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# Home at Last:
# The Re-entry Adaptation of Returned South African Exiles

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How shall I talk of the sea to the frog,
If he has never left his pond?
How shall I talk of the frost to the bird of the summerland
If he has never left the land of his birth?
How shall I talk of life with the sage,
If he is a prisoner of his doctrine?

Chung Tzu, fourth century B.C. Chinese poet

**Abstract**

This study aims to examine how various personal and social factors predict adaptation outcome in people who are repatriated following lengthy periods in exile. In addressing this question, the study tested a predictive model of adaptation that related demographic, exile, home country and situational variables to the two adaptation outcomes of quality of life and psychological well being. The respondents were 325 returned exiles living in Cape Town and Johannesburg. All respondents completed a questionnaire that was specially constructed for the purposes of the study. In addition, a small number of in-depth interviews were carried out, supplemented by two personal accounts of exile and return. Factor analysis and reliability tests were used for exploratory data analysis. Conventional categorical data analysis permitted detailed description of the data. Multivariate analyses enabled the simultaneous effects of a number of predictor variables to be assessed. Finally, path analysis was used to determine the most critical predictor variables for adaptation outcome. One of the major findings of the study was that, of all the variables that were considered, difficulties of return were by far the most important predictor variable that influenced quality of life and psychological well-being. Results showed that this sample of returnees had high expectations which were largely unfulfilled. In the face of such great disappointment, the social support received mainly from family was mostly ineffectual in mitigating these re-entry difficulties. In spite of reporting high difficulty levels, the majority of the sample felt a closer affinity with home than with exile. The study concludes by drawing attention to the role played by re-entry difficulties and the implications this has for policy makers, practitioners and clinicians in the field of forced migration.

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Postnet Suite 355, Private Bag X6, Benmore, 2010 May 1999

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## Summary

Although promoted as the most durable solution to problems caused by forced migration, voluntary repatriation has proved to be a most difficult solution owing to the numerous psychosocial, economic, legal and political problems associated with it. This thesis is a report of an investigation into the complex set of personal and social factors that determine the adaptation of returning South African exiles. In Chapter 1, an account is given in broad outline of the present state of knowledge regarding the issue of repatriation as well as psychological explanations of cultural adaptation. Re-entry into the home culture after a period of forced absence is conceptualized as one aspect of cultural adaptation.

Chapter 2 looks at the historical, international context of voluntary repatriation, focusing on the evolution of international refugee policy. Against the background of the intractable problems that elude the possibility of a permanent solution, a few repatriations to African countries are reviewed.

In Chapter 3, psychological studies of the refugee/exile experience are reviewed. Early psychological research examined the refugee experience from a medical perspective. This has led to a conceptualization of forced migration as a stress provoking process, with refugees reported to have a higher incidence of psychiatric disturbance than native born populations in host countries. Not surprisingly, the term post traumatic stress disorder has become a frequently used term in relation to refugee adaptation.

With the advent of more sophisticated multivariate methods of analysis, multidimensional

models of adaptation have been developed. These consider adaptation to be a product of multiple interacting factors operating at various levels, thus taking into account the complexity of the refugee situation. Finally, acculturation models, notably Berry's acculturation framework focus on how individuals who have developed in one cultural context manage to adapt to new contexts that result from migration. The acculturation approach highlights the complex interactions and patterns of continuity and change people go through in new environments.

Chapter 4 reviews research which shows that returning home can be as or more disturbing than living in exile. The chapter begins by conceptualizing re-entry as part of the larger issue of cultural adaptation. Studies of returning short-term migrants are reviewed and the centrality of re-entry difficulties noted. There are comparatively fewer psychological studies of repatriation of refugees/exiles from countries of asylum. The majority of studies in this domain are carried out from diverse disciplinary backgrounds but consistently report the prominence of economic difficulties of return.

In Chapter 5, the socio-economic and political context of return for South African exiles is examined. The chapter begins by highlighting the major milestones in the history of resistance to apartheid and traces events leading to the advent of a post-apartheid South Africa. Concerning the repatriation exercise, it discusses the role played by the major stakeholders, namely, the South African government, NCCR and the UNHCR. This is followed by a consideration of returning to a situation of violence and uncertainty. Reports of dissatisfaction with conditions on return were common. Problems of employment, schooling, housing and feeling unwelcome often led to deep feelings of despair among returnees.

Chapter 6 gives the rationale as well as an account of the methodology adopted for the study. Berry's acculturation framework, complemented by Nicholson's transition cycle theory forms the theoretical basis on which the study is based. The various components of the study are described under the methodology section and methodological difficulties of conducting a study of this nature are highlighted.

With the collection of data completed, Chapter 7 gives an account of the various preliminary steps taken to prepare the data for statistical analysis. This included checking the data for completeness, accuracy and uniformity as well as examining the properties of the scales used in the questionnaire. Chapter 8 presents the results. The descriptive section of the results indicates that the majority of respondents adapted relatively well to exile life. They had high expectations of what would happen when they returned home. These high expectations were however mostly unfulfilled upon return. Furthermore, respondents reported that they experienced re-entry difficulties at various levels of severity. In the face of such great disappointment and difficulties in adapting back, the family was reported to be the main source of social support. In terms of how close they felt to either home or exile, most returnees indicated a closer affinity with home.

More detailed analysis of the data indicated that re-entry difficulties had the most important influence on adaptation outcome. Chapter 9 discusses and elaborates on these results. The return of the sample of exiles under study was overshadowed by the severe difficulties they faced as they negotiated their way back into a now alien environment. This finding verifies empirically the commonplace fact that following the experience of being forcibly uprooted,

people face tremendous challenges of adapting to a country they were forced to flee. The implications of this finding are that much as repatriation has been promoted as a durable solution to the refugee 'problem', the serious material, social and emotional difficulties accompanying return render it a most problematic solution. This reinforces the argument that the most important criterion to consider in any repatriation is neither the numbers nor the orderly physical movement of people across borders but how well they adapt to conditions of living in the new place called 'home'. It also supports the contention that returning exiles are not returning to the idealized home but to a country of origin.

Thus the central thesis of my study is simple enough - repatriation as it is presently conceived is regarded as a solution to the refugee problem, an end point, and not as a completely new beginning on new terrain. Yet this simple fact does not seem to have been acknowledged thus far. The many repatriations that have taken place indicate that far from being an end point, repatriation is in fact a beginning. It is my modest hope that my study will help contribute to a better understanding of the repatriation process and to approach it as *the problem* that it is instead of assuming that it is *the solution* to problems of forced migration.

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## Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| ANC | African National Congress |
| CMI | Cornell Medical Index |
| CODESA | Convention for a Democratic South Africa |
| DSM III R | Diagnostic and Statistical Manual III Revised Edition |
| FASIC | Foundation for Social Assistance of Christian Churches |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GHQ | General Health Questionnaire |
| GNU | Government of National Unity |
| IGO | Intergovernmental Organisation |
| IOM | International Organisation for Migration |
| MK | Umkhonto we Sizwe (Military wing of the ANC) |
| NCCR | National Co-Ordinating Committee for Repatriation |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| NP | National Party |
| PTSD | Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder |
| SBDC | Small Business Development Corporation |
| SRE | Schedule of Recent Experiences |
| SARQ | Social Adjustment Rating Questionnaire |
| TEC | Transitional Executive Council |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commission for Refugees |
| UNRISD | United Nations Research Institute for Social Development |
| WCCL | Ways of Coping Checklist |
| WHO | World Health Organisation |

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# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

The plight of people uprooted from their countries continues to be a growing phenomenon world-wide. The problems caused by, and the possible solutions to the movements of refugees or exiles as they seek asylum have engaged the attention of a host of international and national aid agencies, producing a spate of literature. The repatriation of these uprooted people has attracted less attention. For historical and political reasons, generations of refugees and exiles who fled their homes in the past resettled in countries of asylum. In recent years, however, the solution to problems posed by refugee movements across borders has increasingly been seen in terms of repatriation (Allen, 1994). The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), has since the early 1980s considered voluntary repatriation the most desirable of the three durable solutions to refugee situations. At its 31st session it "recognised that voluntary repatriation constitutes generally...the most appropriate solution to refugee problems" (UNHCR, 1980). The other two solutions are integration into the first country of asylum and resettlement in a second country.

The UNHCR, an agency of the United Nations, was born in the Cold War immediately following the Second World War. During this period, refugees were a European problem. Thus western governments that received refugees from Eastern Block countries viewed this as welcome evidence that the socialist system had failed

(Harrell-Bond, 1985). It was considered inconceivable that Eastern Block refugees should want to return home. This perception was also shaped by the cultural and ethnic affinities between populations of receiving countries and the East European refugees. These affinities, together with humanitarian concern, led to the development and adoption of international standards according to which refugees should be treated. These standards eventually became embodied in the United Nations Convention of 1951.

In the 1960s, emphasis shifted to the Third World as wars of national liberation and decolonisation produced their own refugee movements. On the African continent, the sense of brotherhood forged through common colonial experiences and the generous humanitarian assistance from the international community eased the burden on governments of hosting refugees. Moreover, the majority of these refugees returned to their countries of origin once independence was gained.

In the 1970s, the causes of refugee movements became increasingly more complex. First of all, the numbers of forcibly uprooted people increased and unlike during the period of decolonisation, prospects for political solutions and for dealing with the root causes of flight became more problematic. The situation in the 1980s was aggravated not only by the dramatic rise in the number of refugees and asylum seekers in the developing world, but also by the growing number of asylum seekers from Third World to western countries. Recognising that refugees were likely to remain in asylum countries for long periods, refugee policy shifted from relief and maintenance programmes to the search for durable solutions. One such solution was voluntary repatriation of refugees to their home countries. In the course of the

decade, the United Nations General Assembly identified return as one solution to refugee problems. The UNHCR also placed great emphasis on the need to encourage voluntary repatriation of refugees to their home countries. As a consequence, the numbers of returnees increased in the 1990s, reaching a peak in 1992, the year declared as the first year of a decade for voluntary repatriation. In that year alone, 2.4 million people were repatriated (Allen, 1994). While this solution was initially acclaimed and reinforced, the short history of its implementation led to a revision of earlier optimistic views. In 1980 a note submitted by the High Commissioner had stated "Voluntary repatriation, whenever feasible, is of course the most desirable solution to refugee problems" (UNHCR, 1980:1). In an extensive study of repatriation, Rogge (1991) noted that repatriation has turned out to be difficult and problematic to implement. Hence the observation by the present High Commissioner, Sadako Ogata in 1991, that it "is very encouraging that the prospects for the return of many refugees seem brighter today than in the past. But I am concerned about the kind of life to which they are expected to go back" (UNHCR 1991a). Two years later, in 1993, a UNHCR statement qualified the earlier optimism by stating, "in ideal circumstances, voluntary repatriation is the best solution for most refugees. It restores citizenship and ends the pain of exile. For the many refugees whose prospects at home are far from certain however, it is only the best of a shrinking range of choices" (UNHCR, 1993).

The notion of the 'pain of exile' is a theme found in most exile writings (for example, Said, 1984). This is because the refugee experience inevitably entails a deep sense of loss - not only at a material level, but also the loss of family relationships, role, status, lifestyle, trust, loss of identity and self-esteem. This loss in turn presents a

major threat to the individual refugee and a major challenge to his or her coping capacities. Lamenting the lack of psychological counselling to Ugandan refugees in Sudan, Harrell-Bond wrote: "one was faced with evidence which suggests that few refugees escape the psychological scars of flight and exile. Even some of the most apparently stable will confide that they regularly dream of war, violence and death" (1986:286). Such an observation does not in any way exaggerate the adverse psychological impact of the refugee or exile experience.

Nonetheless it would be simplistic to assume that the mere act of repatriating 'home' is the magical solution that will end the tremendous emotional upheaval referred to as the 'pain of exile'. In its simplest sense 'to repatriate' means 'to return to one's native land', implying home. The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (1933:914) offers many definitions of 'home'. First, home "is a village, a town, a collection of dwellings." Then, "the seat of domestic life, the place of one's dwelling or nurturing with conditions, circumstances and feelings which naturally attach to it and are associated with it." It is evident therefore that the notion of 'home' is associated with a whole cluster of feelings. Additional definitions given by the same dictionary emphasise this point: "A place, region or state to which one properly belongs, in which one's affections centre or where one finds refuge, rest or satisfaction." Although by no means exhaustive, the definitions cited above indicate that there are a range of meanings associated with the word 'home', from a psychological sense of home as related to a community, to the sense of home being a geographical place.

Warner (1994), commenting on the promotion of voluntary repatriation by the UNHCR, makes the point that the concept of returning home is fraught with

difficulties. He remarks that "it (is) alarming to note there has also been no agreement on exactly what it means to return home" and goes on to analyse repatriation in terms of two elements: returning to a country of origin and returning to a home and a community. According to him "concepts of community and home assume a world order and symmetry that belie the problematic of the relationship between the individual and the group, the group and the state and territory, and fosters the idealisation of a nostalgia for home and return." In the light of the above analysis, it should come as no surprise that problems arise once people return home. Rogge (1991), in a global overview of problems arising from mass voluntary repatriations, cites a variety of situations where repatriation has turned out to be a most difficult and problematic solution. These are cases:

- where not all refugees are willing to return;
- where a home government has been less than welcoming;
- where a host government has been too forceful in encouraging return;
- where there has been limited assistance to returnees, creating difficulties in reintegration;
- where, after long periods in exile, returnees have encountered many and complex problems in re-establishing themselves.

Inevitably problems arise despite the fact that returnees are in their homes, and therefore presumed to be no longer in need of protection. In most cases, these problems are not expected by either returning exiles or the society to which they are returning, given the assumption that going home is natural and therefore problem-free. Rogge (1991) lists a number of probable reasons for the emergence of problems. Among these are that:

- more often than not, the gulf that arises between returning exiles and those who stayed behind leads to a negative perception of returnees;
- society all too often discounts the necessity for a process of integration;
- there are usually conflicts or potential conflicts over scarce resources;
- changes in the home society mean that returnees come back to a place that is significantly different from the one they left behind;
- educational problems, such as the non-recognition of educational qualifications acquired while in asylum countries, and difficulties with language of instruction in home countries;
- a variety of psycho-social problems related to changed value systems on the part of returnees.

Lastly, Stein (1991) notes that most repatriations that have occurred in Africa in recent years have been to countries in a state of conflict with no clear resolution of political, social and economic issues. To suggest then that refugees should be encouraged to go back to the countries from which they were once forced to escape, generates considerable debate. It certainly plays down the fact that refugees are bound to encounter tremendous difficulties when they go back. Even as the best of a shrinking range of solutions, promotion of the policy of voluntary repatriation has now reached a point where, in one case at least, the UNHCR has had to admit that the solution has failed.

Under the heading, "UN effort flounders in Rwanda", the London *Guardian* newspaper, 24 September 1994, reported that "the UN operation in Rwanda worsened as contradictory reports from UN bodies blamed a deterioration in security

on either government troops or the Interhamwe Hutu militia. UNHCR officials suspended the policy of encouraging 2 million refugees in Zaire, Tanzania and Burundi to return, claiming thousands of Hutus had been massacred by the government of the Tutsi dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front."

This justifies the issues raised by Harrell-Bond as far back as 1989, when she questioned the assumption made in various UNHCR statements. The title of her paper, *Repatriation: Under what conditions is it the most desirable solution for refugees: An agenda for research* aptly captures the essence of the question (Harrell-Bond, 1989:1).

Since this question was posed, a wide variety of research on voluntary repatriation has taken place but, so far, very few have addressed the psycho-social consequences of integrating back for returned exiles. In a review of the repatriation of 200 000 Algerians from Tunisia and Morocco following the Algerian peace settlement in 1962, Bouhouche (1991) showed that serious problems arose because most refugees were returning to areas adversely affected by the war. During this period, failed repatriation attempts by Angolans from Zaïre and Sudanese from Uganda prompted questions relating to returnees' perceptions of the safety of their return.

The question of return to areas devastated by war came up again in the case of the repatriation of Mozambicans from Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Zambia in the mid-1970s. Feeling unsafe about returning to such areas, most of those repatriated from Tanzania went back. The decision of refugees to return is also affected by reactions of host governments, responses of home governments and the role played by aid

agencies. The question of how refugees act on information received from the above sources has not been researched. Also, it is implicitly accepted that all refugees necessarily want to return once conditions that led to their exile change. We need to understand why some refugees tend to resist or even oppose return. Kunz (1981) has categorised refugees into three types:

- majority related;
- events related;
- self-alienated.

**Majority related** refugees are, according to Kunz (1981), most likely to return because they identify with opposition movements in their countries of origin. **Events related** refugees feel alienated from the homeland for reasons such as ethnic differences or the fact that they have become fully integrated into their host communities, and are least likely to return. **Self-alienated** refugees are those who for personal or ideological reasons cannot identify with their own nations. In spite of these neat categories, it is doubtful whether return movements fit neatly into Kunz's model. As an example, only a fraction of the number of South African exiles who left over a period of three decades are estimated to have gone back home (NCCR Repatriation Update, 1992). As these are majority related exiles, all would have been expected to go back according to Kunz's model and not remain in asylum countries.

Repatriation, as it is implemented, involves many partners. However, the many studies that have been carried out have studied repatriation mainly from the point of

view of the three partners to tripartite agreements, namely, host governments, governments of origin and the UNHCR. The human dimension of return has not been dealt with adequately, the assumption being that matters of this nature automatically resolve themselves upon return home. The basic questions of how returnees perceive and deal with the problems of returning, what return means to them and what factors influence how well they adapt once home have yet to be answered.

What this brings to the fore is the need for a study of the psycho-social processes involved during the period of adapting back. This need arises from the fact that the plight of returnees is muted by the agenda and 'sanctity' of the principle of voluntary repatriation. The longer-term costs in terms of the emotional upheaval and psycho-social trauma caused by the disruption of exile and repatriation are not considered serious consequences. In the case of exiles returning to South Africa, the long periods away from home and the fact that they are going back to a country that is itself in transition compounds the problem. A whole host of factors - political, socio-historical, psychological and situational - are bound to affect how the individual returning exile settles back into his or her country of origin. The centrality of problems of re-entry has, however, been a subject of debate. Brabant, Palmer and Gramling (1990) dispute the claim that culture shock is inevitable. To a large extent, these different viewpoints arise mainly because re-entry research has its own definitional and conceptual problems.

On the whole, psychologists are agreed that re-entry is a form of cultural adjustment, similar to, but also different from, adjustment to a foreign culture (Martin, 1984).

Beyond that, there are differing conceptions of the phenomenon. These can be attributed to the varied and ambiguous use of the term 'adjustment'. Beginning with studies of acculturation in a foreign culture, estimates of adjustment and maladjustment have always varied depending on the index of adjustment used. This complicates literature and makes integration of findings difficult. Martin defines cultural adjustment as a psychological process focusing on attitudinal and emotional reactions. There are some researchers who regard cultural adjustment as involving potential growth and development of an individual through successful adaptation (Adler, 1975). For Scott and Scott (1989) cultural adjustment is the mental emotional state of comfort, satisfaction and positive attitude and is one of a number of adaptive outcomes. According to Searle and Ward (1990), there are two domains to adjustment, namely psychological and socio-cultural. In their view, psychological adjustment can best be understood in terms of feelings of well-being and satisfaction.

With regard to re-entry adjustment, Pederson Hu, Hwang et al., (1989) are of the opinion that re-entry is complex and propose a broader definition that includes personal and professional satisfaction by returnees over a longer period of time after returning home. While the debate on cultural adjustment and the problems it brings continues on the one hand, some researchers have, on the other hand, suggested that it may be more fruitful at this stage to search for critical variables affecting cultural adjustment and/or re-entry (Dyal and Dyal, 1981; Martin, 1984). In this way we can determine the different ways sojourners, refugees and returnees react to a new or different culture and how some reach positive adaptive outcomes while others experience negative outcomes in the adaptation process.

The adaptation of the individual to his or her environment is one of the central concerns of psychologists. In studies of migration, a focal point of research has been the process of acculturation or adaptation to a foreign culture and problems arising from it. The term 'culture shock', first coined by Oberg in 1960, has been reiterated by most researchers in the field. Past and present research has continued on this theme in various directions. First there have been studies dealing with the incidence of mental disorders in migrant groups. Right from its beginnings, clinical research indicated that the incidence of psychiatric conditions was higher among refugee populations (Rumbaut and Rumbaut, 1976; Lin, Tazuma and Masuda, 1979; Eitinger, 1959; Tyhurst, 1977). Later and more recent studies continue to document that migrants and refugees pose certain social and clinical problems for clinicians as well as society at large (Lin, Tazuma and Masuda, 1979; Beiser and Fleming, 1986; Beiser, Turner and Ganesan, 1989; Westermeyer, Vang and Neider, 1983).

A second set of studies to emerge from the culture shock perspective seeks to determine the different ways in which individuals choose to acculturate. Stonequist (1964) viewed the process of cross-cultural adaptation as following one of three major directions: assimilation into the dominant group, assimilation into the subordinate group and some form of accommodation between the two societies. A fourfold model by Berry (1992) identifies four major types of coping: integration, assimilation, separation and marginality. Various coping styles have also been identified by Adler (1981) namely the proactive, alienated and resocialised styles.

Whilst there has been extensive research on how refugees and exiles adapt to a foreign culture, research on integration home after forced uprooting is comparatively sparse. The few studies carried out indicate that integration into the home society following a period of absence is problematic. Amidst the dearth of psycho-social studies devoted to this subject, a notable exception is the work done by the Foundation for Social Assistance of Christian Churches (FASIC, 1981) in Chile. Drawing on clinical, social and psychotherapeutic experiences acquired by this mental health team engaged with families that returned from exile, the FASIC group breaks down the experience of returnees into five existential tasks:

- saying farewell to the host country;
- encountering the reality of the home situation;
- reconstructing effective links;
- integrating the exile experience;
- elaborating on traumatic experiences endured in exile.

There are, as has already been pointed out, relatively few psychological studies on the subject of the adaptation of exiles and refugees to their countries of origin. However, a great deal of research has been done on a related phenomenon - the re-entry of short- term migrants such as students, business people, diplomats and migrant workers (Gullahorn and Gullahorn, 1963; Martin, 1984; Brabant et al., 1981; Sussman, 1986; Westwood, Lawrence and Paul, 1986; Fisher and Cooper, 1990). The similarities but also differences between the experiences of re-entry for migrants and reintegration of exiles make it possible to draw some parallels between the two processes. Both are psycho- social processes focusing on attitudinal and emotional

adaptation to the home culture after a period of absence. Re-entry is first conceptualised as a continuum of experiences and behaviours which present themselves on returning to a place of origin after being in another culture. Invariably it necessitates some mental and emotional adjustment in order for the returned person to function properly. It is also regarded as one form of cultural adjustment and a psycho-social transition that is a potential form of stress. Similarly, integrating back home after being forcibly uprooted, can be regarded as a psycho-social transition that is potentially stressful.

Indeed, research done on the re-entry of non-refugee groups provides evidence for return culture shock. Just like the adaptation to a new culture, the re-entry process can place demands on the returning person that could end up as a second culture shock. These demands can be summarised as follows:

1. The home society and the returning person do not expect the returnee to have problems. The fact that these problems are not expected makes their impact more forceful. While most individuals anticipate having to make cultural adjustments in a new country, returnees do not believe these adjustments need to be made upon return.
2. Changes take place within the returning person of which he or she may not be aware.
3. The home society may have evolved during the returnee's absence and he or she may not have accurate perceptions of it.
4. Friends, family and colleagues do not expect the returning person to behave differently from when he or she left.

5. The lack of interest in the returnee's experiences by colleagues, friends and family may be a source of frustration and disappointment.

## Statement of the Problem

This research tests a predictive model of returnee integration. Its central purpose is to examine population trends. In addition, idiosyncratic patterns are briefly considered through the presentation of two returnee cases whose history and circumstances made for different outcomes on return. The focus is on returning South African exiles, many of whom spent lengthy periods in foreign cultures before coming home. The majority of studies on returned populations have been carried out on refugees. The present study therefore fills a gap in our understanding of the dynamics of return by looking at the special group of political exiles. Thus it adds to the growing body of knowledge of return from exile in an African setting.

With regard to the predictive model, the predictor variables are demographic and background characteristics of the respondents, their experiences in exile, their expectations of return, the difficulties they encounter upon return, the social support they receive, their coping strategies and lastly, how they integrate to South African society. The dependent variables are their subjective psychological feelings of well-being and their satisfaction with various areas of life. It must be pointed out that independent and dependent variables are not meant to establish a fixed cause and effect relationship. Rather, the approach taken in this study is to consider the two adaptational outcomes and inquire about the circumstances that affect them in an effort to provide a reasonable sequencing of experiences. The two case vignettes

seek to construct representations of return from the everyday meaningful experiences of individual returnees.

## Research Questions to be Asked

1. In what way do various personal and situational factors predict adaptation outcome?

2. What are the difficulties that returnees will experience at the individual level?

3. What is the impact of these re-entry problems on adaptation outcome?

4. What is the contribution of difficulties, social support and coping in determining adaptation outcome?

5. To what extent are returnees' expectations unmet and how does this influence adaptation outcome?

It must be emphasised that the aim of the present study is to go beyond the descriptive and exploratory nature of most research in this area and examine factors which are critical for successful adaptation as well as the nature of the return process from an individual perspective.

