also studied at university, something of which she is very proud.

Religion: Van is a practising Buddhist. She has a shrine in her house. Her arrangement of the shrine has western influences in its simplicity.

Education: Van finished high school and studied to be a teacher in Vietnam.

Occupation: Van has two jobs in Australia. She works as an officer at the commonwealth government's employment bureau and is a part-time language teacher.

Migration status: Van was born in central Vietnam. She has been in Australia for 11 years.

She left Vietnam with her husband and children after the Communist takeover. Life was intolerable for Van and her family because of the domination of the new government. They experienced particular hardships and were ostracised because of their history with the previous government and for being intellectuals. They were forced to attend indoctrination meetings every night. Van felt the loss of trust between people in Vietnam after the Communists came.

Van and her husband did not tell anyone, even their immediate relatives, that they planned to escape. They saved up and taught the children survival skills, including sleeping out in the open air and swimming. The escape cost them their life savings.

Van, her husband and children, left on a six metre boat with 24 people crowded on board. They arrived in Hong Kong and spent six months in a refugee camp before being accepted to come to Australia. Life was very hard during this time, but Van was relieved to have escaped safely.

Additional details: Van comes from a large family of 12 children, eight girls and four boys. Her family was well off and had connections with Vietnamese royalty. They lived in a large house with servants. Van also experienced western culture as a young woman.

Van does not have many relatives in Australia. She has a brother who sponsored Van and her family to come to Australia.
Van has not returned to Vietnam. She considers that as a refugee she cannot morally go back. If the Communists left she would definitely visit, although it is doubtful that she would ever return permanently.

Van makes traditional Vietnamese costume, which she wears.

**Residential situation:** Van lives with her husband and unmarried children in their own house to the east of the study area. She has a large garden with many plants that remind her of Vietnam.
Pseudonym: Hanh

Age: 45

Marital status: Hanh has been married for ten years. Her husband still lives in Vietnam. He is 51 and is a solicitor and worries that if he moves to Australia he will not be able to get a job.

Children: Hanh does not have any children.

Religion: Hanh is a practising Buddhist.

Education: In Vietnam Hanh did a bachelor of physics and biology. In Australia she is doing a diploma of education in science. When she finishes she will be able to teach.

Occupation: Hanh is a student.

Migration status: Hanh was born and grew up in the city of Saigon. She has been in Australia for three and a half years. She was sponsored by her sister and left by plane. She did not have to escape. After the Communist take over her family tried to escape twice but were unsuccessful. Her sister escaped and then sponsored her mother. Hanh did not want to leave at that stage because she was married, quite settled and the government was tolerable. Hanh came out to Australia because her mother needed Hanh’s help.

Residential situation: Hanh rents a flat in the centre of the study area.

Additional details: Hanh comes from a family of five children, three girls and two boys. Her mother ran a cosmetics business in Saigon and her father was an officer in the government.

Hanh’s mother and sister live in Australia. The rest of her family are scattered throughout the world in the US, Canada, France and Germany.
Pseudonym: Nhan

Age: 36

Marital status: Nhan is married to a Vietnamese man. Her husband was a pharmacist in Vietnam and works in a laboratory in Australia.

Children: Nhan has three children; a son aged 13, a daughter aged eight and a baby aged five.

Religion: She is a Buddhist but describes herself as not being very religious.

Education: Nhan was educated to the end of high school in Vietnam.

Occupation: At the time of our interview, Nhan was unemployed and looking for work. She used to have a part-time job sorting mail.

Migration status: Nhan has been in Australia for 13 years. She was born in the second largest city in south Vietnam. She grew up in this urban environment.

Nhan left Vietnam soon after she was engaged to her husband. He was in the South Vietnamese army and was sent to a re-education camp for three years after the Communist takeover. They escaped by boat to Malaysia with four of Nhan's brothers and her husband's relatives. Her brother-in-law was studying in Australia and sponsored them here.

Residential situation: Nhan and her husband own their house to the west of the study area. They purchased the property because it had an attached granny flat. This is currently rented but will eventually be used for their elderly parents when they need more assistance.

Additional details: Nhan comes from a family of six children, herself and five boys. In Vietnam the family was quite well off. Her father owned a chemist shop and they had servants. They lived in an extended family situation.

Nhan's mother, parents-in-law and brothers live in Australia. They are a close family and spend a lot of time together. Nhan's children are often with their grandparents who live nearby.
Pseudonym: Minh

Age: 23

Marital status: Minh has been married for a year. Her husband is Vietnamese.

Children: She does not have children yet but hopes to have some later on.

Religion: She is a non-practising Buddhist.

Education: Minh did her final year of high school in Sydney and then studied commerce, accounting and finance at university.

Occupation: Minh holds a managerial position in a commercial bank.

Migration status: Minh has been in Australia for 13 years. She was born in Saigon and lived there until she left Vietnam.

Life was very difficult for the family after the Communists came to Sth Vietnam. Her father had been an army official in the previous regime and was treated harshly. He spent almost four years in a re-education camp.

Minh left Vietnam with her sister and auntie and went by boat to Malaysia. On the way they were attacked twice by pirates. They lost all their money and jewellery and after the second attack, the pirates towed them to a Dutch oil tanker. They were rescued and taken to safety.

Once in Australia Minh lived with her uncles and then at one of the university colleges until she got married.

Residential situation: Minh lives with her husband in their own house to the west of the study area. There is a granny flat in the rear garden and her husband’s grandparents live there. On one of my visits I met Minh’s grandmother-in-law, who presented me with a Vietnamese lily plant, which is flourishing in my garden.

Additional details: Minh comes from a family of five children, four girls and one boy. Her parents were both teachers.

Her uncles sponsored her to migrate to Australia. More of her family are moving here and soon her parents will arrive.

Minh wants to return to Vietnam one day but would like to visit rather than live there.
Minh talked about generational conflicts within Vietnamese families as children reject extended family living and move away to set up their own households.