## Specification of Terms

This dissertation is about South African political exiles who have returned to South Africa after relatively long periods outside the country. As will be noted, the terms 'refugees' and 'exiles' are used more or less interchangeably throughout the thesis. Whether people identify themselves as exiles or refugees, they share the common feature of having been 'pushed' out by perceived threats to life or liberty and coercive political conditions. The word 'refugee' is a legal term, denoting a status granted by the country in which an individual has sought asylum. Many refugees reject this identity and prefer to refer to themselves as 'exiles' even when their legal status in a host country is that of a refugee. The reason has to do with the future aspirations of individuals and even whole nationalities. The status of a refugee is expected to be a permanent one leading, as recommended by the 1951 Convention to naturalisation and assimilation. For the Palestinian refugees however, and in contrast to the 1951 Convention, 'the right to return' was written into the definition of 'who is a refugee' and this accounts for the preference of many Palestinians for the term 'exile' to refer to their situation (Morris, 1987). Perhaps most, if not all, South Africans who left did so in order to fight against the apartheid regime so that they could return. Their time abroad was viewed as temporary; their aim was always to return, hence many rejected the term 'refugee'. This was also the case for the Chileans who were forced to seek refuge from the Pinochet government. Intending to return, they asserted their identity as 'exiles' (Munoz, 1980). Another reason for preferring to identify oneself as an exile over saying "I am a refugee" is related to the media images of refugees as helpless, starving, dependent people.

With regard to the return process, a lot more psychological research has been done on migrants, both short-term and long-term, coming back after spending periods studying or working in foreign countries. Returning migrants, refugees and exiles share the common feature of having to adapt to the home culture after being immersed in a foreign culture. In addressing issues relating to returning exiles, frequent reference will therefore be made to research on returning migrants. Conceptually, however, it is necessary to distinguish between these different populations of uprooted people. This is because the available literature points to the fact that being uprooted has differential effects depending on the population referred to.

A key consideration in the present study of adaptation by returning political exiles is to determine whether they 'reintegrate' or simply 'integrate' back home. A case is made for the use of the terms 'integrate' or 'adapt' to denote the fact that, given the new political dispensation in the country, returning exiles are not reintegrating to the intact apartheid system they left behind. Rather they have come back to integrate to a new configuration of socio-political forces.

# CHAPTER 2

## Repatriation in the International Context:

## A Brief Historical Review

### A Brief History of Repatriation Policy

As already indicated in the previous chapter, the reasons for refugee movements have become more complex and varied in recent years, and likewise the situation and status of refugees has changed dramatically. Allen (1994:1) quotes figures provided by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), indicating that: "in 1970, there were 2.5 million refugees in the world. In 1980, the figure was 11 million. By the early 1990s, the alarming spread of civil wars was prompting an average of 10,000 people a day to flee across an international border. In 1993, the estimated number of refugees had risen to 18.2 million."

In the first half of this decade, these numbers continued to escalate particularly in Africa, where, in Rwanda alone, over a million people were forced to flee the fighting in that country in 1994 (Van Der Meeren, 1996). In recent times however, the number of refugees has actually declined: from 18.2 million in 1993 to 13.2 million at the beginning of 1997 (UNHCR 1998). This trend is attributable to two factors; first to the succession of large scale repatriation movements that have taken place since the beginning of the 1990's and secondly to the fact that while people have

continued to be displaced, they have not crossed a border to another country (UNHCR 1998).

Regarding the history of the repatriation of these forcibly uprooted people, it is worth reiterating that repatriation was not a major issue in the post war years. Allen (1994) notes that the far-reaching political implications of the Cold War resulted in the UNHCR being reluctant to take responsibility for applying solutions to refugee movements. In a polemical statement on the nature and role of the UNHCR, Harrell-Bond (1989:46) states that it "was established to protect refugees and its work was to be humanitarian. It was not established to address the question of how to eliminate the refugee problem, which, by definition, must always require major political action. The role for which it was established was to protect refugees and to facilitate the finding of a permanent settlement for them." Goodwin-Gill (1989) has correctly argued that protection should be the organising principle behind international activity on behalf of refugees and migrants. Regarding repatriation, Van Krieken (1987) quotes Holborn (1975) who states that the concept of repatriation was surrounded by question marks right from the beginning. According to him, both the United States and France tried to torpedo the inclusion of 'repatriation' as a possible task of the High Commissioner for Refugees. As far as the West was concerned, it was virtually inconceivable that refugees from, for example, the USSR would be willing to return home, or should be forced to repatriate.

It appears that during the period following World War Two, the policy of the UNHCR regarding repatriation was not clear at all. According to Van Krieken (1987), the wording of Article 1 of the Statute of the Office of the High Commissioner is

unnecessarily complex and, in his opinion, disappointing. He further comments that the statute places emphasis on co-operating with governments and voluntary organisations to facilitate voluntary repatriation, which would imply that the High Commissioner has legal authority to be involved in repatriation. Van Krieken, however, notes that neither the 1951 Refugee Convention nor the 1967 Protocol makes specific reference to repatriation and voluntary return. Indeed, the general mood at the time the 1951 convention was drafted was that voluntary repatriation was very much an individual matter. It was therefore on the initiative of the individual refugee that the High Commissioner could act to assist such a person to return. Hathaway (1991) points out that this approach may have been workable in the post-war era when the states of origin and of asylum were Cold War ideological opponents. It is worth noting that in terms of Article 31 of the 1951 Convention, repatriation only features in the negative sense of refoulement, which prohibits the forcible return or expulsion of refugees to their home country against their will (UN, 1978).

Evidently then, the question of repatriation was hardly ever considered a solution during the Cold War era. Issues relating to repatriation centred on the right of the individual refugee to choose to go back, against the rights of states of origin to demand the return of their citizens. Indeed, few of the major refugee movements at the time tended to lead to repatriations. The Palestinians have remained in exile for decades, the Hindus and Muslims who had been forcibly displaced following the partition of India did not go back, North Koreans remained in South Korea, the Chinese who fled to Hong Kong or Taiwan did not seem eager to return and it was expected that the Indo-Chinese who left after the Vietnam war would never go back

(Rogge, 1991). It is of interest to note public sentiments at this time, aptly captured by Stoesinger (1956), who commented that long experience has shown that population exoduses are not reversible.

There has since been a dramatic shift from this position in many parts of the world. Today the UNHCR is promoting repatriation as the most durable solution to the refugee problem. To understand why, it is necessary to consider the history of refugee policy.

According to Loescher (1989), the international refugee regime was created by the leading western powers and was acceptable only in so far as the system followed policies that were consistent with their particular interests. The international refugee regime includes a variety of actors: donor and host government refugee bureaucracies, intergovernmental (IGOs) and non-governmental (NGOs) humanitarian agencies, and more recently an intergovernmental development agency, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). A discussion of the scale and impact of this regime is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, it is important to appreciate the historical context in which refugee policy has evolved.

When the office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was established after the Second World War, its role as defined by the United Nations was to protect the refugees and to find solutions to their plight, in accordance with the 1951 Convention (UN, 1978). The convention defined a refugee, forbade states to 'refoul' an asylum seeker, and set out the rights and obligations that a refugee should enjoy and observe in the country of asylum. It also limited the beneficiaries of its provisions

to Europeans. At the time, the UNHCR carried its mandate in a political environment of relative co-operation. In line with the UNHCR, other agencies in the international refugee regime maintained that the refugee issue is a humanitarian one and should not be politicised. Nonetheless, the politics of refugees were complicated by the conflict between the then Soviet Union and Western powers over the repatriation versus resettlement of Russian, Ukranian and Baltic nationals. As a result, the Soviet Union distanced itself from the UNHCR. The control of the organisation thus fell to the West by default.

When the 1951 Convention was drafted, many of the United Nation's current member states were still under colonial rule. Only 26 states were represented at the conference at which the final drafting of the 1951 Convention took place. The situation in which the UNHCR has to operate has changed in present times. There are now over 150 states that are members of the United Nations although not all are signatories to international refugee conventions. The political climate in which the UNHCR operates includes the potential surveillance of its activities by these member states, especially those which fund the UNHCR budget, with the United States having great influence over the process (Harrell-Bond, 1989). For example, UNHCR expenditure in 1991 amounted to $860 million. Only a negligible portion of this amount was financed from the regular United Nations budget, the remaining costs coming primarily from governments (Rogers, 1992). As western governments are providing this aid, it is assumed that the international refugee bureaucracy (Daley, 1989) must also manage it, the UNHCR being considered the most appropriate channel.

As a result, the UNHCR has not escaped being politicised. Whatever power it exercises depends largely on the financial and political support of the United States government and other large donor countries. Policies pursued by the UNHCR therefore reflect the interests of these donor countries who accounted for 98 per cent of its funding in the early 1990s (Hathaway, 1993). Commenting on the vigorous promotion of voluntary repatriation at the end of the 1980s, Harrell-Bond (1989) reiterates that as a creation of governments, the UNHCR has never been able to act independently. Because donor governments have become increasingly frustrated at the growing costs of supporting the budget of the UNHCR, they have seized upon the promotion of repatriation to reduce costs. Harrell-Bond explains that fairly widespread approval of UNHCR's current policy of promoting repatriation came about as a result of the July 1985 San Renamo Round Table on Voluntary Repatriation. Giving an example of how UNHCR policy is formulated, she quotes from a report by Coles (1985) who records that this forum was attended by "government ministers, jurists and officials of governments and international organisations who were experts in refugee matters" who attended in their personal capacities. Nevertheless, these officials submitted their observations and conclusions to the executive committee of the UNHCR whose deliberations determine UNHCR policy.

The major shift in international refugee policy as it is now implemented in developing countries has been to view the refugee phenomenon as a temporary one, unlike the post World War Two era in which refugees were expected to become permanent members of their host community. As mentioned earlier, once refugees were granted refugee status, an individual and close members of his or her family had the security

of permanent residence. But now the UNHCR is forced to speak, not of permanent settlement but of 'durable' solutions to the mass involuntary movements of people, with voluntary repatriation promoted as the most ideal solution of all (Harrell-Bond, 1989).

## Repatriation to African Countries

The origins of a distinctly African approach to the situation of refugees began with the emergence of anti-colonial struggles in Africa. The return to Algeria of 200 000 former refugees from the Algerian War of Independence prompted new thinking. As this repatriation was to mark the beginning of repatriation to newly independent states, it set the stage for tripartite agreements between country of asylum, country of origin and the UNHCR. The agreements were aimed at establishing the principles and planning of repatriation as well as enabling co-ordination and supervision of related activities. Of concern here is the fact that neither the UNHCR nor its partners remained fully cognisant of the will of returnees in their negotiations. With regard to the Algerian repatriation, the UNHCR, for the first time in its history, made considerable material help available and major efforts were made towards the reception of returning Algerians. These included helping returnees across the border, providing rations and physically accompanying returnees to their villages of origin. In spite of this, once the repatriation exercise had been concluded, it became clear that the former refugees needed to be reintegrated into the economy so that they could become self-supporting. This realisation highlighted the fact that the return to a war-torn country brings to the fore questions of assistance, both to the refugees and the community to which they are returning (Bouhouche 1991).

Table 1 presents major African repatriations that took place between 1971 and 1988. At the time the Algerian repatriation was being negotiated, two other repatriations took place, albeit without much success. In 1961, Angolan refugees who had fled to Zaire were not willing to be resettled back in Angola by the Portuguese authorities. Similarly, even though Sudanese authorities signed a repatriation agreement with Uganda in 1964 and declared amnesty for returnees, very few people participated in this programme. The main problem in both cases was the fact that there was continuing conflict in both regions. This highlights one critical aspect of return, namely, how returnees themselves perceive the safety of return, especially given that they themselves are not partners to the tripartite agreements ostensibly geared to prepare for their return. Thus Sudanese refugees did not go back in the first two years following the signing of the Addis Ababa Agreement in 1972, again because they feared for their safety. In contrast, the importance of efforts by home governments to gain the confidence of people in areas of return is demonstrated by the repatriation of 6 000 Nigerians in 1970 to 1971 after the Biafra war. In this case, the return was completed quickly, swiftly and without UNHCR assistance. This is because of the conciliatory attitude of the Federal government toward the local populations in the recaptured areas and their offer of reconstruction assistance (Rogge, 1991).

**Table 1** Major African Repatriations 1971-1988

| Year | Total repatriating throughout Africa | Major groups of repatriates | Size of groups |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1971-72 | 19,271 | Zairians from Burundi | 7,000 |
| | | Zairians from Sudan | 1,068 |
| | | Zairians from Zambia | 9,250 |
| 1972-73 | 92,015 | Zairians from Burundi | 20,000 |
| | | Sudanese from CAR | 17,00 |
| | | Sudanese from Ethiopia | 7,400 |
| | | Sudanese from Uganda | 25,600 |
| | | Sudanese from Zaire | 21,000 |
| 1973-74 | 87,826 | Sudanese from Ethiopia | 14,216 |
| | | Sudanese from CAR | 16,000 |
| | | Sudanese from Uganda | 53,000 |
| | | Barundi from Rwanda | 4,000 |
| 1974-75 | 47,969 | Guinea Bissauns from Senegal | 40,000 |
| | | Mozambiquans from Tanzania | 2,000 |
| | | Zairians from Tanzania | 4,700 |
| 1975-76 | 112,583 | Guinea Bissauns from Senegal | 74,000 |
| | | Mozambiquans from Tanzania | 37,000 |
| 1976-77 | 12,510 | Guinea Bissauns from Senegal | 10,000 |
| 1977-78 | 22,049 | Barundi from Zaire | 6,000 |
| | | Comorians from various states | 16,000 |
| 1978-79 | 190,045 | Zairians from Angola | 150,000 |
| | | Zairians form Burundi | 36,000 |
| | | Angolans from Zambia | 3,000 |
| | | Angolans from Portugal | 1,000 |
| 1979-80 | 130,757 | Zairians from Angola | 2,000 |
| | | Zairians from Burundi | 36,000 |
| | | Zimbabweans from Botswana | 19,900 |
| | | Zimbabweans from Mozambique | 11,000 |
| | | Zimbabweans from Zambia | 20,000 |
| | | Eq. Guineas from Cameroon | 20,000 |
| | | Eq. Guineas from Gabon | 15,000 |
| | | Ugandans from Tanzania | 4,000 |
| 1980-81 | 166,740 | Zimbabweans from Botswana | 22,000 |
| | | Zimbabweans from Mozambique | 11,000 |
| | | Zimbabweans from Zambia | 21,000 |
| | | Angolans from Zaire | 50,000 |
| 1981-82 | 327,281 | Zairians from Burundi | 20,650 |
| | | Chadians from Cameroon | 67,500 |
| | | Chadians from Sudan | 13,000 |
| | | Chadians from other states | 69,500 |
| | | Angolans from Zaire | 46,000 |
| | | Ethiopians from various states | 110,000 |
| 1982-83 | 146,963 | Chadians from Nigeria | 3,500 |
| | | Chadians from Sudan | 2,000 |
| | | Ugandans from Zaire | 15,000 |
| | | Ethiopians from various states | 126,000 |
| 1983-84 | 238,612 | Zairians from Burundi | 2,062 |
| | | Ethiopians from Djibouti | 35,000 |
| | | Chadians from Sudan | 1,000 |
| | | Ugandans from Zaire/Sudan | 200,000 |
| 1984-85 | 206,880 | Zairians from Angola | 6,800 |
| | | Ethiopians from Djibouti | 6,200 |
| | | Ethiopians from Sudan | 170,000 |
| | | Ugandans from Sudan | 5,833 |
| | | Ugandans from Zaire | 14,800 |
| 1985-86 | 158,117 | Zairians from Angola | 6,800 |
| | | Ethiopians from Djibouti | 7,475 |
| | | Ethiopians from Sudan | 121,000 |
| | | Rwandans from Tanzania | 2,000 |
| | | Ugandans from Sudan | 3,353 |
| | | Ugandans from Zaire | 14,789 |
| 1986-87 | 253,798 | Chadians from CAR | 19,775 |
| | | Ethiopians from Sudan | 150,000 |
| | | Ugandans from Kenya | 2,600 |
| | | Ugandans from Rwanda | 30,400 |
| | | Ugandans from Sudan | 33,000 |
| | | Ugandans from Zaire | 16,740 |
| 1987-88 | 288,757 | Chadians from CAR | 16,932 |
| | | Chadians from Sudan | 1,500 |
| | | Ethiopians from Djibouti | 3,223 |
| | | Ethiopians from Somalia | 80,000 |
| | | Ethiopians from Sudan | 65,000 |
| | | Sudanese from Kenya | 1,400 |
| | | Ugandans from Sudan | 100,000 |
| | | Ugandans from Zaire | 6,000 |
| **TOTAL** | 2,502,173 | | |

Source: Rogge 1991

The decade of the 1970s saw yet other major repatriations in Africa as several wars ended. Mass returns to Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau and Zaire took place. In all, some 2.5 million people returned to their countries of origin. In most cases, return movements were completed speedily. The repatriations differed from one another depending on the circumstances of return. The movements back to former Portuguese colonies are a good example. The majority of returnees to Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde Islands went back shortly after independence and were rapidly absorbed into their home areas. A few Guinea Bissauans who had fought on the side of the Portuguese army chose to remain in Senegal and were eventually integrated (Rogge and Akol, 1987).

In a similar manner, most Mozambicans returned from Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Zambia following the independence of Mozambique in 1975. This return was, however, not to be permanent for many since reintegration was made difficult by the sheer devastation brought about by the war. Nor was the situation made easier by the civil war, which ravaged the country even further in the following decade. Not surprisingly, those who had achieved a degree of self-sufficiency during their exile in Tanzania went back.

Eventually the spillover of Mozambican refugees from the civil war spread them all over Southern Africa. Similarly, in the case of Angola, independence was followed by a civil war and the refugee issue became entangled in the internal politics of post-independence Angola. Again, few Angolan refugees were willing to repatriate (Rogge, 1991). Inspite of these warning signs, the UNHCR continued with its eagerness to pursue repatriation as the most durable solution to the refugee problem

and facilitated repatriations to Zimbabwe, Zaire, Uganda, Guinea Chad and Ethiopia in the early 1980s. According to Rogge, the decade of the 1980's was to see the greatest number of repatriations in Africa. About 75 per cent of all repatriations occurred during this period. The Zimbabwe repatriation was hailed as one of the most successful in the history of African repatriations and involved UNHCR assistance to internally displaced people as well as the provision of essential supplies such as agricultural equipment and food. 250 000 Zimbabwean exiles and 750 000 internally displaced people were resettled within one year. Of these, 600 000 displaced people benefited directly from $140 million worth of assistance provided by the UNHCR to the Zimbabwe government (Jackson, 1994). Thus the provision of food to those in need proved a decisive factor in the success of the operation. For a time, half a million people were given food each month during the last months before harvest. With the benefit of hindsight, Jackson notes that the early assessment of the success of the programme took place before the failed political integration of Zimbabwe's Ndebele minority. This led to a second wave of people fleeing Zimbabwe as a result of the open political rift that emerged between the two major political parties in the country following the establishment of political independence. The near civil war that followed resulted in the death of 1 500 to 3 000 civilians, hundreds of arrests and the torture and disappearance of many suspects and sympathisers.

The above account of the Zimbabwe repatriation raises serious questions about the claims of success of this repatriation in particular, as well as the whole notion of durability of repatriation as a solution.

## Repatriation: A Most Durable Solution?

By the end of the 1980s, the incessant movements of people seeking asylum inevitably forced the agenda of voluntary repatriation at international policy-making level. As mentioned in the previous chapter, refugee problems were becoming more complex and disruptions that led to flight more severe and long lasting. The colonial wars had run their course and the refugees they had produced had since returned. Other sets of causes that produce protracted refugee movements were now in evidence: political repression, ideological and/or ethnic conflicts, economic oppression and destitution, as well as ecological disasters were all responsible for the semi-permanent uprooting of large numbers of people (Rogge, 1991). This increase in numbers of new refugee movements was reflected in the refugee crises emerging in Indochina, Pakistan and North East Africa. No doubt these were spurred on by increasing super power rivalry between the two main Cold War ideological opponents (Allen, 1994).

In Africa the position held by governments was that the situation of refugees needed to be re-evaluated. In view of the fact that refugees place heavy economic burdens on host governments, it was becoming increasingly difficult to balance economic and national security with humanitarian interests. Refugees were sometimes regarded as security risks in that they encouraged border violations. But the poverty of most African states together with the inadequate international assistance meant that refugees were viewed as a drain on the economies (Kibreab, 1991).

The new waves of refugee movements led to the arrival of large numbers of refugees requiring asylum in Western countries, creating enormous pressures for the governments. Most important of these were the fears that refugee flows would

inundate Europe, especially when the refugees were from Africa and other developing countries. The arrival of such asylum seekers in Europe and North America meant that they required jobs and social services which nationals within host countries also needed. Fuelled by the xenophobia this generated, and in spite of the humanitarian cause on which refugee policy is based, these governments have progressively developed policies specifically designed to prevent asylum seekers of non-European origin from entering their countries.

These policies have become increasingly restrictive and have led to the development of mechanisms (for example, detention, visa requirements, fines on airlines carrying improperly documented passengers) in order to prevent refugees from arriving at European entry points in the first place (Ruff, 1989). Many governments now practise 'humane deterrence' (Helton, 1989), which again is mainly targeted at asylum seekers and has resulted in the detention of many of them. Noting that with the end of the Cold War, refugees no longer possess ideological or geopolitical value, Chimni (1995:298) comments on the growing tension between the language of protection and the reality of rejection in international refugee law which, he says "has engendered a 'power-geometry' of time space compression in which the power over the mobility of some groups goes hand in hand with the incarceration of others. Those fortunate enough to be born in the affluent North now live in constant fear of deprived humanity." He goes on to question the operative criterion of sovereignty and the selective way in which concern for the preservation of human rights is invoked.

In the face of the desperate attempt to find solutions for the new waves of refugees by the international community, Allen (1994) points to the contradictions inherent in the policy of voluntary repatriation as a solution, namely:

- antagonisms to refugees in host countries as they are increasingly being seen as a drain on resources;

- the United Nations being seen to be encouraging voluntary repatriation even when it puts refugees at risk as against assisting them to resettle;

- the interest shown by the 1985 Executive Committee of the UNHCR in the consequences of repatriation implied that it was considering expanding its mandate. However, agreement on this has not been straightforward, as reflected in the pressure being applied by host governments and other United Nations agencies.

Repatriation as a policy has become a major source of contention among the many players in the international refugee regime. The policy is seen as a satisfactory solution when refugees are returned to states that have overthrown oppressive regimes. However, promotion of repatriation to countries still ruled by governments whose policies of terror were the original cause of flight is controversial (Loescher, 1989). The emphasis on voluntary repatriation ignores the reality that, in Africa, most refugees integrate into host economies without the UNHCR's assistance. Promoting repatriation therefore undermines the importance of integration as a durable solution. In fact, repatriations serve the purpose of encouraging the cutting off of aid

programmes to refugees in countries of asylum. Also, there is no evidence that refugees are given enough information before they make the decision to repatriate. The fact that mass repatriations take place means that the rights of individual refugees are threatened. For governments whose oppressive practices were responsible for mass exoduses, the return of their exiled citizens while they are still in power makes it even more difficult to remove the root causes of refugee movements and to protect returnees (Harrell-Bond, 1989).

Against this background, Allen (1994) observes that "the approach of the UNHCR has not been consistent and is highly dictated to by reactions of donor countries." For example, it encouraged the Cambodian repatriation in the face of criticism, while at the same time discouraging repatriation in other cases. In the case of the Cambodians, large numbers had fled their country following the Vietnamese invasion in early 1979. Many sought refuge along the borders of Thailand, in accordance with the laws of the host country. In 1980 and 1981, a majority spontaneously repatriated back to Cambodia, and with active encouragement from the UNHCR, more went back after a political settlement was reached in the country. In contrast, the return of 170 000 Tigrayans to Ethiopia in 1994 was spontaneous but this time the UNHCR actively discouraged it. Consequently, Ruiz (1987) observes that the line between encouragement and promotion of voluntary repatriation has not always been a clear one.

Nevertheless, as the 1990s began, large scale return flows have continued, prompting a series of studies conducted under the auspices of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD). Studies of the aftermath of

both the Namibian and Zimbabwean success stories have prompted the question, 'a success for whom?' In an examination of the wide range of strategies used to integrate war-affected Zimbabweans, Makanya (1993) notes that one of the major problems facing the new state was the integration of the estimated 300 000 freedom fighters who had left Zimbabwe to seek refuge in neighbouring countries. The demobilisation exercise proved ineffective largely because it ignored some of the psychosocial problems confronting returnees. Little counselling was offered and even this focused on the literate who could take up opportunities of further training. The majority of illiterates were left out. Makanya concludes that the demobilisation programme was not a success mainly because its sub-programmes were established on an *ad hoc*, trial and error basis, were demand-led, and lacked clear direction and concrete plans, thus rendering the whole exercise ineffective. Horekens (1992) provides a good premise to the question, 'a success for whom?' when he states that the success of a repatriation will not be determined by a well-organised return movement or a happy reception. It will be measured in terms of durability and homogeneity of the reintegration of the returnees to their communities, both from the social and economic points of view.

In a review of the UNRISD studies, Allen (1994) cautions that in spite of all the research carried out, we are still far from unravelling the complexities of the return process. His views are based on the following observations, which arise out of the UNRISD studies:

- return is by its very nature a long-term process. In most instances, return is to societies that have been torn apart by traumatic upheavals. Large sections

of these societies suffer from some form of mental or emotional disorder. However, few studies have focused on mental health issues such as post-traumatic disorder outside Western countries;

- there is usually low level banditry in countries of return as a result of the abundance of small arms and landmines. As a consequence, returnees continue to live in a state of fear and insecurity;

- labelling often becomes problematic in periods of long-term unresolved civil strife, to the extent that no clear distinction can be drawn between returnee, refugee, migrant or stayee;

- it would appear that even in those situations where the UNHCR has attempted to intervene, poor co-operation amongst international aid agencies results in such attempts having little impact in providing immediate help to returnees;

- returnees are commonly treated as one undifferentiated mass irrespective of their specific needs, aspirations, economic circumstances or different groupings.

It would appear then that there is still a good deal of disagreement and contradictions when it comes to specificities and consistencies in conceptualising issues of return. Commenting that there seems to be no future overall direction UNHCR planning, Allen (1994) argues that the time has come for a fine tuned

procedural code to regulate policy making and to take into account returnees' needs and aspirations. Lack of such a procedural code has meanwhile led to even more suffering among refugees. Towards the end of 1996, 15 000 Rwandan refugees in a camp in Zaire were forced to walk 50 kilometres to get to the Rwandan border by Hutu extremist militias. The UNHCR responded by sending 70 trucks to transport them, but only for the last 15 kilometres. Not surprisingly, this attempt failed. Journalists and aid workers came across empty vehicles that were part of a convoy of refugees but which had been ambushed by Zairean rebels. According to the newspaper article that documented this story, international donor nations had failed to agree on the best way to get help to the refugees who were stuck in Zaire (Sowetan, November 1996).

Such inconsistencies by the international community to the needs of refugees become even more apparent when it comes to the issue of protection. While no agreement has been reached to extend the terms of the UNHCR mandate to include returnees, the very presence of the UNHCR offices in areas of return suggests that it is taking up a protective function. Allen (1994) draws attention to the fact that the UNHCR does not apply universal criteria to the extent of its involvement in repatriation. When it does participate, it sets in train dangerous ambiguities. For example, is it protecting people from their own governments?

Before concluding this brief review, it is worth bringing into focus two points of view regarding repatriation that are most often ignored. Observing that the record of international donor response to repatriation programmes is not encouraging, Kibreab (1991) states that a failure by the international donor community to provide assistance to establishments so that the dream of return becomes real amounts to

an indirect denial of the basic human right of return. He further states that a political solution or restoration of peace in countries of return is a precondition for environmental rehabilitation and for the creation of the economic and social infrastructure of communities. Citing a distinction between refugee assistance and assistance to returnees, Kibreab shows that in the latter case, assistance is by its nature developmental, because it has to facilitate reintegration into former communities and should not discriminate against those inside countries of return. Much earlier, Hocke (1986) had commented that the objective of voluntary repatriation is to promote a general improvement in the situation in the country of origin in order to create the necessary conditions for the voluntary return of refugees. He contended that if part of the impressive amount of some one to three billion dollars made available annually to the international community for all types of humanitarian activities the world over were to be used for development aid, with particular reference to creating conditions conducive to voluntary repatriation, this could go a long way to making that solution feasible.

The essence of these two arguments is that, instead of the prevailing notion of repatriation as an end state, a solution to a problem, it is in fact a whole new beginning and gives rise to new sets of problems. This is an issue that has not been adequately taken into account by researchers in the area of repatriation. It affirms the argument mooted above by Warner (1994), concerning the two elements: return to a home and community and return to a country of origin. Here the concept of return as a beginning relates to both elements. Notwithstanding the fact that repatriation marks the end of the refugee cycle, the home and the community undergo changes while the refugee or exile is away. The returning person has to

reconstruct new ways of relating to them. The country has to be rehabilitated, meaning the beginning of a new cycle of social, psychological, political and economic reconstruction and development. To conclude, it is obvious that the international refugee regime has placed a lot of emphasis on repatriation as an end state, a solution to be brought about through short-term relief strategies. The notion of repatriation as a beginning still needs to be addressed.

# CHAPTER 3

## Review of Literature on Migration and Exile

### Exile

Repatriation has become the preferred solution for refugees/exiles at the level of donor and UNHCR policy. The literature which examines 'return' suggests that although refugees are always ambivalent about their lives in exile, at the psychological level, coming back home and going into exile are in effect opposite ends of the same continuum. Edward Said (1984), the celebrated Palestinian exile writer, begins his reflections on life in exile with a quote from George Elliot 's *The Mill On The Floss*: "There is no sense of ease like we felt in those scenes where we were born, where objects became clear to us before we had known the labour of choice, and where the outer world seemed only an extension of our personality" (p., 49).

Said defines exile as "the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home." This captures the psycho-social dimension of exile. He continues: "The essential sadness of the break can never be surmounted."

The state of being a political exile is an age-old experience, but it is only recently that the topic has evoked scholarly interest. To underscore the historical roots of the exile experience, it is useful to cite an example from classical antiquity. The famous Roman poet Ovid was expelled in AD 8 by the Emperor Augustus for some unknown

offence. He spent the rest of his life in the "perilous state of not belonging" on the Black Sea island of Tomi, where he eventually died (Green, 1994). The word exile itself comes from the Latin word exilium, which means banishment. Explaining exile as a fundamentally discontinuous state of being, Said suggests that the search for institutions of belonging leads exiles to reconstitute their lives in narrative forms "usually by choosing to see themselves as part of a triumphant ideology or a restored people" (p., 51). Drawing on the Palestinian exile experience, Said expresses the Palestinians' need to reconstruct the self out of the refractions and discontinuities of exile. He concludes "exile is an experience to be endured so as to restore identity or even life to fuller, more meaningful status" (p., 51). He quotes Simon Weil, who states that to be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognised need of the human race. To Said this constitutes the dilemma of exile.

The psycho-social literature on migration and displacement suggests that the refugee experience may usefully be considered in terms of distinct stages. For each stage, a range of psycho-social stressors have been posited (Baker, 1983, 1990; Ben-Porath, 1991). Drawing on the work of others (Keller, 1975; Tyhurst, 1977), Baker (1983, 1990) proposed that these stages can be conceptualised in the following way:

- perception of threat;
- deciding to leave;
- the period of extreme danger and flight;
- reaching safety;
- the camp experience;

- reception into a host country;
- resettlement
- post-resettlement

The model presented by Baker (1983, 1990) is a descriptive rather than a theoretical one, depicting a common sequence of events in which most refugee experiences take place. Nevertheless, it provides a useful framework for reviewing literature on the psycho-social impact of displacement. As noted earlier, the terms 'refugee' and 'exile' will be used interchangeably in this review. In the following discussion, the stages will be grouped slightly differently:

- Pre-departure - will take into account the first two stages: namely, the period of threat and the decision to flee.
- The period of extreme danger and flight will be discussed under flight.
- The third grouping will be referred to as the stage of first asylum and will bring together Baker's stages of reaching safety, the camp experience and reception into a host country.
- Resettlement will remain a stage on its own.
- Baker's post-resettlement stage implies that adaptation has taken place. The term adaptation will be used for this stage.

Pre-Departure

This is usually a period of extreme hardship that may be characterised by major disruption of households and communities. Even though these hardships may be

expressions of civil wars, political repression or natural disasters, they are in themselves major stressors and trigger the decision to leave. The psychological impact of fragmentation of families is an area that has received some attention from researchers. In a study of South East Asians settled in the United States, Rumbaut (1991), established that about 50 per cent of his sample had lost a family member in the pre-flight period. This study concluded that family loss was a significant predictor of psychological distress in the resettlement period. According to a study conducted on Bosnian refugees settled in Sweden (Eastmond et al., 1994), the psycho-social distress experienced in the first year of settlement centred on the social world that had been lost - the relatives and friends killed or scattered all over the world, or left at home to an uncertain fate. In the researchers' views, this is because for this particular Bosnian sample, kinship was important in structuring social and economic life and vital to a sense of purpose and emotional well-being. This observation can indeed be generalised to most instances when people have been uprooted suddenly following periods of great social upheaval, as the following case study of a thirteen year old Liberian refugee illustrates:

"I arrived here (Ghana) in October 1990. I came with my mother. My father is in the US with my other brothers and sisters. I remember a lot about the war. [This refers to the civil war that began in 1989 in Liberia and lasted for several years]. It was a war when many died and homes were lost. My own home was burned. I felt very bad. We moved around a lot after this, living with relatives. I always remembered I was not in my own home. The day we left, soldiers came and surrounded the house, looking for rebels. We could not play normally. We were afraid of bullets flying all over. I felt very frightened, especially of bullets. I saw three Kran [one ethnic

Liberian group] people killed. I saw people being killed on the spot, shot one by one. The rebels said we [spectators] should not cry but laugh. This happened when we were looking for food. We had no food for about two weeks. We survived on potato leaves - boiled. The only sickness I had was elephantiasis. This has now been treated in Ghana. I was relieved when we arrived here. No guns. I was happy to see food - I had not seen bread for a long time. I dream of my home country, how it's going to be rebuilt - who is going to do it. I dream of the war. My best friend was killed. His home was also burnt. I saw the body, charred all over. Everybody was seeking their own self interest. There was no comfort. You could only hear 'sorry, no man. You'll never see that person again'. When I grow up, I want to be a doctor - to help the sick. In any war, there have to be sick people" (Majodina, 1991a).

In another study of the experiences of South East Asian refugees (August and Gianola, 1987) it was noted that the symptom patterns displayed by the refugees were associated with the occurrence of the stressful events such as:

- witnessing the injury or death of siblings, children or other family members;
- witnessing the injury or death of friends or fellow countrymen due to the war;
- witnessing the execution of parents, siblings, children or other family members;
- witnessing starvation of family, friends or other countrymen;
- at constant risk of injury or death;
- at risk of being captured by the enemy;
- beaten up or tortured in a re-education camp;
- separated from the family during war or flight, safety unknown;
- whereabouts and safety of family unknown.

August and Gianola (1987) observed that the after-effects of witnessing these wartime atrocities contributed significantly to unresolved feelings, leading to psychiatric symptoms, notably those associated with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

In the case of South African exiles, the threat in the pre-departure period centred around being harassed by security agents as a result of political activity, actual imprisonment, banning, torture and so on. To quote from one of the stories in Hilda Bernstein's book, *The Rift* (1994), a young man says after having being arrested and tortured a number of times:

"So I was forced to leave. It was unplanned. It was not in my plan because at that time I thought that those people who leave the country are cowards. They are running away from the situation and leaving us alone. It was not good the way I left. Mummy was sick, very sick. She was lying ill all the time in bed. But I didn't tell her I was going. She told me one night 'My son, I know that one day you will leave me like so and so did.' You know parents in the townships knew who left the country. So she said, 'but please should it happen that you leave, please go to Lesotho because I know in Lesotho there is somebody who will take care of you.' The very next day when I came home from town, I found Mummy crying, the house was in a mess, the police had been there and beaten her up, sick as she was. Then I had to take a decision immediately."

After contacting the ANC in Lesotho he was sent to the ANC school in Tanzania. Many years later he says: "What haunts me now is how I left my Mum very sick and I don't have information of what has happened. I don't know how I would react if they tell me the worst. My brother died in exile. I'm alone now - no brother, no sister. It has been very difficult but I am optimistic about the future." (p., 70 - 71)

As this vignette illustrates, this period of the exile experience points to the added influence of conflict over the decision to flee, which is likely to have significant long-lasting effects throughout the exile period. The decision to flee and actual flight are particularly poignant in exile situations since the severance is more often than not abrupt and forced.

Flight

The pre-departure stage, as we can see, is characterised by high levels of anxiety arising out of living in a perpetual state of fear. But the overriding concern at this stage is to get out at whatever cost. According to Kunz's kinetic model (1973), there are two patterns of flight, namely anticipatory and acute. These two patterns of flight reflect one central tenet of the theory, which is that refugees or exiles are pushed out of their countries, in contrast to being pulled to new lands. In other words, given the choice, most people would stay. The acute type of flight is more traumatic as it is unplanned and takes place as a result of an overwhelming push. This flight is typified in the example given above, at a moment's notice and usually in response to a crisis. The person has not planned for the journey, not looking at a future, but simply needs to get out of an impossible situation.

In anticipated flight, the flight is planned. The potential refugee or exile senses the threat early before a crisis occurs. This may take the form of arranging how and when to escape, laying out plans of who will escort the fleeing person out, who will receive him or her outside the country. More often than not though, as the previous story shows, plans are not worked out and people are just pushed across the borders without much thought as to how or where they are going. A young man escaping from endless police harassment in South Africa recalls how he jumped into the first bus he saw leaving the country: "I had no idea what I would do when the bus reached the border, where I would stay and really what lay in store on the other side" (Majodina, 1993). Little or no thought is given to the consequences of flight. The emotional turmoil in such a situation can only be imagined where a person has no proper papers of identification and does not know what his destination or place of asylum will be. Kunz (1981) refers to this condition as 'midway to nowhere'. It is only then that the refugee or exile faces the three classic choices that have to be made: to return home, to remain in the country of first asylum, or to accept resettlement in a distant place. Usually, at this point, the main factor is pressure from the country of asylum to make a choice.

Kunz further describes refugee associative patterns in reaction to the tendency to see refugees or exiles as a homogeneous group, to label them according to country of origin irrespective of particular circumstances of flight. Most refugees or exiles are in fact made up, according to Kunz, of different waves and vintages that may differ greatly or may have different experiences. The point Kunz makes with regard to different circumstances of leaving is that each period of departure has different

impacts on the nature of the refugee or exile experience, since conditions at the point of arrival in exile obviously change with time.

Research on the impact of a stressful in-flight phase indicates that the trauma of flight produces various psychological changes as a result of enduring great hardships (Keller, 1975). Characteristics such as invulnerability and aggressiveness emerge. In some cases feelings of invulnerability develop because the exile has been through the worst and survived. Aggressiveness is considered to arise from the willingness to take risks. This new aggressiveness can be shown in one of two ways: either in the form of increased violence or in an increased willingness to innovate and make the effort to build a new life. Feelings of guilt also emerge, and Keller explains the aggressiveness as a displacement of guilt onto others. Scudder and Colson (1982) studied people who were uprooted permanently because of the building of the Kariba Dam in Zambia. According to them, active risk-taking by the victims occurred at a much later stage as they were inclined to react in conservative ways in the early stages. It was only after some years, when they had reconstituted their lives, that traits like risk taking and initiative appeared, once they got used to living in their new environments.

This stage of flight may also be characterised by anger regarding forced separation from one's homeland. Eisenbruch (1990) established this among samples of Cambodian refugees settled in Australia and the United States. He found that leaving family members behind in Cambodia had significant adverse effects. On the basis of his clinical work with these refugees, he proposed the diagnosis of 'cultural bereavement' to express the impact of separation from one's homeland, customs

and local practices. It is worth noting that research has not made a distinction between the psychological effects of pre-departure and those of flight. This highlights the practical difficulties of collecting data under conditions of flight. Taking into account the conditions of secrecy under which these activities take place, such research would certainly be limited by ethical, methodological and logistical difficulties.

First Asylum

In the classical refugee experience, the next stage after flight is reception into refugee camps or country of first asylum. Camp life has only recently received attention from researchers. An early description and analysis of refugee camps after World War Two by Murphy (1955) indicated that even though physical conditions of camps vary widely, conditions tend to be uniform, namely:

- being separated from the rest of the population;
- having to share facilities;
- lack of privacy plus overcrowding;
- having a limited area in which all daily activities have to be conducted.

The psycho-social effects of camp life, according to Murphy and other researchers (Bakis, 1955; Stern, 1955) centre mainly on feelings of loss: loss of homeland, identity and a former life. This is in addition to the suffering, trauma and persecution already endured, and involves secondary traumatisation.

Beiser et al., (1989) undertook a study of 1 348 South East Asian refugees who had been interned in refugee camps in Thailand before resettling in Canada. The study aimed to examine the hypothesis that harshness of camp conditions constituted a significant risk- inducing component in the refugee experience. Beiser partially isolated the impact of camp experiences by comparing three camp settings, which varied in the degree of authoritarianism of their regimes. Findings showed that effects of camp life on depressive mood were significant but short-lived. In other words under oppressive, authoritarian conditions, camp experiences appeared to exert a significant but transient effect on depressive affect in the early years of resettlement. An interesting finding to emerge from this study was that a psychological coping mechanism - avoidance of the past - buffered the impact of camp stress on depressive symptoms.

In his clinical observations of South East Asian refugees in camps, Rangaraj (1988:41) reported that the predominant symptoms were mainly somatic complaints, suicide attempts and blatant cases of anxiety and depression, the latter being the most predominant. Long stayers - those who had been in camps for more than five years - seemed particularly affected. In his words, "they seem to die internally - outwardly, they have lost everything - family, country, culture...and suddenly they find they are nobody" Rangaraj asserted that ironically, when the opportunity to resettle eventually came, some refugees would panic. The ordeal of having to tear themselves away from familiar surroundings and go to another country at times precipitated a psychotic breakdown. While similar observations about camp life have been made (Harrell-Bond, 1986) there is a general lack of empirical evidence on which to base firm analytic conclusions.

Studies of psychological reactions to camp life show that under particularly bad conditions, the impact of the camp environment frequently compounds the pre-exile experience (Felsman et al., 1990). This finding is consistent with those of earlier studies reported previously. It is no wonder then that refugees or exiles who are held in camps are notorious for not wanting to remain in them. According to literature on camp life, this is the time when the enormity of what has happened strikes hard. The focus is on what has been lost. Besides the suffering and trauma already endured, the exile must now face the loss of home and his or her former life routine.

It is important to note that fewer refugees end up in camps compared to those who lead civilian lives. With the exception of South East Asian and Afghan refugees who have remained in camps, large numbers of refugees normally self-settle among the indigenous population (Kibreab, 1991). Hansen (1982) found that Angolan refugees avoided camps in favour of settling themselves among the local population even though they sacrificed access to material assistance. Most refugees or exiles share common experiences when arriving at a country of first asylum: being faced with some form of registration procedure to establish their refugee or exile status. Most commonly, and especially in cases of acute flight, this is a harrowing experience as all manner of information can be sought which the exile cannot readily supply. For example, if a person wants to pursue his or her education, he or she may have no certificates to justify appropriate levels of entry. So, in spite of a sense of relief, this stage is accompanied by a great deal of apprehension with regard to the immediate future.

Settlement

Settlement is a complex process that takes place over a long period. It begins when the exile or refugee moves from a reception centre or camp to a locality where it is hoped he or she will eventually settle. The question is, can the exile ever really feel settled in a host country? This is a pertinent question for exiles. They leave their countries to continue whatever struggle they are engaged in. In this regard it is useful to quote a statement which attempts to define the political exile: "One criterion for classifying a political exile is that he engages in political activity directed against the policies of the home regime, the home regime itself or the political system as a whole and is aimed at creating circumstances favourable for his return. As long as a political exile engages himself in such an activity he will also maintain his status as such" (Shain, 1988).

One way to conceptualise reception as well as resettlement in a host country is by reference to the theory of culture shock. As noted earlier, the anthropologist Oberg (1960) coined the term 'culture shock' to account for the reaction of a migrant to a new culture. It is a kind of shorthand for the early and profound experiences people have in a new culture. Oberg mentioned six aspects:

- Strain - due to the effort required to make the necessary adjustment;
- Sense of loss - with regard to friends, acquaintances;
- Feelings of rejection - being rejected or rejecting members of the host culture;
- Confusion - in role, role expectations, values, feelings, identity;
- Surprise - anxiety or even indignation after being aware of cultural differences;
- Feelings of impotence - due to not being able to cope in the new environment.

Obviously, not all exiles or refugees necessarily go through all aspects of this experience. There are bound to be variations in the experience depending on conditions where refugees are settled. The notion of culture shock derives partly from the fact that resettlement in western countries has received considerably greater attention than the majority of resettling in developing countries. Culture shock is the anxiety that results from losing all familiar signs of social interaction. These signs include the many ways to go about daily life, for example, how to greet, when to shake hands, what to say when meeting people and so on. Since Oberg (1960), it has been fashionable to describe culture shock in terms of stages:

1. The honeymoon stage: this is the initial reaction of fascination, admiration of the new country and friendly relations with hosts.
2. The crisis period: when the initial difficulties are experienced, difficulties in language, cultural values, leading to feelings of frustration, anger and anxiety.
3. The recovery stage: when the crisis is resolved by a number of methods, for example, learning the language, forming social networks, getting a job and so on.
4. The adjustment stage: when the newcomer begins to enjoy the new culture.

Moreover, there is some controversy as to whether this is a typical model for the exile or refugee experience. For example, Munoz (1980) maintains that an exile can never really adjust in the sense of active identification with life in a host country. In her paper Munoz makes an analogy between the exile and the state of bereavement. She states: "The exile crisis is basically a rupture in the individual's cultural past,

geographical environment and attachment to society and nation and varies in intensity depending on the individual's past history and the strength of socio-political commitment" (p., 1). According to her the exile faces the conflict between links to home, including the political cause, and the need to resettle. This leads to feelings of transitoriness. Such a state of transitoriness is captured well in the words of one South African exile who lived in London for 23 years: "I have never really felt part of this place. Throughout my stay here, I have always looked forward to the day when I will return to South Africa" (Majodina, 1990).

Munoz sees the parallel between exile and bereavement as the symbolic key, which unlocks the psychological world of the exile. Baskaukas (1981) elaborates on this theme by referring to the experiences of Lithuanian refugees who settled in the United States after the Second World War. She refers to the dimension of loss in their experience as a social collective phenomenon. Grief and mourning are the psychological processes experienced during this period, which she sees as characterised by a crisis of discontinuity. This happens because of the change brought about by loss, where the will to adapt has to overcome an impulse to restore the past. She quotes Marris (1957:7) who says: "the will to adapt is centred upon the struggle to defend and recover a meaningful pattern of relationships" so that life can continue despite the experiences of repression, violence and displacement. According to Marris, the psychological process of adjusting to loss is characterised by several responses. These are: conservatism, bereavement and innovation. Baskaukas suggests that these processes describe the ongoing grief that she observed among the Lithuanians and suggests that this can be generalised to all political exiles. Conservatism refers to avoiding those aspects of the environment in

which the exile lives in order to ensure continuity of structures of meaning so that they can interpret the meaning of events and, at the same time, preserve the totality of the original culture. Many exiles never progress beyond this stage.

The second stage during this grief period is bereavement, which involves acknowledgement of the irretrievable loss that they have gone through. The stage of innovation implies moving beyond one's losses to develop new patterns of life. This is a very difficult stage to achieve because their view of their situation as transitory makes people cling to hopes of return. This hope delays the process of acculturating into the host country and disturbs the process of grief, and thereby adaptation.

Adaptation

To go back to the stages that are indicated in the exile experience, this last stage implies that the refugee should be leading a routine life, assuming that he or she has returned to his or her previous level of functioning or has adapted. On the whole, studies of adaptation of refugees or exiles show that there is little consensus on the correct approach among social scientists. Much of the literature is derived from several disciplines making for a variety in overall input. Because of its multiple facets, adaptation has been viewed from various perspectives and measured in various ways (for example, changes in economic conditions, social conditions and attitudes). This review will be limited to psychological studies and will be discussed in the context of three strands of research literature, namely the medical, psycho-social and acculturation approaches.

Medical Approaches

Early approaches to studies of adaptation examined large-scale migrations from Central Europe to the United States, Australia and Western Europe following the end of the Second World War. This research made a direct connection between the extent of involuntariness of migration and psychopathology. Essentially, refugees or forced migrants were identified as at considerably increased risk for psychotic illness compared to native populations (Murphy, 1955; Eitenger, 1959; Eitenger and Grunfield, 1966; Krupinski and Stoller, 1965). Based as they were on a medical orientation, these studies emphasised the experience of being a refugee as a predisposing factor to psychiatric disturbance.

In order to locate the present review in the relatively more recent refugee populations, the focus in the following section will be research carried out on Indo-Chinese refugees for the reasons that:

- they are part of a mass departure of people who fled their homelands for fear of persecution;
- the mass exodus generated a reasonable amount of psychological research in host countries, notably in North America and Australia.

Some more recent studies coming out of western European countries will also be taken into account. As already indicated, a large body of medical research on adaptation was conducted among South East Asian refugees in North America in the 1970s. These studies were more clinically oriented compared to earlier ones and concentrated on the ability of psychiatric service providers in western countries

to understand symptoms across cultures. These studies thus broadened the frame of reference to take into account difficulties of adapting to an alien environment (Stein, 1986). The central consideration was that uprooted people, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, often experienced severe psychological distress because the adaptive process led to a disruption of their customary way of life.

The movement of Indo-Chinese refugees began in 1975 in response to political and social upheavals in the region. It is unanimously agreed that for most refugees, the circumstances under which they left their homelands were very stressful, if not traumatic (Nicassio and Pate, 1984). More often than not, the dangerous escape by sea or by land was followed by a stressful transitional period in refugee camps. For those who resettled in the United States, their arrival coincided with a period of economic recession when the national unemployment rate had risen considerably. Cuts in federal welfare programmes affected the refugees directly (Nguyen, 1983). Against this background of the refugees' flight and settlement in a host country, it would be expected that the problem of psychological alienation would be particularly acute. Not surprisingly, in a study comparing the Indo-Chinese refugees with an American control group, Smither and Rodrigues-Giegling (1979) found that on scales of marginality and anxiety designed to gauge cultural distance from American society, the Indo-Chinese scored significantly higher.

Similarly, in another study of distance between refugee and American cultures, Nicassio (1983) found alienation among 460 Indo-Chinese heads of households to be inversely related to a number of indices of adjustment. Examples of these indices are English language proficiency, media usage, number of American friends and

socio-economic status. Indeed, alienation of this kind would be expected, given that the refugees were faced with uprooting stresses such as disruption of social networks, loss of family and community life and language or cultural barriers. These studies would thus seem to concur with the received wisdom from early European studies that forcible uprooting is associated with an increased risk of psychiatric disturbance (Lin, Tazuma and Masuda, 1979; Nicassio and Pate, 1984; Westermeyer, Vang and Neider, 1983; Westermeyer, Neider and Vang, 1984).

Much as this argument is intuitively appealing, the studies mentioned above suffer from a number of methodological flaws. Researchers studying refugee adaptation draw upon numerous scales, inventories and other measures of psychiatric symptoms that have been standardised in the United States and Western Europe. The norms obtained establish prevalence rates for various mental conditions in American and European populations. To determine prevalence rates for refugee populations on the basis of these norms leads to equivocal findings. For example, Lin, Tazuma and Masuda (1979) administered the Cornell Medical Index (CMI), the Social Adjustment Rating Questionnaire (SRRQ) and the Schedule of Recent Experience (SRE) to a non-random sample of Vietnamese refugees. The study confirmed that the CMi scores of the refugees were significantly above the norm and about half the Indo-Chinese sample was diagnosed as having psychological problems. Since these measures were not standardised on Vietnamese refugees, the validity of this finding is open to question.

Another major problem with these studies is that they confound or do not control for time elapsed since migration. Westermeyer, Neider and Vang (1984) administered a

scale of depression and a symptom checklist to their sample of 90 Indo-Chinese refugees. After two years, the tests were administered again. Results showed significant improvements on all indices, namely depression, somatization of symptoms, anxiety and obsessive-compulsive behaviours. The findings suggest that the relationship between migration and psychopathology may only hold in the early post-migration phase. This cautions against over generalising the results of mental health findings taken at the early stages of post- migration.

Further evidence that the temporal dimension is important comes from a study by Beiser, Turner and Ganesan (1989). This study was survey of a population-based sample of 1 348 Indo-Chinese who had spent some time in refugee camps. Results showed that depressive symptoms were short-lived. According to the authors, social support from the ethnic community and from an intact family diminished the risk of developing depressive symptoms by enhancing a sense of belonging and a sense of identity. It appears that the mediating variable of social support may confound the effects of time on the migration-stress relationship. For instance Hauff and Vaglum (1995), in a three year follow up study of 145 Vietnamese boat people in Norway found that the level of emotional distress did not decrease. One explanation they give is that their sample had fewer social resources and social support compared to those Vietnamese refugees studied by Westermeyer et al., (1984).

The fact that refugee migration is a relatively traumatic experience is nevertheless consistently reported. In a large-scale survey conducted by Nicassio and Pate (1984), 1 638 Indo-Chinese refugees, were asked to rate 32 potential problem

situations. The refugees had to respond to a ten item measure of alienation covering topics such as feelings of isolation, cultural estrangement and powerlessness. In the analysis, the 32 adjustment problems were rank ordered according to their severity. Results indicated that the most serious items were: separation from family members, painful memories of war, communication problems, finances, job skills and medical care. The authors suggest that the highly rated problems of painful memories from the past and family separation reflect unresolved grief and anxiety, which may predispose the refugees to depression and other psychiatric disorders.

More recent research acknowledges the role of culture in shaping the experience of mental ill health. After conducting extensive ethnographic and clinical work with Indo-Chinese refugees in the United States and Australia, Eisenbruch (1990) identified that much of the experience of these refugees was shaped by loss - of their families, their past, their culture and their core identity. Based on this observation, Eisenbruch also draws on the theory of cultural bereavement to describe these experiences. His Cultural Bereavement Interview grew out of emergent themes from clinical ethnography combined with concepts from classical grief theory. Accordingly, the Cultural Bereavement Interview offers a framework for clinical interviews with refugees as it explores reactions to personal losses as well as to losses of both the social systems and cultural meanings. By acknowledging the cultural system of meaning held by the refugee, Eisenbruch believes the Cultural Bereavement Interview can serve as a complement to currently used psychiatric diagnostic categories. While it is debatable whether the results of an interview schedule developed for use with refugees of a distinct cultural background can be usefully applied to all refugee groups, Eisenbruch's work must be commended for

going beyond set western psychiatric tools and diagnoses to explore refugees' experiences from the refugees' own perspectives.

The role of cultural factors and how they influence the expression of mental ill health is increasingly being taken into account. Cheung and Spears (1995) conducted a study of psychiatric morbidity among 239 Cambodians living in New Zealand. The purpose was to examine the relationship between minor psychiatric morbidity and the following variables: life events, chronic post-migration stressors, social support and coping style. All the variables except post-migration stressors were assessed using scales developed in western countries. The 28 item General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) was used to assess psychiatric morbidity; the 12 item list of Threatening Experiences was used as a measure of life events; a short, modified version of the Sense of Coherence Questionnaire assessed ability to cope with stressors; and social support was assessed using a combination of methods. The results indicated that chronic post-migration stressors, life events, poor coping style and poor social support were all associated with minor psychiatric morbidity. Even so, the authors pointed out that the association between GHQ scores and the various independent variables were to be interpreted with caution. They identified that manageability, one of the sub-scales measuring coping was an insensitive or inappropriate indicator of coping style for Cambodians. Consequently, there was no association between manageability and psychiatric morbidity.

To understand the dynamics involved in the coping styles of this sample, one has to consider the value system and behavioural norms of Cambodian culture. As the authors acknowledged, the coping style of Cambodians is likely to be based on

Bhuddism, the most predominant religion among them. But they stopped short of exploring this issue thoroughly. According to Liem (1980), the key concept in Bhuddism is 'karma' or a fatalistic belief in the inevitability of suffering caused by desire. Desire as conceived here may be for life, happiness, riches or power. It is not surprising then that in this sample, the construct of manageability as a coping style was not relevant. The Cambodian refugees' character traits of passivity and fatalism would not make them strive to make the most of their new life. In a similar way, most of the other variables used in the study would benefit from an emic perspective.

Another body of research has linked organised violence (including torture, war experiences, and imprisonment) in the pre-flight stage to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in countries of resettlement. Refugees and exiles who were victims of these atrocities before and during flight have been found to suffer from a range of symptoms of PTSD which are long-lasting. (Kinzie and Sack, 1991; Hauff and Vaglum, 1995; Lavik, Hauff, Skrondal and Solberg, 1996; Sundquist and Johansson, 1996). The literature on PTSD is, on the whole, unanimous about the psychological consequences of trauma encountered in the pre-flight and flight phases. For example, in a study of 50 randomly selected Cambodian refugees from a general non-patient population in the United States, Carlson and Rosser-Hogan (1991) found that they met DSM-111-R criteria for PTSD and all were suffering from clinical depression. In general the PTSD label has helped focus attention on the fact that with time, psychological difficulties may increase rather than decrease among certain groups of resettled refugees, especially the unmarried or those lacking social support (Hauff and Vaglum, 1995).

Furthermore, the occurrence of PTSD with depression in survivors of trauma has been associated with severity of symptoms of PTSD. In a prospective study of the onset, overlap and course of PTSD and major depression among 211 hospital in-patients, it was found that PTSD and major depression were independent sequelae of traumatic events, had similar prognoses and interacted to increase distress (Shalev, Freedman, Peri, Brandes, Sahar, Orr and Pitman 1998). Recent research also suggests that traumatic pre-flight experiences may not be as important as social problems of exile in relation to morbidity. Gorst-Unsworth and Goldenberg (1998) found that the level of affective social support proved important in determining the severity of both PTSD and depression, particularly when combined with severe levels of torture among 84 male Iraqi refugees living in London.

Nonetheless, a close analysis of PTSD studies shows that there are inconsistencies in the reporting of results. Different symptom patterns emerge from different studies. This could be a result of methodological artefact, measurement criteria (hospital admissions versus community prevalence rates), or the use of standardised versus unstandardised measures. Moreover, it is important to note that there is a great variation in cultural background, degree of torture and conditions in exile for previously tortured refugees. Indeed, PTSD literature has yet to carefully investigate the differential effects of these intragroup variations.

Another issue of concern is that while a diagnosis of PTSD may be useful in that it gives the clinician a sense of what he or she is dealing with, it has yet to lead to a cure or even abatement of symptoms for the patient. A growing body of clinical

evidence is in fact questioning whether the highly traumatic nature of recall and relating of experiences of trauma is therapeutic or rather leads to an intensification of symptoms (Boehnlein, Kinzie, Rath and Fleck, 1985). In addition, it is debatable whether an overemphasis on trauma does not make for an individualised view of the refugee to the exclusion of other highly salient events within the full breadth of the refugee experience. While not playing down the key role of the 'trauma story' in therapy, there is the danger that only the dramatic nature of events in the story may be attended to, to the detriment of less tangible but equally powerful aspects of the refugee experience (Muecke, 1992). Essentially, Muecke is concerned that the medicalisation of the socio-political problems associated with the refugee situation deflects attention from international and national responsibility for them.

Psycho-Social Approaches

The early medical studies of adaptation among refugees and migrants have, as we have observed, concentrated on establishing incidence rates and causal relationships for particular mental illnesses. As indicated, this medical/mental health tradition did not take sufficient account of psycho-social aspects of migration and its effects. It was relatively late that the risk of mental health was conceived of as not just related to stressors in a unilinear fashion, but as mediated by a range of personal and social factors. The view that adjustment to a new culture is the product of multiple interacting factors led to the development of various multidimensional models. Most of these incorporate demographic, personality, behavioural and social network elements. Goldlust and Richmond offered one of the earliest multidimensional models in 1974. The model included pre-migration influences, demographic characteristics, value and attitude change and behavioural indices. Although the model was based on the experience of immigrant groups to Canada, it

can also be usefully applied to forced migrants. In presenting the model, Goldlust and Richmond (1974) argued that there is a dynamic interaction among important intermediate variables that predict adaptational outcome in immigrants. According to them, the multivariate approach assumes that human behaviour is the complex outcome of many different determinants. Indeed, the multivariate approach provides a more realistic and sophisticated basis of exploration, compared to one which considers the effects of only one variable at a time or which tries to reduce all aspects of adaptation to one single factor. Lately this approach has been enhanced by the application of computers in the analysis of data, making it possible to use techniques that are capable of explaining a much larger proportion of the variance in dependent variables.

In their model Dyal and Dyal (1981) provided a framework for the study of cross-cultural adjustment which included variables operating at four psycho-social levels: cultural, ethnic, interpersonal and intrapersonal. Subsequent research has experimented with a wide range of multivariate sets of variables. The most frequently mentioned arrangements identify demographic, personality, behavioural and social network situational variables as predictors of adaptation outcome. In establishing theoretical models of adaptation, many studies treat demographic and background variables before migration as predictor variables on which subsequent adaptation depends. Though some demographic characteristics change in the course of adaptation to a new culture; gender, age, marital status, level of education, urban or rural background, prior intercultural experiences and socio-economic status have all been shown to influence adaptation levels of refugees.

On this basis, Tran and Nguyen (1994) examined gender differences in a sample of 1 384 Indo-Chinese refugees in the United States. Their dependent variable was sense of satisfaction with the United States, measured in terms of satisfaction with housing, neighbourhood and life. Predictor variables were age upon arrival in the United States, employment status, lack of health care, financial problems, education in country of origin, location in country of origin and length of residence in the United States. Regression analysis revealed that Indo-Chinese men who arrived in the United States when they were 50 or older had a higher sense of satisfaction with their present housing conditions, neighbourhood and life than younger men. In the case of women, those with urban backgrounds and higher levels of education were less satisfied with housing and neighbourhood compared to men with similar backgrounds. Further findings were that refugees, whether men or women, who more advanced in age, unemployed, with less education and income and had arrived relatively recently, had more adjustment problems.

In the analysis of multivariate models, personality characteristics have been found to function as either moderating or intervening variables, produced by a set of demographic and background characteristics, in conjunction with other variables and having consequent effects on various kinds of adaptation outcomes. Beiser, Turner and Ganesan (1989) assessed the effects on mental health of harshness of refugee camp conditions in a community survey of 1 348 Indo-Chinese refugees in Canada. Results showed that the effects of camp conditions were significant but short-lived. Furthermore it was found that the effects of camp life were mediated by a number of variables, including avoidance of the past, social support, and an intact marriage.

Most studies simply determine the relationship between predictor and outcome variables.

Van Tran (1987) examined the psychological well-being in 160 Vietnamese refugees in the United States. Relationships among the variables revealed that ethnic community supports, self-esteem and income had significant effects on psychological well-being. Similarly, Montgomery (1991) sought to find out how refugees from so-called Third World countries adapt in Canada. Variables with the most influence on adaptation were education, age, size of host municipality and length of residence. In their study, Searle and Ward (1990) constructed a predictive model of psychological and socio-cultural adjustment among immigrant students in New Zealand. From a range of clinical, social, learning and cognitive variables they found psychological well-being was best predicted by satisfaction, relations with host and low level of difficulties.

Later studies have used more sophisticated designs that include a greater number of variables at various levels. Thus Nicholson and Imaisumi (1993) studied the adjustment of 91 Japanese managers and professionals on international assignments in London, taking into account pre-departure events. The dependent variables included standardised measures of adjustment, well-being, mental health and modes of adjustment (personal change and role innovation). Predictor variables included experiences in Japan, family factors, self-rated job performance, self-efficacy, social interaction and perceived company purpose in the assignment. Spouse adjustment was the only predictor that was consistent across all dependent variables. Work adjustment as the dependent variable was predicted by age,

perceived company purpose and job performance. Interaction adjustment was predicted by competence in English and time spent with host nationals. General adjustment was predicted by pre-departure positive feelings and living with one's family while on assignment. Lastly, non-work well-being was predicted by perceived purpose of the assignment, low pressure on arrival, job performance, time spent with host nationals and living with one's family.

To test the link between acculturation modes and acculturation stress empirically, Damji, Clement and Noels (1996) conducted a study examining whether a shift in identification between one's original group and the host group, or a stable identification with one's cultural group produced more stress. Results suggested that the separation mode was related to higher levels of stress only when individuals who identified strongly with their first language group did not always endorse this identity to the same extent. In other words, higher levels of stress occurred when the separated identity was not stable across situations. In a study of the relationship between acculturation modes and stress, Liebkind (1996) investigated the precise psychological mechanisms underlying acculturation. She based the study on a two generation sample of Vietnamese refugees in Finland. Using a series of hierarchical regressions, she found that gender and generation heavily influenced the frequency of stress symptoms. Males in both generations had more positive attitudes to acculturation. Acculturation attitudes predicted stress symptoms for adult women only. For adult males and the younger generation, acculturation experiences and degree of acculturation were better predictors.

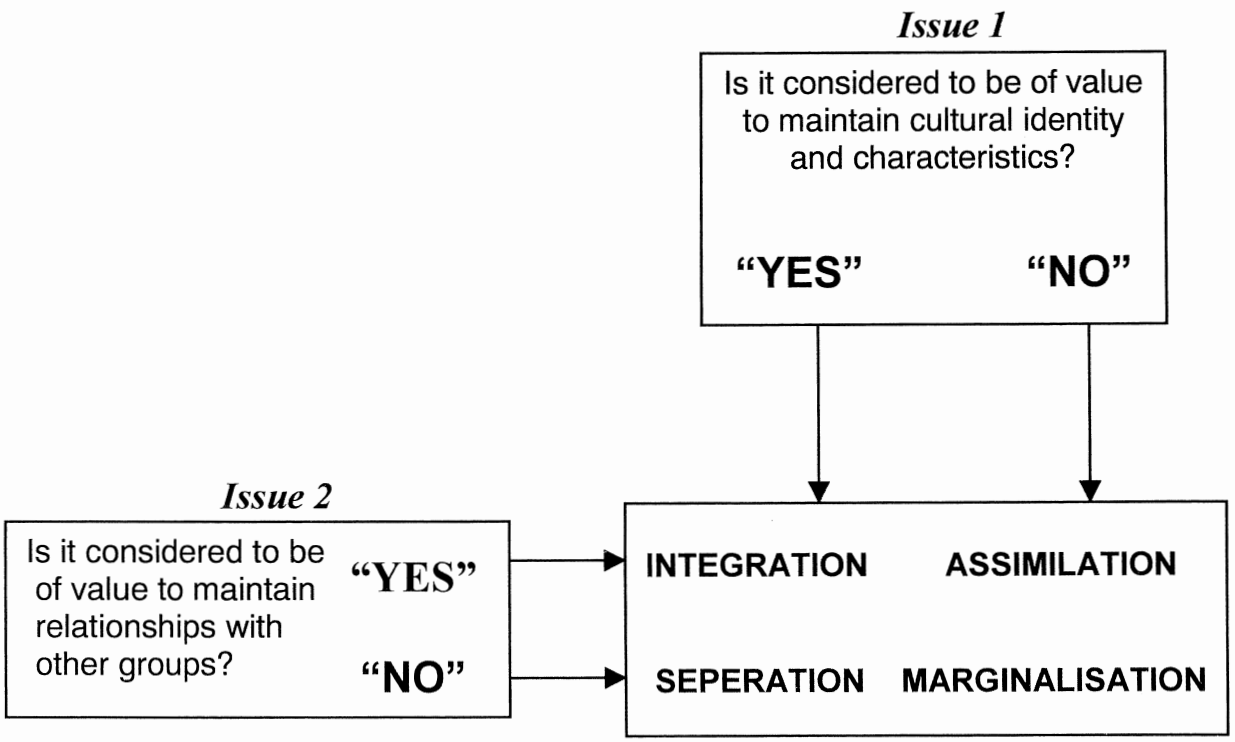
In spite of the impressive array of predictor and outcome variables, as well as the use of increasingly more sophisticated research designs, the main concern about multivariate studies is that there is little consistency in variables and measurements that are used by different researchers. Nor are there adequate operational definitions of the various indices of adaptation. Researchers using the predictive approach have in effect generated numerous narrow conceptualisations of adaptation by throwing together variables into a regression equation without careful theoretical considerations. In the end, many of the studies appear to be primarily aimed at developing measurement devices and not at constructing or testing theoretical explanations of the adaptation process.

Acculturation Models

So far the dominant research orientation in studies of adaptation has focused on mental health problems arising from cultural differences and the various intervening variables that can predict mental health outcomes. An equally important approach has been to examine the different ways in which individuals seek to acculturate to new cultures. At the individual level, acculturation has been defined as "the process of cognitive, attitudinal and behavioural adaptation to the new cultural system" (Kim, 1978). The most widely acclaimed conceptual model for the study of acculturation is that of Berry ( 1980, 1992, 1997). Berry (1992) contends that when individuals who have developed in one cultural context attempt to re-establish their lives in another one, a complex pattern of continuity and change takes place. His model proposes that individuals and groups in this situation confront two major issues. The first issue is that of cultural maintenance: "Is my cultural identity of value and to be retained?" The second issue relates to contact and participation: "Are positive relations with the larger (dominant) society to be sought?" At the level of measurement, these issues

can be responded to on a continuous scale from positive to negative. For conceptual purposes however, they are presented here as dichotomous yes/no options (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1** Four Acculturation Strategies as a Function of Two Issues




Source: Berry 1992

When individuals from non-dominant groups answer negatively to the first issue and positively to the second one, an **assimilation** mode is favoured, meaning the relinquishment of their cultural identity and acceptance of the one held by the host country. This implies cultural and behavioural assimilation, resulting in an individual's behaviour becoming more similar to that of the dominant society. Also, it implies structural assimilation, whereby the acculturating group participates more in the social and economic life of the larger social system.

When the answer to both issues is positive, an **integration** mode is present, with the individual maintaining his or her cultural identity and at the same time becoming part of the larger societal framework. A **separation or segregation** mode is the case when the answer to the first issue is 'yes' and 'no' to the second one. This implies that the individual has no desire to relate to the larger society but wants to maintain his or her culture. If the majority group imposes the lack of a relationship, this is referred to as 'segregation'. When the acculturating individual seeks it, this is termed 'separation'. Lastly, a negative answer to both issues is referred to as **marginalisation**, the main characteristic of which is loss of contact with both the dominant group and the traditional one.

Various studies have measured attitudes or preferences towards the four alternatives. For example, when relating acculturation attitudes to mental health, it has been shown that individuals in the **integration** mode exhibit better mental health than those individuals in the **separation, assimilation or marginalisation** groups (Berry 1991). Because integration involves both maintaining a positive identification with one's culture and developing a positive identification with the new culture, it is presumed to be associated with less stress and fewer conflicts (Berry, 1992). This viewpoint has, however been disputed. Damji, Clement and Noels (1996) have raised the question of variability in identification. To test the hypothesis that it is the variability of a person's identity that produces stress, as opposed to particular combinations of identities, they studied the ethno-linguistic identity of 295 native Anglophone University students in Ottawa, Canada. They chose a bilingual university which serves French speaking and English speaking students equally

even though French is spoken by a minority in the city. The variables measured were depression, self-esteem, situated identity and stress. Results suggested that a variable and exclusive first-group identity produced more negative psychological consequences than any other acculturation type. More specifically, Anglophones who identified strongly with their first language group but exhibited a high degree of variation in this identity experienced more stress, more depression and lower self-esteem. Furthermore, and contrary to Berry's predictions, concurrent identification with both the first and second language group, whether under conditions of high or low variability, did not result in appreciable better adjustment.

Berry's model of acculturation has provoked much interest in acculturation processes among psychologists. The model has applicability in the area of forced migration where it can serve as a framework to study the various ways refugees or exiles adapt in countries of asylum. It also has relevance to the study of return populations as it can form the basis of identifying how returnees acculturate to their country of origin. Following Berry, a number of alternative theoretical and empirical approaches that identified gaps in the existing knowledge of acculturation have been developed (Padilla, 1980). A recurring theme has been the importance of ethnic identity and the fact that contact between immigrant and dominant groups is a two-way process. In contrast to the adaptation options put forward by Berry, particularly marginalisation, Padilla conceptualised and operationalised a model of acculturation which addresses the degree to which ethnic groups remain oriented to their own culture or alternatively assimilate the dominant culture. The model consisted of two dimensions: cultural awareness and ethnic loyalty. Cultural awareness relates to the individual's cultural heritage, cultural identification and language preference. Ethnic

loyalty consists of cultural pride of affiliation and perceived discrimination *vis-à-vis* the other. In a study of Japanese-Americans using this model, Padilla, Wagatsuma and Lindholm (1985) found that level of assimilation was related to generational status. In other words, while the first generation appeared least assimilated, the second generation was perceived to be caught in a conflict between the parents' culture and that of the dominant society.

In a later study, Richman et al (1987) offered an alternative acculturation model based on five sub-dimensions: language use, customs, sociability, perceived discrimination and ethnic identity. Their data, based on a study of Indian migrants and white Mestizo non-immigrants in Lima, Peru showed that second generation migrants were more highly acculturated across the five sub-areas and perceived less discrimination than first generation migrants. Speculating on possible mental health outcomes of adaptation along the five dimensions, they hypothesised that a score in each area reflective of a degree of retention of Indian culture would be more conducive to psychological well-being than a score reflective of complete assimilation among the Indian sample.

Quite evidently, as each study attempts to delineate acculturation modes, so have a variety of factors incorporating behavioural, personal and social network elements been identified for each respective acculturation model. The issue of ethnic identity has, however, remained a central concern. Hurh and Kim (1987), for example, showed that Koreans' assimilation in the United States did not replace or weaken any significant aspect of Korean traditional culture and social networks. They thus referred to 'adhesive assimilation', which they conceptualised as "a particular mode

of adaptation in which certain aspects of the new culture and social relations with members of the host society are added on to the immigrants' traditional culture and social networks, without replacing or modifying any significant part of the old" (p., 190). These findings were based on a study of 615 randomly selected Koreans in the United States. They coined the term 'adhesive adaptation' to imply that assimilation and ethnic attachment were not mutually exclusive and reflected that there were multiple realities involved in intergroup relations in the United States.

The notion of culture as a way of life of a particular group of people is obviously central in the process of migration where people leave one set of social and historical situations and move on to others. This would probably account for why acculturation is simply considered as an eventual conversion of immigrants into the host culture and as the end product of the adaptation process. However, the notion of cultural adaptation as a one-dimensional process going from host groups to immigrants seems problematic (Richman et al., 1987). In an increasingly mobile world, movements of people across national borders is producing people whom we might describe as cosmopolitan, who identify with friends, family and fellow migrants across borders. Studies of acculturation seem to have missed the importance of this continuing interaction between homeland and host country. This then leads to the reification of acculturation as a unidirectional process going from the host country to the newly arrived person. What should be seen as a process ends up being concretised and the fluidity of cultural forms de-emphasised. Marx (1991:194) in his paper, 'The social world of the refugee', looks at how refugees form social networks in a new culture and argues that "a social world is not confined to a particular place or limited by territorial boundaries...It is the relations with other people that grounds

man in his existence, and not the physical grounding of the individual and a group within a given space."

# CHAPTER 4

## Review of Literature on Return Migration

As we have seen, there is an extensive literature on the adaptation of refugees/exiles to a foreign culture. In contrast, there is a dearth of literature examining the adaptation of returning refugees/exiles to their home culture (re-entry). In order to further understand this phenomenon, this chapter discusses the re-entry process as one type of cultural adaptation. It begins by defining and describing re-entry. Secondly, the two processes of adapting to a foreign culture and re-adapting to the home culture are compared and contrasted. Finally research investigating the re-entry process is reviewed.

### Conceptual Issues

It has been indicated in the previous chapter that psychologists have long been interested in the adaptation of the individual to the cultural environment. Re-adaptation - the process of integrating back to one's home culture after an extended exile - has received much less attention, even though researchers have suggested that re-adaptation to one's home culture may be more difficult than adapting to a foreign culture (N.Adler, 1981; P. Adler 1975; Brislin and Pederson, 1976; Gullahorn and Gullahorn, 1963).

Research investigating this phenomenon of re-entry has been sparse and carried out from various disciplinary perspectives. For psychologists it is important to understand

the phenomenon as a type of cultural adaptation. However, we need to understand how the re-entry process is similar to, or different from adaptation to a foreign culture.

As indicated above, re-entry must be viewed in the larger context of cultural adaptation. Cultural adaptation has been conceptualised as a psycho-social process focusing on the attitudinal and emotional adaptation of the individual to a new culture. It is also viewed as a social process, whereby the individual integrates into the social interaction of the cultural system (Church, 1982). Early studies variously referred to adaptation as acculturation or adjustment of an individual to a foreign culture and were characterised as 'culture shock'. Re-adaptation or re-entry is defined as "the transition into one's home culture after having lived and worked abroad" (Adler, 1976: 7).

Westwood, Laurence and Paul (1986) consider re-entry as "the continuum of experiences and behaviours which are encountered when an individual returns to a place of origin after having been immersed in another culture for a period of time sufficient to cause some degree of mental and emotional adjustment prior to optimal functioning in the new environment". In other words, re-entry, as noted above, is the experience of facing previously familiar surroundings after living in a different environment for a significant period of time. All researchers in the field of re-entry studies stress the need to regard it not as an isolated phenomenon but as part of the overall process which begins with initial departure from one's home.

Adaptation and re-adaptation are thus two types of cultural adjustment. There are similarities between the two processes but there are differences as well. Both are characterised by a sense of loss of familiar cues. Both involve integrating into a different cultural system. Finally both processes involve aspects of culture learning or culture re- learning. There are, however, three main differences. The first relates to differences in the kinds of expectations involved in the two processes. The sojourner to a new culture expects difficulties and a sense of strangeness in adjusting to a foreign environment. Furthermore, the hosts in the new country also regard the newcomer as different from themselves and likely to behave differently from them.

When coming back to a home country, the returning person does not anticipate differences between him/herself and fellow countrymen, especially when the physical environment is similar. What is more pertinent is the fact that friends/family also do not expect the returnee to have difficulties in re-entering the home country. One final difference between adaptation to a foreign culture and adaptation to home concerns the element of change and awareness of change. When adapting to a foreign environment, there is of necessity a change in the physical and social surroundings, but the newcomer does not change within him/herself from the onset.

When it comes to returning home however, the returnee is most likely to have new attitudes and behaviours which may amount to change in self identity. The home country will also have undergone changes in many respects. Adler (1981) points out that it is not just the amount of change that matters so much in the re-entry process. Rather, that change is often overlooked by both the returning person and the society

to which he/she is returning. Following the culture shock approach in acculturation studies, re-entry research has likewise focused mainly on return culture shock and its manifestations.

## Re-Entry Research

While early studies of re-entry explored some facets of the return experience, conclusions were based largely on isolated evidence with relatively few of these using well-designed methodologies (Austin, 1986). The population groups on which these studies were based can be divided into two:

- U.S. college students coming back from study programmes abroad

- International students returning home after completing U.S. study programmes.

Many of these studies identified re-entry difficulties. These ranged from family and professional problems to include social, cultural, linguistic and political problems (Ascuncion-Laude 1976).

Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) investigated the experience of returning Americans scholarship grantees. They reported professional problems for older grantees and more personal/social problems for younger grantees. Gama and Pederson (1977) measured the extent and nature of the re-entry difficulties as reported by 31 Brazilian students returning from a stay in the US. They identified two general problem areas: family problems and professional problems. More difficulties were reported with professional adjustment than with re-entry into family lives. Female

students however, found it harder to cope with family than male students. Werkman (1983) based his findings on clinical observations of students returning to the U.S. after sojourns abroad. While it may be argued that his sample was biased, his findings generally echoed the theme of difficulties in adapting on return. He further concluded that in order to understand the psychological status and problems of returning students, it is necessary to consider issues related to the entire cycle of leaving, settling abroad and coming back. For example, an inability to settle abroad may breed feelings of defeat and pessimism that may continue to plague an individual on return.

Martin (1984) undertook a preliminary review of these early studies of returnees and identified a need to define and describe the nature of the re-entry process more specifically. She suggested that re-entry should be studied in terms of three sets of variables, namely, background, host culture and re-entry variables. Brabant et al (1986) empirically investigated the problems with family, friends and daily life experienced by students returning to different parts of the world following a course of study in the U.S. Results indicated that culture shock was not as universal as generally assumed and could be alleviated by visits to their home. Re-entry was, however, found to be more problematic for females than for males. In a case study of one Liberian student re-entering from the U.S., Westwood et al's (1986) findings reiterated those reported earlier. They further elucidated problems of re-entry for students as arising from a multitude of challenges, inter alia:

- conflict arising from change from an individual lifestyle to a collective pattern of living;
- demands for conformity by family, friends, political and professional groups;

- conflicts over newly developed concepts of self;
- coping with sex role stereotypes;
- estrangement from traditional value systems.

Wilson (1993) compared the re-entry experiences of high school exchange students from Australia, Ecuador, Norway and Sweden who had spent one year in the U.S. or another country. She concluded that her findings are consistent with those that show that re-entry is problematic, the majority of students reporting ambivalence about coming home.

While there has been relatively more research on the cultural adjustment of business executives to foreign cultures, current knowledge and discussion of their re-entry experiences is largely based on anecdotal and insubstantial research that is lacking in systematic observations. This is typically illustrated in a volume entitled Cross-cultural re-entry edited by Austin (1986). The book consists of articles based largely on personal recollections or at best, clinical observations. In a review based on the experiences of businessmen returning after long term overseas experiences, Austin (1986) suggested that the re-entry process is characterised by two phenomena: separation and loss. The act of leaving the foreign country evokes feelings of separation and loss similar to those experienced at the time of going into exile. In coming back, the unfinished tasks, unfulfilled dreams must be dropped or forgotten. In the same volume, Fontaine(1986) noted that even when anticipated, the reality of reverse culture shock is painful and resolving it may well become an unending task.

Adler (1981) provided a more empirically based study. Using a framework to classify strategies adopted by returning managers during the re-entry process, she identified

them as pro-active, resocialised, alienated and rebellious returnees. Pro-active returnees see the uniqueness of the situation of being between two cultures and experience this as a period of growth. In contrast, resocialised returnees fail to value the uniqueness of the transition period but fit back into the home culture. Alienated returnees also fail to recognise the uniqueness of being between two cultures and react negatively to the transition experience. Lastly rebellious returnees, like the alienated types, reject the home environment, but are aggressive rather than passive.

Howard (1980) undertook a survey of eighty-one American repatriated employees. His findings were that while all his respondents mentioned some difficulty with reverse culture shock only seven percent of companies provided any organisational support. In fact one significant problem reported was the lack of a suitable job upon returning home. Just as in Adler's study (1981), Murray (1973) had found that returnees frequently found it difficult to obtain appropriate assignments when they come back to their home companies.

Drawing upon a review of empirical literature of re-entry as it relates to students and business returnees, Sussman (1986) suggested that there are a number of factors that influence the nature and intensity of re-entry difficulties. These are:

- Change in financial status - which varies from substantial reductions for businessmen to insignificant amounts for students.
- Structural difficulties of re-entry - that is reintegration into one's career path in a changed technological environment.

- Objective changes in the home environment - including changes in the political, economic and corporate culture, and more importantly, change in family relationships.
- Sojourner changes - reflected in individual changes in attitudes, behaviour, world view and changed perception of the home country.
- Change in home culture characteristics - which re-echoes the point made by Adler (1981) that the cross-cultural experience of returning managers is usually not seen in a positive light by those who stayed behind.

## Research on Expectations

Expectations have long been regarded as a crucial factor in determining psychological adaptation during cross-cultural transitions and re-entry. A number of studies have empirically examined this aspect of return. Most of the research on expectations has been based on the expectancy value theory, which suggests that it is the fulfilment of expectations about the sojourn that leads to positive evaluation of the sojourn, problematic adaptation and even mental illness. The focus has therefore been on the match between expectations and experiences and the effects this has on psychological adjustment. Thus Weissman and Furnham (1987) compared expectations and experiences of American sojourners in the United Kingdom by considering the absolute discrepancy between the two and its reaction to mental health. They hypothesised that unmet expectations would be associated with poor mental health. A particularly strong factor of their research design was the repeated testings: expectations were assessed prior to departure from the United States and actual experiences were then assessed after arrival in the United

Kingdom. Comparing pre- and post-arrival measures, Weissman and Furnham reported that expectations were remarkably similar to experiences. They could not, however, substantiate a significant relationship between expectations - experience discrepancies and psychological adjustment. Furthermore, while the longitudinal design was impressive, the result cannot be generalised due to the small sample size and its lack of representativeness.

More robust data are to be found in a study by Black and Gregersen (1990), who focused on the re-entry process. Their point of departure was that unlike expectations sojourners may have of overseas experiences, it may very well be that expectations about re-entry are more unrealistic than those concerning the overseas sojourn. They investigated expectations, satisfaction and intention to leave an overseas assignment among American managers in Japan. The study was based on the hypothesis that while the discrepancy between expectations and experience is a significant factor in the adjustment process, the direction of the discrepancy and its consequences are of greater importance. Their findings confirmed the hypothesis. Over-met expectations about life in Japan were associated with increased general satisfaction. This in turn decreased the likelihood of a decision to terminate the overseas assignment prematurely. Black and Gregersen's study suffers from a major limitation: expectation ratings were assessed retrospectively.

Following up the evaluative dimension in the analysis of the expectation-experience discrepancy, Rogers and Ward (1993) used a longitudinal approach in their investigation of expectation, experiences and psychological adjustment of twenty student sojourners returning to New Zealand. First they examined the relationship

among expected social difficulty, experienced social difficulty and psychological adjustment. They tested two hypotheses:

- The realism hypothesis: that unrealistic expectations, (large discrepancies between expectations and experiences) are associated with psychological distress during re-entry;

- The directional/evaluative hypothesis: that unrealistic, positive expectations, (large discrepancies between expectations which are more positive than experiences) are associated with psychological distress during re-entry.

The results indicated some support for the directional hypothesis. When the direction of the difficulty was specified as more difficulty experienced than expected, larger discrepancies were associated with psychological adjustment problems. These findings were statistically significant for depression. In other words, when experiences were more difficult than expected, larger discrepancies were associated with depressive symptoms. In spite of their robust research design, the small size of the sample and the low return rate of questionnaires (23%) limit Rogers and Ward's study. This calls into question the representativeness of the sample and its potential for generalising to other groups or situations. Furthermore, the research was restricted to expectations about situational social difficulty upon return. As such, the findings cannot be generalised to the wide spectrum of expectations operational in crossing cultures.

A further refinement of the expectation value theory is the expectancy violation theory, which emphasises that unmet expectations do not only produce negative evaluations, but that expectations may be violated either positively or negatively. Martin, Bradford and Rohrlich (1995), basing their theory on the expectancy violation theory, examined the relationship between expectations and evaluations of the sojourn. They hypothesised that the more expectations were violated positively, the more positive would be the evaluation of the sojourn. Conversely more negative violations of expectations would result in more negative evaluations. Using a longitudinal research design, they conducted a pre-departure and post-arrival study on 248 students who spent one semester abroad in one of four West European countries and subsequently came back to the U.S. Findings revealed a positive relationship between expectation violation and evaluation of the sojourn and somewhat supported the expectancy violations theory. Specifically unmet expectations about a sojourn were not necessarily evaluated negatively but rather, when most expectations were positively violated, the sojourn was evaluated positively.

Much as this study is, by comparison to earlier studies, based on sound methodological grounds, it has the limitation that it addressed only one student population group. The extent to which the findings can be generalised to students returning to their home countries in other parts of the world remains unclear. Of relevance is the important finding that location of sojourn had a significant effect on violation/fulfilment of expectations. The study nevertheless adds one dimension to the research literature on expectations - that is, the relationship between

expectations and overall evaluation of the sojourn as this might relate to mental health.

On the whole, re-entry research, just like research on adjustment to foreign cultures, has been characterised by reliance on only one method of inquiry - the quantitative , survey method. Rarely have multiple methods been used in individual studies.

## Research on Repatriation

Earlier, the dearth of studies addressing the issue of psychological adaptation of exiles to their home countries following repatriation was mentioned. A notable exception is the work done by the FASIC group in Chile (1981) which has reported on a preliminary study of 25 returning families based on clinical, social and psychotherapeutic experience acquired over a nine month period. Insights gained from this experience indicate that a distinction has to be made between primary and secondary characteristics of return.

Primary characteristics are inherent and intrinsic to the process of return and refer to such factors as:

- the decision to return,
- the need to re-adapt to a society that has changed profoundly during the period of absence,
- the fact that old points of reference and foci of physical, social and emotional identification have altered,

- the different experiences encountered in exile, whereby the returning person built emotional, social and professional ties,
- lastly, the fact that return is the result of a previous decision to return, taken directly by the returnee or a member of the family group.

Secondary characteristics relate to the objective conditions encountered during the process of return and can include:

- emotional disturbances,
- economic and employment problems,
- language difficulty,
- political persecution and intimidation, and
- marital and family problems.

The methodological distinction between primary and secondary characteristics is considered crucial if only to indicate the different characteristics that shape the process of return. Thus return is not necessarily a negative, painful event but can be a positive challenge. Furthermore, the secondary or negative characteristics may arise from the primary characteristics or as a consequence of objective conditions in the home country.

Findings from this study parallel those of short-term re-entry on the question of return culture shock. In the case of return from exile, return culture shock was attributed to the fact that in spite of exiles having kept abreast of developments in the home country, this was done in a disassociated manner. That is, exiles related to events in

their home countries either exclusively at the intellectual or emotional level. Upon return, they experienced difficulty in integrating both levels. Return culture shock came about as returnees were surprised by a reality of which they were not totally ignorant, but had not sufficiently assimilated. This observation implies a critical distinction between return from exile and re-entry after a short term sojourn. As Llambias-Wolff (1993) noted, the return process for exiles is very complex. He makes the point that exile and return are two sides of the same coin. The contradictions faced by the individual when leaving home reappear in different forms when they return. Return means a disruption of the continuity of life all over again. Based on data gathered on Chilean returnees, Llambias-Wolff (1993) depicted the adaptation process as taking place in different socio-psychological stages that accelerate or postpone the social integration of the returnee. He labelled those stages as:

1. Decision to return

   This stage incorporates the actual decision to return, preparations for return, the euphoria experienced immediately following return and the initial encounter with a different reality.

2. Stage of facing the unexpected

   As reality turns out to be not what was expected, some returnees experience anger and doubt about their capacity to adapt. These feelings may lead to a depressive state where the individual loses his/her self esteem and lives in

the past, at the risk of reproducing a psychological state similar to that experienced in exile.

3. Re-adaptation

One of the most important factors facilitating integration is the capacity to accept the limits of real life and propel oneself into the future, thereby enjoying the positive aspects of the decision to return. The essence of integrating back then becomes the ability to link past, present and future.

No doubt the two studies by the FASIC group and Llambias-Wolff are groundbreaking. The FASIC group' research was the first attempt at approaching return from exile from a psychological perspective. Being cautious not to suggest that there is a psychopathology of exile and return, the FASIC study was nonetheless grounded on a strong psychoanalytic tradition. However, it did not presume to generalise, noting that there are wide variations in the subjective reactions of individuals to the objective realities of return.

In contrast to the example of an analytical approach to understanding return, most studies have been undertaken from other disciplinary perspectives. Krznaric (1997) examined political conflict within communities of Guatemalan returnees. Van Hear (1992) considered the extent to which returnees to Yemen constituted an economic burden or were a potential benefit to the home country. Preston (1993) studied the process of integration among various war-affected groups of people in Namibia. A common theme that runs through all these studies is a concern with the 'economy of return' both from the perspective of the individual who has difficulty finding satisfactory employment and the capacity of the economy as a whole to absorb

returnees. Both Krznaric (1997) and Van Hear (1992) observe that returnees are commonly assumed to be homogeneous whereas in fact they represent great diversity. For example in the case of the Guatemalan refugees who returned from refugee camps in Mexico, the majority, estimated at 26,467 returned between 1986 and 1995. In the camps in Mexico, there had been a strong political organisation in which most participated. They were even able to set the terms of their return and participated as the fourth signatory to the usual tripartite repatriation contracts between the UNHCR, the government of the country of origin and their hosts. This solidarity was undermined by the economic difficulties of return when they went back Chief among these were struggles for land which they had previously occupied, access to credits promised by government and the culture of fear and insecurity linked to the civil war that continued after their return (Krcznic 1997). Similarly, Preston (1993) found that three years after the return of exiles and the declaration of Independence in Namibia, there were undercurrents of civil unrest brought about by increasing economic hardship and declining standards of living. Most striking was the fact for those who returned from exile, the solidarity that prevailed during the days of struggle was no longer evident.

Van Hear (1992) describes the return of 800,000 Yemenis who were forced to leave Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other Arab states as the Gulf War unfolded in the second half of 1990. While the Yemenis had gone to the Arab countries as economic migrants, they spent such long periods in these countries that they were more or less settled. When they were expelled, the problems they encountered were like those of refugees repatriating after long periods in exile. Drawing on interviews and various official documents, Van Hear observed that the impact of the mass return

was mixed. On the one hand, it exarcebated unemployment and imposed strains on the education, health and other social services. In some sectors, the sudden increase of economically active people by seven percent appeared to have a positive impact at the macro level.. For example, the capital they brought increased the money supply. However, more than two years after this mass return , the increased investment which did create some jobs had not sufficiently reduced unemployment. At the same time, returnee labour increased agricultural production.. Returnee farmers reported substantially higher incomes than others. Length of time abroad was another significant factor influencing outcomes. Those who had only spent short periods in Saudi Arabia suffered fewer problems on return than those who had spent long periods abroad and who had lost meaningful social and economic ties with Yemen.

In summary, it should now be evident that returning home can be as or more disturbing than living in exile. As pointed out earlier, re-entry should be considered part of the larger issue of cultural adaptation. Thus it is an intrinsic part of the overall process of adjustment that begins with initial departure from the country of origin. In this review, the centrality of re-entry difficulties in studies of returning short-term migrants is noted. While most studies on repatriation are conducted from diverse disciplinary perspectives, they also consistently report the prominence of economic difficulties of return.

# CHAPTER 5

## The Context of Return for South African Exiles

To understand the reactions to the repatriation of South Africans from 1990, it is necessary to place them in the political, economic and social context to which the exiles were returning. Until the first democratic elections on April 27, 1994, the central feature of political, social and economic life in South Africa was the continued policy of apartheid. As is well known, apartheid represented a system of institutionalised racism based on a colonial model of segregation, political domination and economic exploitation. For over 40 years the government enacted a wide range of repressive legislation designed to consolidate apartheid. The result was a polarised state where political and economic power was in the hands of a white minority resulting in gross inequalities in income, standard of living, education and work opportunities. The legacy of apartheid is still evident today in spite of the change of government.

Resistance to apartheid by the black majority had long been a force in the country's political development, taking different forms at different periods. Major landmarks of this resistance include the defiance campaign of the 1950s and the subsequent banning of opposition political movements in 1960. The opposition forces, having reconstituted themselves outside the country as the liberation movement, attracted large numbers of people to join this process in exile. Many had been politically active in South Africa and had to escape for fear of reprisals. Others left because they could not endure life in a country that practised apartheid. In the late 1970s the exodus acquired a new dimension. This was the exodus of young people in their

thousands who joined the liberation movement. Their main objective was to acquire military skills in order to return to fight the apartheid regime. The politics of exile and the role of the liberation movements have been analysed by many, (e.g. Barrell (1990) and Lodge and Nasson (1991).

Beginning in the mid 1970s, there was a re-emergence of black resistance. The climax of militant mass action was reached at the end of the 1980s. There is a significant body of literature that reviews the complex nature of the forces and circumstances that have always moulded South African politics. On the whole, there is general consensus that the Soweto revolt of 1976 marked a watershed and had a profound effect on future forms and levels of struggle (Murray 1994).

The Soweto revolt began a chain reaction that resulted in unprecedented mass political mobilisation of the Black majority as the 1980's began. Demands for the right to organise led to a sustained, level of strike action in the aftermath of the 1976 uprising. As part of its strategy to control the rising militancy among the country's majority black population, the apartheid government, under the leadership of PW Botha, embarked on a cautious reformist course. This included the incorporation of Indians and so-called Coloureds through a tricameral constitution. This strategy of co-optation triggered the most serious Black revolt in the country's history. Sparks (1990) writes,

> "At a stroke Black politics was reactivated ... A reform package carefully designed to divide the emergent Black bourgeoisie from the masses and to co-opt the moderate centre brought a powerful new anti-apartheid mass movement into existence, which in turn identified with the Freedom Charter of 1955 and

so, by an association that evaded legal restrictions, brought the ANC back into the centre stage of the domestic political arena" (p332-333).

The formation of the United Democratic Front as a coalition of community, church, women and youth groups laid the ground for new methods of struggle, beginning with a vigorous campaign against the reform package. This had the effect of raising the level of political consciousness. Sustained mass resistance continued as people saw that gains could be made through mass action. Apart from organised labour, large numbers of community-based organisations, women, civics, students, all took a definite turn toward organised community action. Resurgence of armed action inside the country took place as the ANC re- established itself. As the 1980's drew to a close, substantial changes had taken place in the balance of forces in the country. In spite of a succession of states of emergency, the country became increasingly difficult to govern, notwithstanding the use of brute force by the military and police.

On the economic front, apartheid became increasingly counter-productive as the liberation movement mobilised international support, which resulted in considerable anti-apartheid sentiments world-wide. Subsequent sanctions and disinvestment by foreign companies helped saddle the economy with debt, unemployment and capital outflow (Hirsch 1989, Rustomjee 1991). Faced with wave upon wave of political unrest, South Africa was no longer a safe environment for new investors. One of the consequences of the 1984-1986 township rebellion was the refusal by international banks to extend short-term credits to South Africa. The international sanctions campaign exarcebated market forces already at work, especially the flight of capital that had begun much earlier in the 1970's. Suddenly, the country was faced with

demands for the repayment of $13 billion in short-term loans by December 1995 (Smit and Mocke 1991, Edgar 1989). The origins and causes of this state of affairs have been explored in great detail elsewhere (Bond 1991). Suffice it to say the economy not only stagnated in 1980s, but remained in a state of recession throughout the decade. Evidently, the decision to reform was not a matter of a 'change of heart', but a necessary step to save the country from economic collapse. Adam and Moodley (1993) provide a detailed analysis that reveals complex political forces that led to the dismantling of apartheid. Thus, it was ultimately a combination of factors such as an unstable economic environment, political instability and international isolation that forced the government to introduce reforms in 1990. The reforms included the repeal of the many apartheid laws, the unbanning of political parties, the release of political prisoners, amnesty for returning exiles and negotiations for the country's future.

The visible signs of the economic stagnation carried over from the 1980's are still evident today. It has been estimated that somewhere between 40 and 46 percent of the economically active population are currently unemployed (Keet 1991). Furthermore, the continuing low rate of economic recovery means that business enterprises have to grapple with lower profit margins. The resulting retrenchments increase the incidence of unemployment rates. For many jobseekers, prospects of working in the formal wage sector are simply dwindling.

Since 1990, a new and fragile era in South Africa's political life was ushered in as the reform process gathered momentum. Reforms designed to ultimately pave the way to the first democratic elections began in earnest in December 1991 with the setting

up of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). Apart from these talks stalling and being later reconstituted, there were yet more setbacks, leading to a breakdown of the negotiations process (SAIRR 1992/3). Some of the reasons for this can, with hindsight, be attributed to the fact that each party to the negotiations came with its own agenda. For example, it is not too far-fetched to presume that for the apartheid regime, taking part in negotiations did not mean readiness to relinquish power. Nevertheless, November 1993 saw the setting up of high level multi-party negotiations, which were concluded with the establishment of the Transitional Executive Council in November 1993 (TEC). The TEC's role was to allow all parties contesting the projected future elections to have a say in the running of key institutions of government in the run up to the elections (SAIRR 1992/3).

In spite of all these developments, a most disturbing trend in the progress to a new democratic dispensation in the country was the continuing spiral of violence that went hand in hand with major breakthroughs in the negotiation process (Laurence 1993). It is difficult to make generalisations, however, violence in South Africa has a long history which is deeply rooted in the apartheid system and the continued uncertainty which plagued the country in the last days of the apartheid era. The causes of violence in the country are complex and need to be analysed at various levels, for example social, political and economic. The culture of violence of the time must therefore be viewed within this historical context. According to Adam and Moodley (1992), this aspect of the political economy of South Africa has elicited many divergent explanations and misinterpretations.

Two major forms of violence are worth mentioning in regard to the repatriation: politically related violence and organised criminal activity. Political violence can be further sub-divided into state-sponsored violence and that due to political rivalry. State sponsored violence has been a very significant and serious component of political developments, especially in the run up to the elections. As Adam and Moodley (1993:125) put it, " the instigators of the violence can be found in the same circles of semi-independent military operatives who, disagreeing with De Klerk's policy change, wanted to see negotiations fail and the right-wing agenda succeed". For example, an estimated 3,500 people died in incidents of political violence between 1984 and 1989 (Cock 1990). Between 1 January and 31 December 1993, 3,706 people were killed in political violence. Fatalities totalled 18,997 for the period September 1984 to the end of December 1993 (SAIRR 1993/4).

The ANC placed the blame for this kind of violence squarely on the ruling National Party and insisted that high-ranking state officials were not willing to stop the turmoil because it was a means of propping up the government. It made allegations of a third force operating as a destabilising element to negotiations. According to these allegations, the South African Defence Force's military intelligence continued to wage its dirty tricks campaign against the broad based political parties, the African National Congress and the Pan-Africanist Congress. This perception was backed by newspaper reports which documented a string of mysterious attacks, including random 'drive-by' shootings carried out by balaclava-clad men who drove in to the townships, an increase in 'taxi-rank' bombings and indiscriminate attacks on passengers in commuter trains. The official explanation was that these were incidents of political rivalry among different political formations, notably the IFP and

the ANC, and were portrayed as 'black on black violence'. Initially, this kind of violence was largely confined to Natal. In what became known as the 'Seven Days War' (25 March-31 March 1990), Inkatha warriors, transported by the KwaZulu police, fought pitched battles against ANC supporters in the Natal region resulting in the destruction of whole communities, houses set ablaze, hundreds killed or injured and thousands forced to flee for their lives (Sparks 1990). As the violence spread to other parts of the country, especially to the Black townships in the southern Transvaal, it had the overall effect of maintaining a climate of fear in the country.

While this violence could be interpreted as 'acts of destruction that impact on power relations' (Cock 1990:44) in South African society, it was compounded by the criminal aspect, mostly in black townships where there was a virtual breakdown of law and order resulting in a state of near anarchy. It was often difficult to establish the causes for the mini-wars that tore communities apart; they could take the form of revenge attacks involving hostel dwellers and township residents, or ethnic clashes which in conditions of poverty escalate and become full-blown battles. In short, violence rapidly became the principal method of resolving disputes in a country with a history of severe repression in which police were distrusted and feared (Seekings 1992). In the absence of effective policing, residents of these areas resorted to setting up their own self-defence units in order to defend themselves.

The potential for more political violence did not diminish as political developments in the country unfolded. While the Transitional Executive Council was being set up, an extreme right-wing Afrikaner political group joined forces with Homeland leaders under the Freedom Alliance. The tactics of this group included perpetuating and

encouraging the violence in order to create conditions which would make it impossible to hold elections. They feared that their power bases would be destroyed if a democratically elected government came into power. Nevertheless, and in spite of all these ominous trends, elections did take place in April 1994. A Government of National Unity (GNU) was elected with a mandate to serve the country from 1994 to 1999 (SAIRR 1995/6). The National Party has since withdrawn from the GNU and has constituted itself a formal opposition party to the ANC dominated government.

## Repatriation

True to the fact that no two repatriation processes are alike, the South African repatriation had its own characteristics. When the first trickle of returnees started coming in 1990, the situation was characterised by the fact that they were coming back after long periods of absence, the longest being in excess of 30 years. They were also returning to the situation of violence, low economic growth, a high poverty rate, high unemployment, all linked to the threat of further civil conflict. Secondly, the South African government was not a co-operative partner in the repatriation exercise. Thirdly, the National Co-ordinating Committee for Repatriation (NCCR), a national body set up to co-ordinate the return process, was plagued by financial difficulties right from the very beginning of its existence.

### The National Co-ordinating Committee for Repatriation of Exiles (NCCR)

The NCCR was formed in May 1990, following a National Consultative Meeting on Repatriation. The composition of this national committee included representatives from the churches, liberation movements and service organisations and functioned

mainly through regional offices located in the main cities. Its purpose was to co-ordinate the process of receiving and resettling returning exiles. Although the underlying policy was that the NCCR would run a short term programme, leaving the liberation movements and government to take up the challenge of their longer term integration, it set itself the following tasks:

- To assist returning exiles in tracing their families.
- To provide counselling services so as to help returnees physically and psychologically.
- To assist with legal documentation and defence against harassment.
- To arrange job placement for skilled professional returnees in various sectors of the economy.
- To provide skills training in institutions and assist in arranging income generating projects.

In the first year of its operations, the NCCR was largely involved in reception activities. It made accommodation available through its reception centres. Here returnees had access to counselling services, medical assistance and legal aid. Aware of the high unemployment rates, the NCCR assisted those returnees in need of skills training programmes, and arranged job placements for others in various sectors of the economy. By early 1992, the focus of NCCR programmes shifted to development projects, education, ongoing protection of returnees' rights and housing (NCCR Repatriation Update 1992).

Right from the beginning of its operations, the NCCR was hamstrung by inadequate resources as well as obstacles arising mainly from conditions within the country. First of all, the security situation was such that the laws which had provoked the flight into exile were still in force. Creating a climate conducive to the return of exiles was not easy in light of this. As exiles started returning, the consequences of having repatriated under the terms set out by the South African government were the arrests of some, the threat of arrest of others and a pervasive fear among returnees. Returnees only obtained indemnity from prosecution if they disclosed 'crimes' (including membership of banned organisations) committed before leaving and during the period of absence. Regarding the Indemnity Clause, there was consensus that it was a thinly disguised invitation for self- incrimination and an unacceptable surrender of power to the government. The government, for example, remained the sole judge of the applicants 'motivation' regarding the political or criminal nature of acts. (NCCR Update 1991).

The NCCR believed that instead of the Indemnity Clause, the government should offer a general amnesty for all. Under the terms of such an amnesty, all exiles, foreign spouses and children born in exile were to be granted temporary travel documents to enter South Africa. This was not done. Secondly, there was need to repeal certain legislation such as the Internal Security Act, Section 29. This was to ensure a favourable environment for those who had returned. There was also a need to repeal all laws which allowed for detention without trial. Thirdly, the requirement that citizenship of exiles needed to be established prior to entry into South Africa adversely affected the voluntary repatriation of certain categories of potential returnees. Fourthly, the NCCR recognised the need for an information

campaign directed mainly at returnees as a confidence building measure to assure them that they could come back in peace, safety and dignity (NCCR Repatriation Update 1991).

One of the most urgent problems facing the NCCR was its uncertainty over funding. Most donors had declared their intention to contribute to the repatriation effort, but were willing to do so through the UNHCR when circumstances permitted its proper involvement in South Africa; otherwise the donors had serious reservations. The International Migration Organisation (IOM) declared its readiness to provide technical support, but this was conditional upon the UNHCR being invited to pursue its mandate for facilitating voluntary repatriation (UNHCR 1991b).

Eventually, with the establishment of a UNHCR office in the country, the NCCR did secure funds, provided almost entirely by international donors. The NCCR initially estimated that the full cost of repatriation would be in excess of R60 million. Because of its over reliance on foreign funding, the NCCR's capacity to plan an effective repatriation was adversely affected. For example, by the end of August 1992, the UNHCR stopped giving out grants amounting to R6 000 (US$133) that each returnee received on return. This was at a time when the NCCR had begun to put its reintegration phase into operation. Needless to say, this increased the level of suffering among the many jobless returnees. Those who arrived just before August 1992 could not even get the full amount of R6 000 grant money. Realising that the grants paid to returnees would not make much of an impact on their lives, the NCCR turned its attention to providing for more long term integration by way of creating skills training and employment opportunities. Paradoxically at this time, it

had reduced its staff drastically due to financial constraints. The overall effect of the endless uncertainty as to how long the NCCR would continue became evident in the low morale among its staff, as well as dissatisfaction from the returnee community.

Having set up a development unit in June 1992, the NCCR's main objective for 1993 was to enlist the participation of national business institutions to promote long term integration. Already substantial numbers of returnees had undergone skills training offered by various organisations countrywide. In recognition of its limited capacity to promote and administer economically viable projects, the NCCR's strategy involved entering into partnership with existing business organisations. This was all the more necessary since the NCCR's life span could not be guaranteed. Accordingly, the first agreement was signed between the Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC) and the NCCR on 5th June 1992. An amount of R1 million was deposited with the SBDC. As an operational partner, SBDC was to play a major role in administering, monitoring and disbursing funds for identified micro businesses (NCCR Repatriation Update 1992).

Unfortunately the office of the NCCR was forced to close down prematurely in the early part of 1993, amidst claims of embezzlement by some officials of the office. As was to be expected, the closure of the NCCR brought about even more hardship for returning exiles, a substantial number of whom had been unemployed since they arrived back. Dissatisfied with the role played by the UNHCR and its local partner the NCCR, there were many instances when returnees marched on these offices. Some directed their anger at former liberation movements. When members of the armed wing of the ANC took control of the organisation's office in 1992, threatening

action to relieve their plight, this provoked a statement from the President of the ANC to the effect that it had been easier to deal with the political and military changes than with its effect on human beings as so overwhelming a number needed assistance to return to civilian life.

Role of government in repatriation

According to the 1960 statute of the UNHCR, states that force their citizens into displacement should themselves take responsibility for integrating their returning citizens. A government's prime responsibility is therefore to create an enabling environment for its citizens when they voluntarily choose to return (UN, 1978).

With regard to returning exiles, the South African government had a number of reservations concerning the role it had to play. It had to honour its obligation as a member of the international community, which meant acknowledging the UNHCR's role as a conduit for aid. The South African government was however very uneasy over the issue of allowing a UNHCR presence in the country (UNHCR 1991b). The uneasiness about the UNHCR arose out of the following concerns: -

- UNHCR Partiality: The government was of the view that the UNHCR had made "political" decisions in the past and that it might act like a "front office" for the ANC in particular. Linked to this was the question of UNHCR "independence" from its parent body the UN and whether or not it would seek instructions from the UN Secretary General.

- United Nations "hostility": While expressing appreciation for the UNHCR's humanitarian role, the South African government was unhappy about the United Nations' hostile attitude towards it as well as the offensive language used when referring to South Africa.

- UNHCR visibility: The existence of a UNHCR office with the UN flag and other symbols might precede the establishment of other UN offices in the country. The main concern was therefore how long UNHCR would remain in South Africa and the size of its staff. With regard to this last issue, the government wondered whether UNHCR's involvement could not be confined outside South Africa's borders. This would leave the NCCR and government to see to the arrival and reception of returning exiles (UNHCR 1991b).

In spite of its apprehensions, the South African Government did enter into a series of discussions with representatives of the UNHCR as from 1990. Chief among the topics of discussion were the terms of a "Memorandum of Understanding" between the two parties. In February 1991, when a team of UNHCR experts were invited to South Africa, this issue was discussed at length. The memorandum established the roles and responsibilities of the two parties in connection with the repatriation. This was partly to respond to the South African government's anxiety over what the UNHCR's monitoring role entailed. As far as the government of South Africa was concerned, returnees were by definition not refugees and were returning to a country with an independent judiciary. A further point of concern was the scope of the amnesty and whether the UNHCR would insist that all exiles be included in the amnesty provisions even those who had committed serious crimes (UNHCR 1991b).

According to a UNHCR report ( UNHCR 1996), it took a period of 500 days, between April 1990 and September 1991 to negotiate the memorandum. Among the issues covered was agreement for an amnesty to be granted to returnees for political offences committed before 8 October 1990. As a consequence of the signing of the memorandum, the UNHCR became the first UN agency to become operational in South Africa. Even so, the South African government was not prepared to be fully involved as partner in the repatriation exercise. In a letter written to the NCCR, dated 30 April 1992, the Department of Home Affairs stated that "returnees could not be afforded preferential treatment to the detriment of other South Africans". The letter went on to say that there was no government department with the necessary budgetary provision to assist the reception centres. (NCCR Repatriation Update, 1992).

The UNHCR

In spite of having resisted the involvement of the UN body in the repatriation process, the South African government invited a UNHCR delegation in February 1991 to hold discussions concerning the role it would take in facilitating the return of the country's exiles. In accordance with its expanded mandate, the UNHCR has the responsibility of ensuring the protection of returnees after their return (Rogers 1992). Given this, the UNHCR team had two main concerns, namely protection for returnees and the government's obligations in this regard, and the issue of indemnity.

First of all, the UNHCR team believed that the definitions of offences such as terrorism and sabotage were cast in broad and equivocal terms. In discussions with government officials, they pointed out that while the government had indicated its intention to repeal the basic discriminatory legislation, it had at the same time emphasised that it would, for the time being, maintain the existing security laws. Furthermore, the State's repressive apparatus remained very intact, with the police and security forces vigorously enforcing the security laws. The UNHCR team was particularly concerned that the Internal Security Act gave a wide range of discretionary powers to the law enforcement officers, including powers of arrest

without warrant, indefinite detention and denial of access to detainees by counsel or relatives.

As a result, a number of returnees had already been detained and refused access to legal representation (UNHCR 1991b). The team insisted that, if UNHCR were to be invited into the country, these two issues would have to be resolved. Specifically, it proposed a general amnesty that should be accompanied by the removal of certain oppressive legislation, notably the Internal Security Act (in particular, section 29).

Once it had established an office inside the country, the UNHCR saw its main role as facilitator to the NCCR in setting up a programme that would benefit all South African exiles, (whether or not they had been active in the liberation movements), and involve relavant NGO's , the South African government and any other interested parties (UNHCR 1991b).

## Repatriation to a situation of violence

The situation of political conflict and violence took a turn for the worse in South Africa after 1990, in spite of the major political reforms noted earlier, which included the repeal of many apartheid laws. This had adverse consequences for planning the repatriation exercise and for reuniting returnees with their families. First of all planning under such conditions can never be effective or adequate. In its agreement with the UNHCR, one of the conditions the South African government laid down was that the UN body would be given a one year time frame within which to operate. The agreement was reached in September 1991 and gave the UNHCR only three months within which to prepare. Under the prevailing conditions in the country, planning and executing a repatriation process within that period proved impossible. By September 1992, the end of the one-year period, only a fraction of the expected number of returnees had come back. The UNHCR had a planning figure of 30 000 but at the time only about 16 000 had come back, the heaviest returnee flows having taken place in the first five months of 1992 at an average of 700 people per month. Gradually this figure declined until there were only 100 people per month by the end of 1992. Very few people registered to come back after that time.

It was impossible to plan and execute the successful reuniting of returnees with their families within such a short time frame. Even when returnees and families were reunited, the continuing conflict in parts of the country caused many a returnee to be once more on the run. The following case history is illustrative:

"Easter Sunday in the village of Kwa-Mashu in Durban was a day of celebration and a day of sorrow for the Ngidi family. Mrs Ngidi and family were celebrating the

return of their son Abraham, who had spent three and a half years in exile. The celebrations at the Ngidi homestead turned out to be premature when a police convoy of sixteen vehicles raided their home resulting in the whole family being detained, including women and children. Abraham, who joined the military wing of the ANC in Zambia during his exile, had recently returned home after being indemnified under the Pretoria minute drawn up by the ANC and the (NP)

government. After this encounter with the South African Police, he had to go into hiding for his own safety" (South African Research and Documentation Centre, February 1991).

By the end of 1992, the paralegal department of the NCCR had established that no less than 30 former exiles, as well as members of their families, had been reported killed. Over a one-year period, the department documented 150 cased of harassment, including searching houses of returnees for weapons. A classic example was the raid by police on June 8th 1992 at a reception centre for returning exiles at Sebokeng, near Johannesburg. At that time, 270 returnees were living on the premises. Some, having failed to trace their families, had nowhere else to go. Others were back at the reception centre after being evicted by their families. According to a report in the NCCR Repatriation Update (June 1992), about 30 police cars carrying over 60 policemen raided the reception centre, armed with rifles and pistols. On entering, they pointed guns at the inmates and started searching the place, stating that they were searching for weapons. No weapons were found (NCCR Repatriation Update 1992).

## Implications of Insecurity for the Well-being of Returning Exiles

The social and political situation in the country remained one of acute tension and sharp polarisation as more and more exiles returned. The violence described in earlier sections of this chapter contributed significantly to high levels of insecurity among returnees. From an economic point of view, signs of stagnation were evident everywhere, but more particularly among the vast majority of Blacks. Estimates were that at least 5.5 million people or between 40 and 46 percent of the economically active population were currently unemployed (Keet 1991). Further, the continuing low rate of economic recovery meant that business enterprises had to grapple with lower profit margins. The resulting retrenchments increased unemployment rates. There were few prospects for many returnees to get jobs in the formal wage sector. The legacy of the investment crisis of earlier years meant that while the formal small business sector contributed 26 percent towards the gross domestic product (GDP), and generated approximately 75 percent of new jobs, it accounted for 38 percent of all existing employment opportunities (Murray 1994). Against this background, economic trends projecting the future showed that even if increased investment resulted in economic growth and expansion, it would not be matched by increased employment opportunities for Black workers (Klerck 1991). The only option left for unemployed returnees was to join the permanent underclass subsisting outside the formal economy.

Many returnees became quite convinced that they had done themselves a great disservice by coming back. The following example captures the mood of many.

Mary, a 35-year-old mother of two had been living at a transit centre in Cape Town for more than 3 years since their arrival from Zimbabwe. She had left the country 23 years earlier and found it difficult to adjust to the new circumstances she found herself in. Her mother was still alive and lived on the farm where she, Mary grew up. Mary could, however, not go back to live with her mother on account of the problems she would have with her children's schooling. Having attended school in Zambia, they would not have been able to cope in South African schools. In addition, her older son had a severe learning disability and needed to be placed in a special school. Mary summed up the situation by remarking "I keep asking myself, why did I come back when I had everything in Zambia" (Majodina 1993).

Low priority was given to the needs returning exiles. Lack of facilities such as housing forced many to join their compatriots living in the degradation of squatter camps on the outskirts of major cities. An added problem was the inability of government to control these localities. This highlights the issue of protection when repatriating under conflict conditions. Together with protection issues, the vulnerability of the very communities the exiles were moving into created its own social dynamic. Returnees found themselves being marginalised or totally rejected since local people regarded them as opportunists, as people who left them behind when the country 'was on fire', and who had benefited from special assistance all the time they were away. Furthermore, in terms of numbers, the problems of the large scale internal displacement of people inside the country as a result of violence totally eclipsed the return of exiles. The resettlement of thousands of internally displaced people was a much bigger challenge for local communities. Clearly then, whatever

expectations most exiles had about coming home before they actually came back were bound to be unfulfilled.

# CHAPTER 6

## Rationale and Methodology

Thus far we have reviewed the literature on re-entry adaptation as well as the context of return for South African exiles. I now turn to the subject of this investigation, which is a study of the experiences of return for South African political exiles. These experiences involved leaving the countries that had hosted them during their long exile and adapting back to their country of origin. While it is commonly assumed that returning home should be a solution to problems caused by forced migration, indications from the literature are that this is far from being a simple process (Rogge, 1991). In the case of South Africa, the socio-political and economic conditions prevailing at the time of return did not present a conducive environment. As noted in Chapter 5, the tense political situation and the high levels of violence and unemployment exacerbated the problems of a difficult transition for returning exiles. At the same time, the prospect of finally being re-united with the homeland generated euphoria among them. This study was an attempt to gain a picture of the complex set of social and personal factors that predicted how well exiles adapted back home.

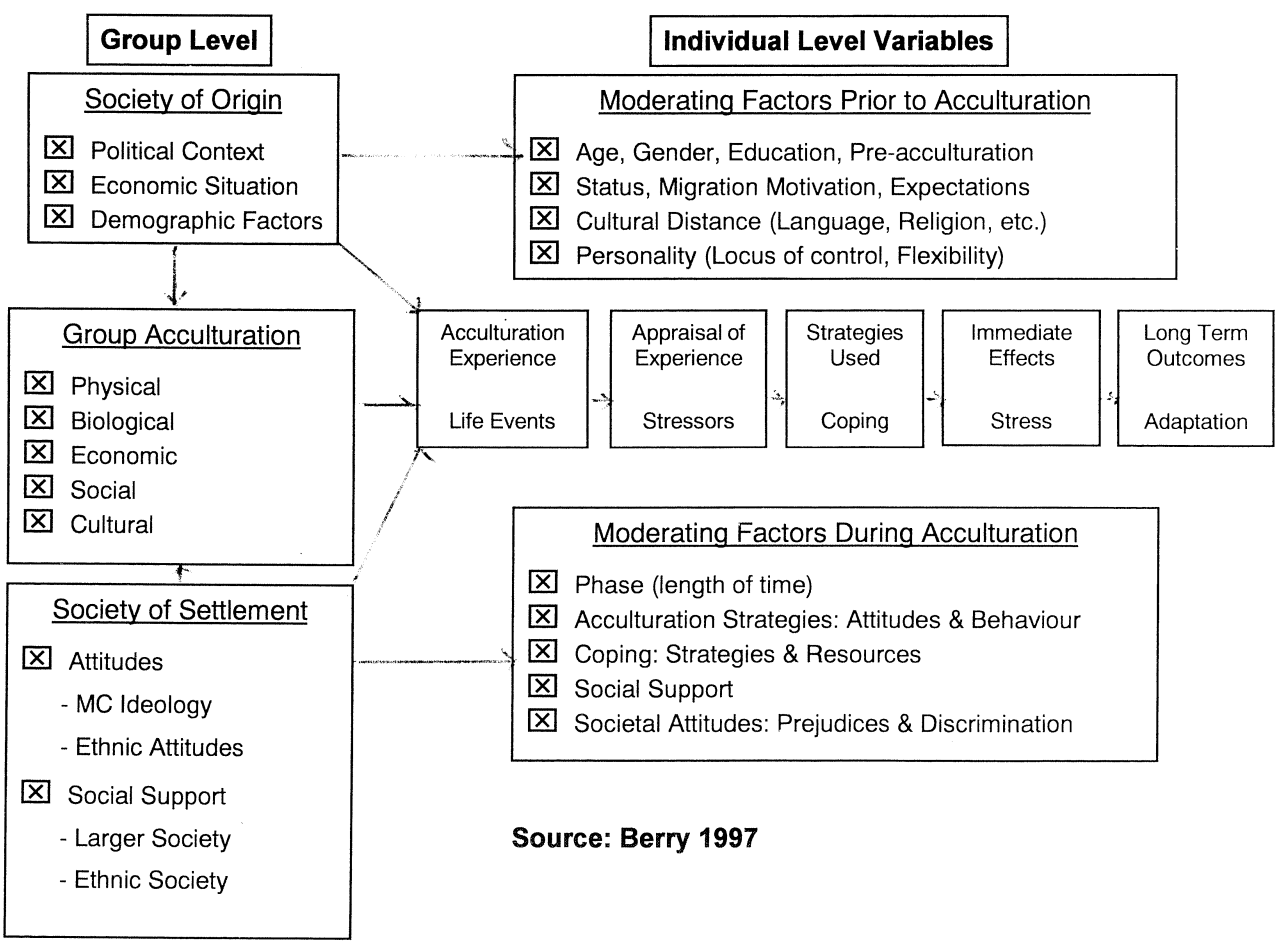
This Chapter begins with a discussion of a general framework of acculturation that describes what happens to individuals who, having developed in one cultural context, try to re-establish themselves in another. In this study, return is conceptualized as a transition and thus a discussion of Transition Cycle theory follows, highlighting the mechanisms involved during transitions. The research is based on an integrated model of re-entry adaptation to account for the various sets

of variables that can influence the outcome of re-entry adaptation. The methods used in the research are presented in the second half of the Chapter.

## Acculturation

A good understanding of what happens when individuals who have lived in one cultural setting re-establish themselves in another can be achieved within the framework of existing theories of mainstream psychology and these were discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. An outstanding contribution to the study of acculturation is provided by Berry (1986, 1992, 1997) who has developed a comprehensive conceptual framework that illustrates the main factors which affect an individual's adaptation in a cross-cultural context.

**Figure 2** A framework for acculturation research




**Source: Berry 1997**

Figure 2 presents Berry's acculturation framework. The focus of this framework is on how individuals who have developed in one cultural setting manage to adapt to new contexts that result from migration. (In other words, it is equally applicable to movements of people into foreign cultures as well as return to places of origin after appreciable periods of absence. The framework is therefore well suited to be adopted for purposes of the present study). The figure represents two kinds of phenomena: on the one hand, there are group or cultural level phenomena that appear on the left side of Figure 2. Individual level phenomena appear on the right of Figure 2. The latter are psychological phenomena that are essentially person variables. Of relevance are certain individual characteristics that exist prior to moving outside one cultural context. These are to be found along the top. Features that arise during the course of acculturation are to be found along the bottom of the figure. Going from left to right in the middle part of the framework are the main group and psychological acculturation phenomena. These features begin at the group level and depict group level changes that come about when groups are in contact (for example, political, economic, social and cultural structures). These group phenomena are followed by phenomena at the individual level which affect the person experiencing acculturation. Both result in a number of possible events that take place at the individual level, for example, psychological changes which in turn lead to adaptation.

As Berry (1997) explains, the framework combines both structural and process features. The flow of events from group level to individual level obviously represents a process that takes place over time. The upper and lower levels of the framework which represent factors that influence the process are the structure in which

acculturation takes place. Berry is of the view that the framework presents broad classes of variables that need to be taken into account when studying psychological adaptation. He points out that no single study has so far included all the variables, no doubt due to the fact that this is a composite framework drawn from a variety of smaller studies. While Berry's model has been developed to account for adjustment to a foreign context following migration, key elements of his framework can be considered applicable to the situation of return from exile after appreciable periods of absence. The framework is therefore well suited to be adopted for the present study. Berry and others have used the term acculturation to refer to adaptation to a new society or cultural system. Clearly returnees form exile are returning to a familiar culture. Nonetheless, they face the psychosocial task of adaptation to the home situation after periods of absence. During their exile, both they as individuals and their home environments have undergone change. So, the process of acculturation in this situation is concerned, among other things, with the degree to which the returnee can leave behind the culture and identity of being an exile, and merge back into his or her own society.

## The Transition Cycle Framework

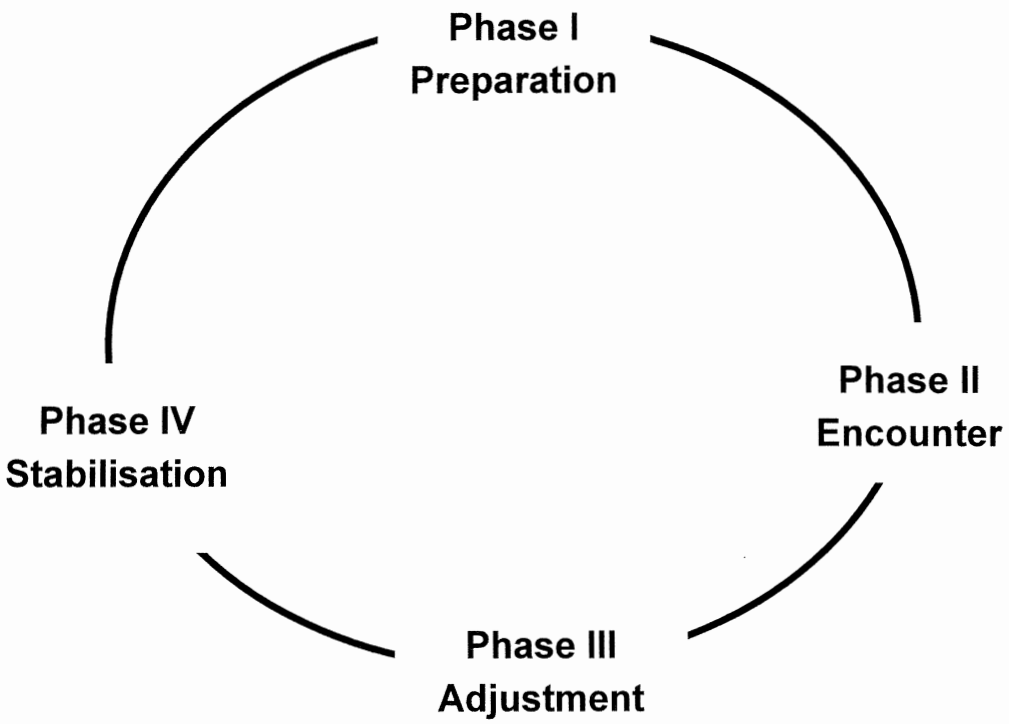
Nicholson (1990) reviews the challenge of adaptation by looking at three approaches, predictive, process and taxonomic. Of relevance to the present study are the first two. The predictive approach seeks to explain differing outcomes to adaptation and suggests that the outcome of any adaptation depends on certain prior influences. The process model is about the nature of the process of adapting to change. If we take return to be a typical example of a transition, then the process approach provides a clearer understanding of what happens to returning exiles. Nicholson makes the point that, when viewing transitions as experiences through

time, the nature of these experiences changes from the initial point of impact through to more strategic adjustments. Unlike the stage theories of cultural adjustment, he does not prescribe that certain experiences will or will not occur, but proposes the process model as a general framework that allows for the full range of experiences to be interpreted. The process model rests on three important principles:

- Recursion or continuous movement - each stage carries with it a stage of readiness for a new cycle of transition.
- Disjunction - different experiences characterise different stages due to their distinctive qualities.
- Interdependence - what happens in one stage has a powerful influence on the next.

Figure 3 is a diagrammatic representation of the transition cycle. As can be seen from the figure, Nicholson identifies four stages: preparation, encounter, adjustment and stabilisation.

**Figure 3** The Transition Cycle



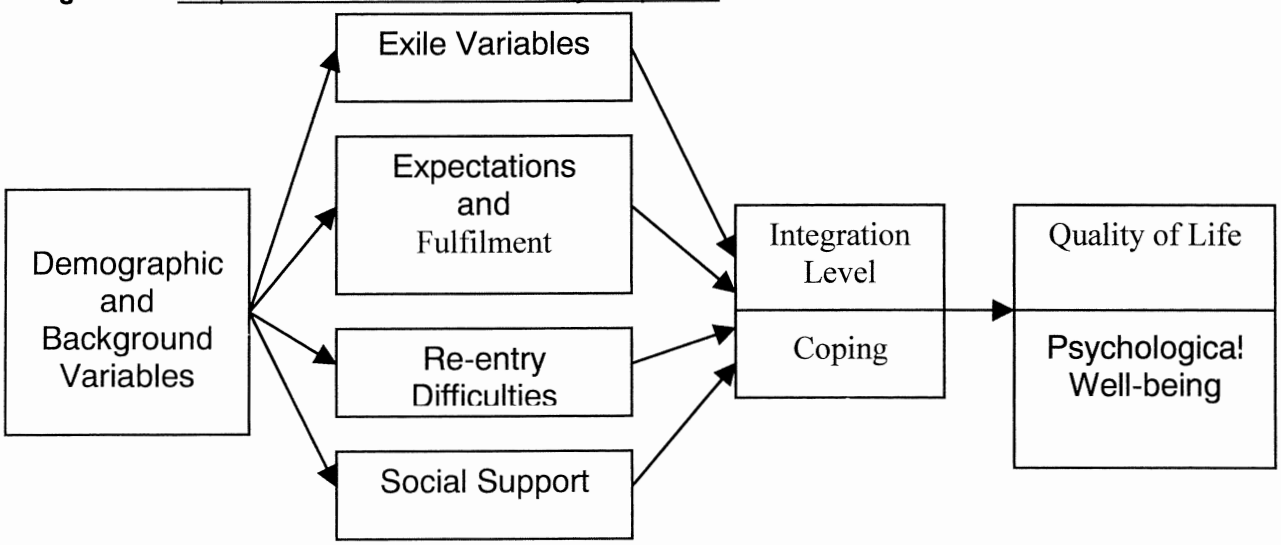

## Proposed Causal Model of Re-entry Adaptation

The acculturation and transition cycle frameworks are useful models for understanding the process of re-entry adaptation. Both are helpful because they highlight the fact that the outcome of acculturation is now known to depend on a variety of influences. The transition cycle framework further brings into focus the fact that re-entry adaptation can be viewed as a psychological transition that takes place in stages. By incorporating elements of these two frameworks into the proposed model of re-entry adaptation, this study has the potential to further our understanding of the psycho-social processes that predict quality of life and psychological well-being.

Re-entry adaptation has been conceptualized as one aspect of acculturation. The integration of the two frameworks contributes to the field of acculturation by consolidating the current state of knowledge on acculturation and extending it to the

context of return. It also contributes to the predictive dimension of transition cycle theory by testing the generalisability of a predictive model in accounting for how well individuals adapt following return to a country of origin. The proposed model is presented in Figure 4.

**Figure 4** Proposed causal model of re-entry adaptation




The model proposes two adaptation outcomes upon return. These are quality of life and psychological well-being. The model further proposes that these adaptation outcomes are predicted by a variety of personal and social factors. From the acculturation framework, the component that delineates moderating factors that arise prior and during acculturation has been selected. Much as this study is not based on a longitudinal design, it has been considered appropriate to include demographic and background variables such as age, gender, marital status, socio-economic status as well as expectations. This is based on the fact that various studies of acculturation indicate that these variables influence the adaptation process. In addition, the integrated model identifies some moderating factors arising during the process of acculturating to the home culture as predictors of adaptation outcome. These are exile experiences, expectations and their fulfillment, re-entry difficulties, social support, coping and integration levels.

A key feature of Berry's acculturation framework is that it accounts for what happens when people move into a foreign culture and it encompasses both individual and group level acculturation. Berry (1997) points out a distinction between acculturation as a group level or collective phenomenon and psychological acculturation.. In the latter case, acculturation is a change in the psychology of the individual. Much as the question of group level acculturation does arise, in the sense that exiles come back as a group, the focus of the present study is on psychological acculturation.

Taking the notion of prediction from the transition cycle framework, the integrated model represents one way of presenting outcomes of re-entry adaptation by elucidating relationships between empirical groupings of predictor and outcome variables. A further consideration from the transition cycle framework is the idea that return can be conceptualized as a process that takes place in stages. Unlike other stage models, the transition cycle framework specifies that the stages do not have to take place in a rigidly defined sequence. The cross sectional nature of the study does not allow for a full exploration of these stages but the idea introduces a temporal dimension to prediction. That is, not all the processes that predict adaptation outcome take place at the same time. A more detailed description of the variables identified in the integrated model is provided in the following section.

## Predictor Variables

### Demographic variables

The relationship between demographic variables and certain measures of adaptation has been documented. Theoretically, age at the time of migration should have a

demonstrable influence on the outcome of the adaptation process. The expectation that young people are better able to adapt in a new culture has been borne out by some but not all studies. (Aronowitz, 1992; Rumbaut, 1991; Nicassio and Pate, 1984; Lin, Tazuma and Masuda, 1979). With regard to gender, several researchers have stated that females may be more at risk of problems of adaptation than males (Hauff and Vaglum, 1995; Boyd, 1984). This is supported by findings from a study by Ager, Ager and Long, (1995), who reported more vulnerabilities among female headed households. On the other hand, some studies have found gender to be spuriously related to various measures of adaptation (Starr and Roberts, 1982; Moghaddam, Ditto and Taylor, 1990). It may very well be that gender has a variable influence on adaptation.

The association of education with positive adaptation has been established (Michalowski, 1987). Among the reasons given is that education is a correlate of other resources such as occupational status and income which are themselves protective factors. Regarding Vietnamese refugees in particular, Nguyen and Henkin (1982) found that education was an important factor in adaptation. Related to education is occupational and employment status in the sense that the possibility of obtaining jobs increases with education. For example, Samuel and Wolowski (1985) found a positive correlation between education on arrival and occupational adjustment.

Evidence concerning the relevance of marital status for adaptation is ambiguous. While married status among Vietnamese refugees was associated with low risk for psychiatric symptoms (Berry and Blondel, 1982), Lin, Masuda and Tazuma (1979) reported that married Vietnamese in the United States showed an excess of

psychiatric symptoms once age and gender were controlled. In view of the above considerations, the demographic variables of age, gender, educational level, marital status, occupational status and employment status were the first set of predictor variables to be considered in the present study.

Exile Experiences

In his discussion of exile movements, Kunz (1973, 1981) proposed the concepts of push/pull motivations common to most studies of human migration. From research undertaken in this domain, it could be concluded that those people with high 'push' motivation will have greater problems in psychological adaptation. However, indications are that those people with high 'pull' motivation are equally at risk (Berry, 1997). To study the influence of 'push' factors, operationalised as exile experiences on adaptation, these exile experiences will be the second set of predictor variables.

Expectations

Expectancy value models propose that a person's behaviour is directly related to the expectations they hold (Furnham and Bochner, 1986). Research applying expectancy value theory to the area of migration and psychological adaptation is relatively new (Weissman and Furnham, 1987; Black and Gregerson, 1990; Rogers and Ward, 1993). The focus of this research has been on discrepancies between expectations of the sojourn and actual experiences as well as how these discrepancies relate to psychological adaptation. Findings from this research support expectancy value theory. Specifically, fulfilment of expectations about a sojourn leads to positive adaptation. Insights gained from empirical work have, however, been constrained by research designs used to study expectations.

Furthermore, these studies were carried out on short-term migrants. The rather special circumstances of political exile would suggest that exiles tend to have high ideals. These are individuals who were forced to leave their homes, partly because they believed the society left behind could be a better place for all. Upon return, they will still hold these high ideals, and this in itself may make integration difficult. In the present study, expectations of return as well as fulfilment of these expectations are the fourth set of predictor variables.

Difficulties of Return

Psychologists and psychiatrists have collected evidence over a long period on the relationship between stressful life events and psychological and physical illness. The basic idea is that a negative life event such as loss of a job has an adverse effect on a person's health. The applicability of the life events approach to the migration context should be obvious (Furnham and Bochner, 1986). The act of leaving one cultural setting for another most often involves a number of important events, usually of a stressful nature. In the present study, life events were captured in the form of difficulties of return.

Social Support

Social support has been referred to as the "broad range of interpersonal behaviours by members of a person's social network (that) may help him/her successfully cope with adverse life events and circumstances" ( Cutrona and Russell, 1990 p 319). The main thrust of studies on social support is that it is a mediator between stressful life events and well-being as well as a significant predictor of a person's well-being (Cobb, 1976; Henderson and Byrne, 1977; Thoits, 1981). Social support is thought to modify the effects of stressful life events in two basic ways. First, the existence of

support can positively affect the appraisal of a stressful situation, thus rendering the event less threatening. Second, social support can influence the psychological reaction to a stressful situation by facilitating direct action, thereby encouraging positive behaviours (Cohen and Wills, 1985). This way social support acts as a buffer against adverse effects of stressful life experiences. Contrary to the stress buffering model, other studies suggest that social support can have direct independent relationships with psychological well-being. (Cheung and Spears, 1995; Bebbington et al, 1984; Lin et al, 1979).

Although early research tended to treat social support as a unidimensional construct, there is now wide agreement that it is multidimensional (Cutrona and Russell 1990). Researchers have proposed a number of different dimensions, which, while differing on specifics nevertheless appear to converge on a common set of dimensions. Cutrona and Russell (1990) mention five basic support dimensions that have been commonly been identified. First there is *emotional support,* which appears to represent the ability to turn to others for comfort and security during times of stress, leading a person to feel that others care for him or her. *Tangible aid* support refers to concrete instrumental assistance, in which a person in a stressful situation is given the necessary resources. In the case of *Informational support,* an individual is provided with advice or guidance concerning possible solutions to a problem. *Social integration or network* support refers to a person feeling that he or she is part of a group whose members have common interests and concerns. Lastly, *esteem support* represents the bolstering of a person's sense of competence or self esteem by other people.

In the migratory context, social support from fellow migrants has been found to be crucial for adaptation (Beiser, Turner and Ganesan, 1989; McSpadden, 1987). Findings from these studies indicate that availability of social support from existing ethnic communities reduced refugees' levels of stress and anxiety. Nonetheless, Westermeyer, Vang and Neider (1983) found frequency of visits among Hmong refugee households predicted poorer rather than improved psychological adaptation. Rumbaut (1991) found that the number of reported friendships bore no significant relationship with levels of psychological distress. Punamaki-Gitai (1987) reported that social support predicted positive sentiments among Palestinian women but not psychological outcome.

On the whole, the weight of the evidence indicates the beneficial effect of social support. McCallin and Fozzard (1990) reported factors such as having friends live nearby and seeing family members as a source of support as predictive of better psychological adjustment among Mozambican refugees. In a retrospective study of exiled Tibetans, Holtz (1998) found that torture survivors did not report a significantly high proportion of depressive symptoms. This is because nearly all felt they were receiving adequate social support. Holtz suggests that the social support alleviated depression by restoring a sense of community and facilitating coping with the stress of resettlement. Social support was however not equivalent across the sample. Female subjects had guaranteed social support while this was limited for male subjects. Consequently, three times as many males exhibited depressive symptoms and five times more tortured males had elevated depressive symptom scores. The study of South East Asian refugees by Beiser et al. (1989) which also indicated a protective function of social support might account to some extent for the discrepant

findings regarding the role of social support. They identified the type of support and the distinct phase in which it was operative. Their findings were that having an intact marriage and close links with the ethnic community moderated the impact of adjustment only at the resettlement phase and not in the refugee camps. They therefore suggested that social network support protected against the stress of adjustment by enhancing a sense of belonging more effectively than against the effects of trauma and deprivation.

As already mentioned, there is enough evidence for the existence of different support dimensions. Three dimensions that have been identified in most studies of social support will be examined for their predictive effect on adaptation into the home culture in the present study. These are emotional, instrumental and informational support

Coping

The literature on stress and coping refers to coping as "the cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the person's resources" (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984:141).

The concept of coping is not a unified construct with a readily agreed upon meaning. What distinguishes it is its relevance to adaptation in the face of stressful life experiences. Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) coping model takes into consideration causal antecedents, mediating processes as well as immediate and long term effects. Causal antecedents refer to personal and environmental variables. Personal variables include individuals' beliefs while environmental variables relate to demands imposed on a person as well as available resources. The mediating processes of

appraisal and coping strategies make it possible to assess whether a situation is challenging and taxing and to use coping strategies to reduce its negative impact. Immediate effects of coping involve physiological changes, positive/negative feelings and quality of social interactions. Long term effects may take the form of somatic illness or social functioning.

This study focuses in particular on coping strategies as one of the relevant predictor variables in re-entry adaptation. According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), coping strategies either change the actual terms of the troubled person–environment interaction, a form of coping referred to as problem focused, or regulate emotional distress, which is referred to as emotion focused coping. Problem focused coping is task oriented while emotion focused coping is person oriented. Lazarus and Folkman (1991) further stress the temporal and unfolding quality of coping strategies. On the basis of clinical observation and empirical research, they make it clear that coping is normally characterised by a high degree of variability among and within persons. Coping strategies therefore change constantly as a function of the continuous appraisals and reappraisals of the person/environment relationship, which is also always changing. Thus it is important to consider coping as a process where the actual function of any given type of coping is determined only in the context in which it happens.

The existence of two kinds of coping strategies has been challenged. Cohen (1987) maintains that there are five broad categories of coping: information seeking, direct action, inhibition of action, intrapsychic processes and turning to others for support. Endler and Parker (1990) add a third dimension to Lazarus and Folkman's (1984)

two strategies, namely avoidance coping which can include either a person oriented or task oriented strategy. Overall, the strength of the concept of coping strategies lies in the flexibility they afford an individual. That is, the ability to respond both to the requirements of the situation and to personal needs.

In the migration context, there has not been much rigorous analysis of the role of coping. What emerges from mainstream psychological research suggests that the conception of what constitutes adaptive coping needs to be adjusted and extended in situations of persistent and overwhelming stress (Punamaki-Gitai, 1990). On the basis of work with Palestinians in the Occupied Territorries, Punamaki-Gitai found that direct exposure to the most extreme violence and conflict led to more active and purposive coping strategies such as political activity. However, those who adopted such strategies reported higher levels of psychological symptoms and anxiety than those adopting a more passive coping style. Beiser (1987) noted the importance of avoidance of the past among South East Asian refugees who are resettled in Canada. He found that positive coping was related to religious faith and mastery of previous trauma.

Ager (1993) suggests that whilst the use of active problem solving strategies by refugees might be appropriately encouraged, their effectiveness in situations of extreme stress maybe questionable. Based on earlier studies, Lazarus and Folkman (1991) noted that problem focused coping is more likely to be used if the outcome is appraised as amenable to change. Emotion focused coping on the other hand is more likely to be used if the outcome is appraised as unchangeable. Indeed, Berry (1997) is of the opinion that there may be cross-cultural variations in the distinction

between problem focused and emotion focused coping. According to him, problem focused coping may have limited success if the problem of acculturation lies in the dominant society such as when members of the dominant society have little interest in accommodating the needs of the acculturating group.

Given these findings and the central role coping should have in cross-cultural transitions, there is clearly a need to extend the area of inquiry on coping to its role in a situation of return after lengthy periods of absence. This is all the more important against the long acknowledged fact that immigrant groups are vulnerable to first time mental illness many years after migration. This suggests that while acculturation stress may initially have been met with adequate coping skills, the individual migrant is still vulnerable to later stresses.

Integration Levels

The acculturation strategies people use in a new cultural setting have been shown to have substantial relationships with adaptation. For example, almost all studies of acculturation have found integration to be the most successful strategy, marginalisation the least, while assimilation and separation are intermediate (Berry, 1997). In explaining acculturation strategies, Berry (1992) states that they are made up of the attitudes and behaviours of people in relation to ways of acculturating. Although using Berry's conceptual framework, the present study does not set out to measure the presence or absence of the four acculturation strategies as in the case when an immigrant or refugee encounters a foreign culture. Since the study is about returning exiles coming back to their country of origin, the focus is on the extent to which they either maintain an exile identity or are more oriented towards

identifying with home. Within that continuum, it is possible that all four of Berry's acculturation strategies can be expressed. The integration level scale therefore seeks to explore how far Berry's acculturation framework can be adapted to exiles returning to their home country.

It must be noted however that Berry (1997) conceptualises acculturation strategies at the level of people's primary cultural identities while in the present study, integration levels refer to exile/home identities superimposed upon existing cultural identities. In this sense, the exile/home identity is a secondary level identity. and is not the at the same deep level as cultural identity. With this difference in mind, parallels can nonetheless be drawn between Berry's acculturation strategies and integration levels as conceptualised in the present study. From the point of view of Berry's acculturation framework, when individuals have an interest in both maintaining their original culture while at the same time interacting on a daily basis with other groups, an integration strategy is defined. Similarly, it is expected that in the present study, the integration option would apply when returning exiles maintain their exile identity while simultaneously immersing themselves in the home community.

According to Berry's framework, when individuals do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek daily interaction with other cultures, the assimilation strategy is defined. While the assimilation option is a possibility in the context of the present study, it is not commonly expected that returnees would readily reject their exile identity. in favour of interacting solely with the broader home community. In a situation where individuals place value in holding on to their original culture and at the same time avoiding interaction with others, Berry's framework would indicate a

separation/segregation strategy. In the case of returning exiles, holding on to the exile identity while avoiding daily interaction with the larger home community would indicate problems identifying with home. This is because by its very nature, the act of return implies that a former political exile is ready to become an integral part of the society s/he is coming back to. Lastly, according to Berry's framework, the marginalisation strategy is indicated when an individual is not interested in maintaining his/her cultural identity and has little interest in relating to the larger society. In a situation of return from exile, the marginalisation level would apply when there is little interest in maintaining either an exile identity or relations with the home community. Returnees would rarely choose this option. Rather the marginalisation option is most likely to be imposed in situations where returnees find themselves being excluded or discriminated against by the broader South African society while at the same time relinquishing their exile identity.

## Dependent Variables

### Psychological well-being and life satisfaction

As has been already indicated, practically all outcome measures of adaptation are drawn from psychiatric or psychological tests of mental health, reflecting a disease model of adaptation. The perspective taken in this study is that the outcome of acculturation varies as a function of a complex set of social and psychological variables in which personal and psychological factors interact to produce a particular level of adaptation. Furthermore, the emphasis on psychological well-being and life satisfaction reflects the original conceptualisation of mental health as a satisfactory and optimal state of being (Vega and Rumbaut, 1991). This represents a move away from the negative outlook on adaptation to looking at positive cognitions and affect

as well as personal assessments of one's condition. Very few cross-cultural studies have been concerned with psychological well-being and life satisfaction as outcome measures of adaptation. This is partly due to their multidimensionality and the difficulty of drawing conceptual distinctions among the many terms used to refer to these constructs. Van Tran (1994) found psychological well-being to be predicted by education, length of residence, English speaking ability and social adjustment among Vietnamese in the United States. Bradburn (1969) considered psychological well-being to be based on two independent dimensions: positive affect and negative affect. Following Bradburn, this study conceptualises psychological well-being as the positive feelings people have towards themselves.

With regard to life satisfaction, it seems appropriate to use this as a measure of how returning exiles compare themselves to a reference standard or compare their aspirations with present conditions they find themselves in. Using psychological well-bieng and life satisfaction to operationalise mental health is moreover consistent with the World Health Organisation's (WHO) interpretation of mental health (1981). According to the WHO formulation, the essential quality of mental health is a continuous functioning self. This understanding of mental health locates it within the broader framework of physical, mental and social well-being.

All the variables in the present study were identified on the premise that adaptation back home shares similar features with acculturation to a host country. Acculturation has been conceptualised as a psychological process that focuses on attitudinal and emotional reactions. Re-entry adaptation is similarly regarded as a form of acculturation that necessitates mental and emotional adjustment (Martin 1984). The

difference between the two processes lies in the fact that while acculturation implies encountering a new culture, re-entry adaptation involves going back to a culture of origin. According to Dyal and Dyal (1981), any empirical investigation of acculturation requires a multivariate model with explanatory variables operating at various psycho-social levels. In their view, a model of this kind underlines the importance of multivariate, multi-method and multi-level approaches involving both cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses when studying acculturation. It should be pointed out, however, that the main thrust of the present study is the predictive approach. The approach was chosen on the grounds that it will elucidate relationships between empirical groupings of predictor and outcome variables at various levels of generality. In other words, it represents one way of presenting adaptation outcome upon return home and the empirical circumstances that can affect it.

## The Sample

Participants in this study were 325 exiles who returned to the country after spending varying periods in exile. A convenience sample was identified for two reasons. Firstly, the political situation in the country was not settled enough for returning exiles to feel completely safe. As participation in the study was purely voluntary, a high refusal rate was, therefore, anticipated. Secondly, the intermittent flare-up of violence in parts of the country also meant that returning exiles residing in those parts of the country were inaccessible. Having identified the names and residential addresses of prospective respondents from the NCCR lists, research assistants approached respondents at their homes in those localities that could be reached without much difficulty.

The South Africans who went into exile were a diverse group of people drawn from the various racial groups in the country. My sample, however, was made up mainly of black [1]Africans with a few exceptions. The rationale for concentrating on this sub-section of the population is based on two considerations. First, black Africans make up the majority of the people who went into exile. Secondly, they provide a classic example of people who were subjected to the most severe hardships before being forced to flee, for example, discrimination, harassment and in some cases imprisonment. Table 2 presents the demographic characteristics of the sample.
While the data was collected from 325 respondents, data analysis will not always reflect this number due to missing values.

The ages of respondents range from 18 to 65 years. Over four-fifths of the sample are in the age range of 18 to 40 years. Adults between the ages of 41 to 65 comprise 17 per cent of the sample. At the time of going into exile, the majority were in the age group 13 to 20 (41per cent),a quarter of the sample were in the age group 21 to 30 years while 16 per cent were born in exile.

[1] According to the current racial classification system which dates back to the Apartheid era, the population of South Africa is made up of Blacks, so called Coloureds (people of mixed descent), Asians and Whites. As used here, black Africans refers to South Africans of African descent.

**Table 2** Demographic Information

| | Number | Percentage Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| Age range now (in years) | | |
| 18-20 | 10 | 3 |
| 21-30 | 126 | 40 |
| 31-40 | 126 | 40 |
| 41-50 | 29 | 9 |
| 51-60 | 25 | 8 |
| TOTAL: | (n=316) | |
| Age at the time of exile (in years) | | |
| Born in exile | 51 | 16 |
| 1-12 | 47 | 14 |
| 13-20 | 128 | 41 |
| 21-30 | 69 | 25 |
| 31-50 | 13 | 4 |
| TOTAL: | (n=308) | |
| Marital status at time of exile | | |
| Single | 268 | 85 |
| Divorced, separated | 9 | 3 |
| Married, spouse left | 10 | 3 |
| Married in S.A., both in exile | 29 | 9 |
| TOTAL: | (n=316) | |
| Marital status now | | |
| Single | 146 | 46 |
| Divorced, separated | 48 | 15 |
| Married, spouse in exile | 15 | 6 |
| Married both in S.A. | 103 | 33 |
| TOTAL: | (n=315) | |
| Gender | | |
| Male | 167 | 52 |
| Female | 155 | 48 |
| | Number | Percentage Frequency |
| TOTAL: | (n=322) | |
| Duration of return | | |
| 1 year | 90 | 29 |
| 2 years | 163 | 53 |
| 3 years+ | 49 | 18 |
| TOTAL: | (n=302) | |
| Nationality of spouse | | |
| South African | 120 | 62 |
| New South African | 75 | 38 |
| TOTAL: | (n=195) | |
| Enrolled for course of study in exile | | |
| Yes | 211 | 67 |
| No | 106 | 33 |
| TOTAL: | (n=317) | |
| Educational status | | |
| Tertiary | 69 | 23 |
| Secondary education completed | 76 | 25 |
| Secondary education not completed | 122 | 40 |
| Primary | 38 | 12 |
| TOTAL: | (n=305) | |
| Occupational status | | |
| Professional | 61 | 20 |
| Semi-skilled | 89 | 30 |
| Unskilled | 87 | 29 |
| Student | 62 | 21 |
| TOTAL: | (n=299) | |
| Employment status | | |
| Working full time | 60 | 19 |
| Working part time | 28 | 9 |
| Self-employed/Voluntary | 53 | 10 |
| Seeking work | 148 | 47 |
| Student | 49 | 15 |
| TOTAL: | (n=318) | |

Slightly over half of the sample (55.2 per cent) is male and 48 per cent are female. The majority was single when they went into exile (85 per cent), very few (9 per cent) left as married couples. At the time of data collection, just less than half were single and one third were married. Of those who were married, 62 per cent had South African spouses and 38 per cent had foreign spouses. The majority of the sample (82 per cent) had been back in South Africa for at least two years. While abroad, two-thirds of the sample took up further studies and one third did not.

Distribution of the sample according to education, occupational and employment status shows that less than a quarter of exiles acquired tertiary education. The largest group (40 per cent) had secondary education but did not complete it. In terms of occupational status, one-fifth of the sample was of professional status. Over half were semi- or unskilled (59 per cent) and another one-fifth were students. With regard to employment status, only 19 per cent of the sample were in full time employment and almost half (47 per cent) were seeking work. The rest of the employment categories were made up of retired/voluntary/self-employed workers (10 per cent) and students (15 per cent). For those seeking work, reasons for not finding work were reported as due to: lack of appropriate skills or training (32 per cent), financial or transport difficulties (27 per cent), qualifications not being recognised (16 per cent), discrimination and racism (16 per cent), and no demand for skills (10 per cent).

## The Research Instruments

The research design involved the administration of a questionnaire (see Appendix 1) consisting largely of measures specifically designed for this study. Apart from the two Chilean studies that were clinical in orientation, most studies of return have been descriptive and have not been undertaken from a psychological perspective. It was therefore necessary to construct scales for most of the measures to be used.

**The Demographic and Background Scale** (specifically constructed for this study) was a measure of demographic and background characteristics (section a of the questionnaire). The demographic characteristics were: gender, age at the time of going into exile, age at the time of the interview, marital status, highest educational level reached, occupational status, employment status. The rest of the scale measured background characteristics related to moving in and out of exile.

**The Exile Scale** (specifically constructed for this study) included items related to experiences in exile such as satisfaction with exile, coping in exile, feelings of alienation and loneliness (section b of the questionnaire).

**The Expectations Scale** (specifically constructed for this study) measured the expectations exiles had of home before they came back. These were expectations regarding living conditions, employment, political freedom and access to education (section b6 of the questionnaire).

**The Fulfilment of Expectations Scale** (specifically constructed for this study) measured the extent to which all six of the expectations measured in the previous scale were fulfilled at the time of the interview (section c of the questionnaire).

**The Social Support Scale** (specifically constructed for this study) measured instrumental, emotional and informational support by means of eight questions. Respondents were asked to rank five sources of support for each of the eight items on a five point Likert scale. The five sources were family, neighbours or friends, fellow returnees, the National Co-ordinating Committee for Returning Exiles, churches and political organisations. Three items pertaining to emotional support asked respondents to rank from among the five sources: who showed an interest in the respondents' well-being, who provided an opportunity to talk about problems, and who invited the respondent to a social activity. Three items pertaining to instrumental support asked respondents to rank who provided a place to stay if needed, who provided financial support or food, and who provided a means of transport if needed. Two items pertaining to instrumental support asked respondents to rank who gave information on how to go about daily life and who gave feedback about this information (section c (b) of the questionnaire).

**The Re-Entry Difficulties Scale** (specifically constructed for this study) consisted of fourteen problem areas. Respondents were asked to rate the level of difficulty on a five point Likert scale (ranging from no difficulty to extreme difficulty). Examples of these items are difficulty with finding accommodation, finding a job, adjusting to changed living conditions, meeting family expectations, having enough money to live on (section d of the questionnaire).

**The Coping Scale** utilised a sixteen item version of the Ways of Coping Checklist (WCCL) devised by (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). In its original form, the WCCL contained two rationally derived scales: problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping. A study of the psychometric properties of the scale revealed respectable internal reliability coefficients. The relative associations of the coping scales with anxiety and depression provided the strongest evidence of construct validity (Vitiliano, Russo et al, 1985). Adopting the original paradigm, each respondent was asked to identify three recent stressful experiences. They then had to respond in terms of these stressful situations, for example, a stressful situation that had happened over the last month and check off those strategies they used to deal with it. As the WCCL was to be part of a longer questionnaire in the present study, it adopted this response format which is less time consuming than the Likert scale used in later versions of the WCCL. Examples of the eight problem-focused coping strategies are: made a plan of action and followed it, concentrated on something good that could come out of the whole thing, stood my ground and fought for what I wanted, talked to someone to find out about the situation. Examples of the emotion-focused items are: blamed myself, realised I brought the whole problem on myself, hoped a miracle would happen, went on as if nothing had happened (section e of the questionnaire).

**The Integration Level Scale** (specifically constructed for this study) measured the attitudes respondents had towards exile and home. This scale was constructed as an adaptation of Berry's acculturation strategy of integration, which is based on immigrants, sojourners and refugees seeking to acculturate to a foreign culture. For

purposes of the present study, the main issue in this scale was not about returnees moving into a new culture but about how they balanced the maintenance of an exile identity versus a South African identity. This was done by asking respondents to rate how distant they thought they were from two end points - home and exile - on a seven point scale. Examples of questions are: Which of the two places feels more like home? Where did you feel you were when you first arrived? Where do you feel you are right now? (Section f of the questionnaire.)

**Quality of Life Scale** was specifically designed for this study. This is because existing measures of quality of life are psychometrically weak and rely mainly on single item instruments (Diener 1984). The ten item five point Likert scale asked whether respondents were satisfied or not with various areas of life. Six items asked about material aspects of life, namely, satisfaction with: house or flat, means of earning a living, job security, job suitability, safety in the neighbourhood and quality of community services. Three items related to social aspects of life: respondents' attitudes to neighbours and friends, people's attitudes to the respondent, and attitudes to family life (section g of the questionnaire).

**The Psychological Well-Being Scale** was derived from an adapted version of the Affect-Balance Scale originally devised by Bradburn (1969) and which has been consistently used in many large scale surveys. The scale has important psychometric strengths, including a test-retest reliability of 0.90, assessed over three days for 174 respondents. Adequate validity was derived from extensive agreement between the questions and other indices of self-reported well-being (McDowell and Newell, 1987). The scale is made up of a positive affect component and a negative affect one. The positive affect items assessed by means of yes/no

questions whether, during the preceding few weeks, the respondent felt: particularly excited or interested in something, proud because someone had complemented them, pleased about having accomplished something, on top of the world and felt things were going the right way. Negative affect items asked whether the respondent: felt angry because people did not understand him or her, felt very lonely or remote from other people, felt bored, felt helpless or felt upset (section h of the questionnaire).

Once completed the questionnaire was translated into Zulu, Xhosa and Sotho for use with those respondents who would be more comfortable in the mother tongue. After the original translations were made, back translations were used to finalise the translation (Brislin, 1970).

## Pilot Testing

The questionnaire items were developed following focus group discussions with exiles and from material in the literature.A first draft of the questionnaire was completed by 25 people chosen to represent the diversity of the returnee population. They were all interviewed afterwards to seek their comments and suggestions for improving the questionnaire. The comments received were very valuable in ensuring clarity of interpretation of questionnaire items and for gauging the likely reaction of the research sample to the questionnaire. As a result, items that were considered unsuitable were dropped, and in some cases sections of the questionnaire were rephrased.

In preparation for data collection, lists of returning exiles and their addresses were obtained from the offices of the National Co-ordinating Committee for Returning Exiles (NCCR) in Cape Town and Johannesburg during the period October to November 1992. Anticipating the possibility that the questionnaire would be misconstrued, a number of meetings were held at the national office of the NCCR to get support for the study, as well as to hold wide discussions around it. Reference was therefore made to the NCCR's active support of the study in the covering letter that was to accompany each questionnaire. Interviews were also conducted with various officials of the NCCR in the Cape Town and Johannesburg regional offices.

## Data Collection

The first stage of data collection began in June 1993 in Cape Town and continued until October 1993. In order to have access to the great number of returnees who live in the Johannesburg/Pretoria area (estimated at 60 per cent of the total returnee population), it was necessary to recruit two research teams. In Cape Town the team was made up of two social science undergraduate students. Both had earlier expressed a lot of interest in the study, one having taken part in an earlier study of student returnees. The Johannesburg team was made up of a social worker, two former exiles and an undergraduate student. Data collection in the Gauteng area continued until June 1994. Prior to conducting the interviews each research assistant participated in training sessions conducted by the principal investigator. During these sessions the nature of the study was explained and the contents of the questionnaire reviewed thoroughly.

Each research assistant was given time to role-play the administration of the entire questionnaire. This was followed by supervised administration during the first three days. At the end of this period a session was held during which any unforeseen problems were discussed and resolved. In conducting the actual interview, the research assistants would first introduce themselves, and explain the nature and purpose of the study. They then proceeded to ask a potential respondent if s/he wished to participate in the study. If the response was positive, the interview would begin. Each interview lasted between one and two hours. The average number of interviews for each research assistant was four per day. Having identified the names of returnees from NCCR documents, these were grouped according to residential areas. Research assistants approached as many respondents as possible in any one locality before moving on to the next. Essentially then, convenience sampling was used as the sample was made up of returnees who could be located, and who then agreed to participate. At the end of data collection, final sessions were held with both research teams to discuss what impact the interviews had on the assistants and their assessment of their ability to conduct the interviews.

## The In-Depth Interviews

In order to add a more qualitative dimension to the investigation, which would illustrate the experience of return at the individual level, a limited number of in-depth interviews were held with returnees. The interviews were semi-structured and were conducted with respondents who had shown a particular interest in the questionnaire survey. They were aimed at investigating in greater depth findings that emerged from the quantitative study. In the course of each interview, a set of topics and themes were used to ask questions in a conversational manner. The objective was to

discover the subjective emotive responses of individual returnees, to try to capture the meaning of responses and allow inferences to be drawn. In addition to the ten individual interviews, two life stories of exile and return were documented. This was done in order to add depth to the questionnaire data and the nomothetic aspect of the study. These interviews will be referred to when discussing the results. The life stories will be presented as they were told in the results section as examples of how personal circumstances of exile and return affected two individuals in different ways to produce two contrasting adaptation outcomes, one positive and the other negative. The two life stories were chosen to illustrate the main theme of this study, which is that the outcome of re-entry adaptation is variable and depends on a complex interaction of personal and situational factors.

Interviews were conducted at the respondents' homes. They were conducted on a face-to-face, one-to-one basis by the principal investigator. Since difficulties of return were emerging as the main issue, the semi-structured nature of the interviews afforded the respondents the opportunity to air their views freely. Each interview lasted between one to two hours. Exceptions were however made in cases where it was not possible to conclude during one session. Even though this was not the main objective, a therapeutic dimension was added to the interview whenever indicated.

In conducting the interviews, care was taken to make respondents feel at ease. For example, since the principal investigator was also a returnee, she took time to share her identity as a fellow returnee, assuring other respondents that information provided would not be used to anyone's disadvantage. It was also explicitly stated

that the identity of respondents would not be revealed and no one would be mentioned by name in the research report.

Respondents were informed of the manner in which the interviews would be conducted. In line with the generally accepted practice of taping interviews when doing qualitative research, the data in the present study was collected and stored by means of taped interviews and field notes. In cases where respondents objected to the use of the tape recorder, the interview was recorded by means of field notes and observations recorded immediately after the interview.

## The Principal Investigator's Role

In research of this nature, it was important that I make my own interests explicit from the outset. My perceptions of exile and return were shaped by the personal experiences of having been an exile for twenty-one years. From 1970 to 1992, I was in what has been referred to as "the perilous state of not belonging" (Green, 1994). Having been one of those who were fortunate to start exile life by gaining access to higher education, I nevertheless did not escape the legacy of the exile experience in its entirety.

Given the option of being a political activist, I chose what at the time appeared to be a less threatening situation - professional academic employment. Being far removed from the main theatre of political struggle landed me in the very isolated position of being one of a handful of South Africans in my country of exile. My full time academic activities were nevertheless interspersed with occasional periods of

feverish political involvement. Additionally, in the latter years of my exile life I became involved in the study, teaching and research into the psychology of forced migration. This took place in the course of a two year visiting fellowship held at the Refugee Studies Programme, University of Oxford. The varied experiences of exile life afforded me the opportunity to understand the political and social context of exile. In turn my awareness, knowledge and sensitivity to many of the issues and challenges of exile were enhanced. Consequently, I bring knowledge of the exile and return experience in both their individual and collective dimensions.

Due to my previous experience and work with policy makers in this field, I bring certain biases to the study. Although every effort will be made to ensure objectivity, these biases may shape the way I view and understand the data I collect and the way I interpret events. I commence this study from the perspective that the exile experience is ambiguous and often difficult. While repatriation of people who have been forcibly uprooted is considered the most durable solution to problems faced by the exile, I question how durable a solution this is. I view the first few years after return as the most critical and difficult, and the varied experiences of people as they grapple with the demands of the 'new' environment of home as predictors of how successful the return process will be.

## Ethical Considerations

Authors who discuss research methodology address the importance of ethical considerations (Marshall and Rossman, 1989). First and foremost, the researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of the

respondents. This was a particular concern in this study where, especially in the volatile period immediately following the lifting of the ban on political activity, returning exiles felt their safety from political harassment was not guaranteed. As a consequence, it was difficult to identify people who were willing to be interviewed. At the level of their relations with the State, there was a lack of clarity on the question of indemnity for returning exiles. The highly restrictive terms of the indemnity clause and the fact that it was carried out in an inquisitorial manner had a serious on the sense of security of returnees. Many believed it was premature for them to disclose their identities and their views about what it meant to have been actively involved in the struggle against apartheid.

A number of safeguards were therefore employed to protect respondents' rights. First of all, the research objectives were clearly articulated so that they were fully understood. The apolitical nature of this research was stressed. Secondly, the wish of respondents not to have their identities documented on the questionnaire forms was respected. This particular unavoidable concession was to have the adverse consequence that it was not possible to conduct any follow-up study. It defeated the original aim of having both a cross-sectional and longitudinal component to the study. Thirdly, respondents were informed of all data collection activities and their approval sought at every stage. Lastly, transcriptions of interviews were made available to those who requested them.

## Limitations of Data Collection

During the first stage of data collection, one of the most difficult issues that faced the interviewers was the suspicious attitude to this study of returning exiles. As things turned out, by the time the interviews were conducted, the office of the NCCR had been closed prematurely amidst a lot of publicity surrounding the misappropriation of funds by some officials. My introductory letter that made reference to the NCCR could, therefore, not be used. Before its closure, this office had conducted a number of surveys and returnees complained about not being given feedback from these surveys. Each interviewer was, therefore, obliged to precede the interview with a lengthy introduction. She had to explain that the principal investigator in the study was an independent, academic researcher based at the University of Cape Town and not attached to any agency.

It was, however, not easy for the interviewers to handle the high expectations of the respondents. The majority was very hopeful that some concrete financial assistance would be given to them as a result of this study. Interviewers approached each potential respondent at his or her home or place of work if they were willing to be interviewed, and an appointment was then made for the interview to be conducted at a suitable time for the respondent. A small number of respondents preferred to fill in the questionnaire by themselves and were allowed to do so. The interviewer's role was then to be present to offer assistance and clarification of any issues raised. It was not considered cost effective to compare scores obtained from this small number of questionnaires with those from the rest of the sample.

Much as a lot of effort was made at initial contact to allay any fears, the refusal rate was high. It is estimated that for every interview granted, one was refused. One reason for this is that in the period immediately preceding data collection, there had been wide media coverage surrounding the setting up of a Commission of Inquiry into alleged human rights abuses in ANC camps in exile. Any attempt to talk about exile experiences was thus viewed in the light of this enquiry. People felt that there were sensitive issues relating to exile and return and this was not a good time to talk about their experiences.

Actual administration of the questionnaire brought further problems. These were due to respondents' perceptions that the study was touching on sensitive issues in their lives. Finding people who were willing to respond to the entire questionnaire was not easy. Despite the fact that the principal investigator was well known in exile circles, this was no guarantee that the idea of doing research on the exile experience would be regarded positively. Quite apart from people wanting to protect their identities, most returning exiles did not believe they were ready to enter into a dialogue about their experiences since they themselves had not fully processed what they were going through. In addition, the unfolding political developments in the country gave rise to a new set of anxieties that left most people in a state of distress.

Even when the study generated a certain amount of interest, by and large returning exiles were more concerned with the material gains that could accrue from the study. This was in view of the dire economic circumstances many found themselves in and question marks over whether the study could address the plight of those with immediate needs. For example, data collection took place during the winter months.

Many people were in need of such basic things as blankets and food, not to mention housing. The UNHCR grants had not made much impact on the returnees' economic situation and had, in fact, been run down. Furthermore, there was a degree of 'fact finding fatigue', especially in the transit centres where groups of returnees lived. They complained bitterly about the exploitative tendency of journalists, researchers, aid agency workers and NGOs who perceived them only as sources of information, and showed no real interest in their plight.

These reservations made it obligatory that the sensitivities of those who agreed to be interviewed be taken very seriously. For example, by sharing my exile background as a black South African, together with my intellectual and personal understanding of the dynamics of social relations in the context of return, I was able to build some rapport with almost all respondents. To the extent that it was possible, I refrained from being seen as a professional, but as a fellow returnee undergoing a similar process of renegotiating my way back into a society that had not only changed, but was continuing to change. Having shared the same political commitments and values in the past was an advantage. Although seemingly contradictory, I tried to balance this with a certain amount of distance and intellectual separation. The idea was to create a context where respondents felt their diverse experiences of return were as important as any one else's and that there was no judgmental attitude involved in the interviews.

Conducting in-depth interviews necessarily involves a series of social relationships that are partly influenced by factors outside the researcher's control. In spite of the limitations mentioned above, each of the interviews contributed to the richness of the

data. Certainly the real meaning behind some of the information gathered this way could not have been captured in the statistically derived section of the study. Finally, as a researcher who comes from the same population as the one I studied, I had to delve into my own personal and subjective experiences and views as part of understanding my respondents. In this sense, I do not pretend to have been a totally neutral observer.

# CHAPTER 7

## Development of Measures

To prepare the data for statistical analysis, a number of preliminary steps were taken. First of all, all the scales used in the questionnaire were subjected to examination for accuracy of data entry, missing values, univariate and multivariate outliers and fit between their distributions and the assumptions of multivariate analysis. Only missing values merited further attention.

The next step was to reduce the number of missing values. Respondents who did not complete the questionnaire or who omitted a number of items in a scale were excluded from analysis. Subsequent review of missing data revealed that there were only a few items in the questionnaire that had a particularly high number of missing values. The next step taken involved reliability and factor analyses of all the scales, the results of which were used to decide on the final choice of items in the questionnaire that were to be included in further analyses. Finally, to deal with the small number of missing values that were not accounted for by these two processes, mean substitution was employed. Mean substitution was applied for item scores and not scale scores. A comparison of the refined sample (excluding cases and items with a high number of missing values) and the mean substitution sample revealed only marginal discrepancies in factor structures and internal consistency indices.

## Reliability and Factor Analyses

All scales were submitted to factor analysis before reliability analysis. Prior to factor analysis, all scales were assessed via regression analysis (standardised residuals distribution) to ensure normal univariate distributions. As it was assumed that factors would be theoretically related, factor analysis used the maximum likelihood method of extraction with oblique rotation. The minimum Eigenvalue for a factor was set at one. Items which displayed low factor loadings (less than 0. 20) were omitted, and practically all items with missing values were dropped as a result. This ensured factorial validity of the scales before reliability was assessed. The cut-off of 0.20 was adequately low to consider anything below it as insignificant. Reliability coefficients (Cronbach Alphas) for all the scales are reported in Table 3. As a general rule, items were eliminated from the scales if item-total correlations were below 0.20.

**Table 3** Final Reliability (Chronbach Alpha) of Scales

| SCALE | ALPHA |
|---|---|
| Exile | 0.75 |
| Expectations | 0.83 |
| Fulfilment | 0.86 |
| Re-entry difficulties | 0.80 |
| Social support | 0.76 |
| Coping | 0.65 |
| Integration strategies | 0.81 |
| Quality of life | 0.73 |
| Psychological well-being | 0.70 |

### Factor Analysis of Exile Scale

Factor analysis of the Exile scale produced one factor made up of three items reflecting the general exile experience. One item was dropped during factor analysis leaving three items to account for the scale (see factor loadings in Table 4).

Reliability of this scale was 0.75 (Cronbach Alpha) with all item total correlations above 0.20.

**Table 4** Factor Analysis of Exile Scale

| Exile Scale | Loading |
|---|---|
| Item | Factor I (Eigenvalue = 1.24) |
| How often in touch?* | |
| Did you suffer from loneliness? | 0.50 |
| How well did you cope? | 0.86 |
| How satisfied were you with life? | 0.48 |

* This item was not included in further analysis.

## Factor Analysis of Expectations Scale

Factor analysis of the Expectations scale resulted in all six items being retained and produced two factors as shown in Table 5.

**Table 5** Factor Analysis of Expectations Scale

| Expectation Scale | | |
|---|---|---|
| Item | LOADING | |
| | Factor 1 (Eigenvalue = 3.25) | Factor 2 (Eigenvalue = 1.01) |
| Expectation for housing | 0.94 | |
| Expectation for money | 0.79 | |
| Expectation for job | 0.62 | |
| Expectation for education | | 0.83 |
| Expectation for better life | | 0.71 |
| Expectation for freedom | | 0.61 |

Factor 1 relates to material expectations and factor two to social expectations. Reliability analysis of the whole scale was 0.83 (Cronbach Alpha), with all item total correlations above 0.20.

Factor Analysis of Fulfilment of Expectations Scale

Factor analysis of the Fulfilment of expectations scale yielded one factor (see Table 6) made up of the six original items that reflect fulfilment of both material and social expectations.

**Table 6** Factor Analysis of Fulfilment of Expectations Scale

| Expectation Scale | |
|---|---|
| Item | Loading |
| | Factor 1 (Eigenvalue = 3.11) |
| Fulfilment for expectation for housing | 0.81 |
| Fulfilment for expectation for money | 0.83 |
| Fulfilment for expectation for job | 0.77 |
| Fulfilment for expectation for education | 0.60 |
| Fulfilment for expectation for better life | 0.70 |
| Fulfilment for expectation for freedom | 0.58 |

Reliability of this scale was 0.86 (Chronbach Alpha) with all item total correlations above 0.20.

Factor Analysis of the Social Support Scale

Prior to factor analysis, deletion of missing items from the Social Support scale reduced the number of items in this scale from eight to four. This was done on the basis of consistently high missing values. Factor analysis of the scale yielded one factor relating to material/emotional support as indicated in Table 7.

**Table 7** Factor Analysis of Social Support Scale Loading

| Social Support Scale | |
|---|---|
| Item | Loading |
| | Factor 1 (Eigen value = 1.75) |
| Expressed in well-being | 0.67 |
| Provided opportunity to talk | 0.61 |
| Provided place to stay | 0.64 |
| Provided financial suppport/food | 0.71 |

Reliability analysis confirmed that the items correlated sufficiently to be treated as one index. The Chronbach Alpha Index of Internal Reliability was 0.76 with all item total correlations being above 0.20.

Factor Analysis of the Difficulty Scale

Initial deletion of missing items of the Original Difficulty scale resulted in four items being dropped. Factor analysis of the remaining ten items (see Table 8) produced three factors reflecting material (Factor 1),social- emotional (Factor 2) and political difficulties Factor 3).

**Table 8** Factor Analysis of Difficulty Scale

| Re-entry Difficulties Scale | Factor 1 (Eigenvalue = 3.56) | Factor 2 (Eigenvalue = 1.42) | Factor 3 (Eigenvalue = 1.24) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Item | | | |
| Difficulty with finding place to live | 0.72 | | |
| Difficulty with finding housing | 0.92 | | |
| Difficulty with money | 0.64 | | |
| Confronting changes | | 0.80 | |
| Meeting family expectations | | 0.74 | |
| Sharing exiles experiences | | 0.59 | |
| Experiencing and atmosphere of tension | | 0.50 | |
| Adjusting to changed living conditions | | 0.41 | |
| Being discriminated against | | | 0.76 |
| Being harassed, intimidated | | | 0.62 |

Reliability of the total scale was 0.80 with all item total correlations above 0.20.

Results of separate reliability analysis for the three factors were:-

Factor 1 (material difficulties) : .80

Factor 2 (emotional difficulties): .74

Factor 3 (political difficulties): .63

## Factor Analysis of the Coping Scale

Factor analysis of the Coping scale was done on the basis of fifteen items, one item having been dropped as a result of the high number of missing values.

**Table 9** Factor Analysis of Coping Scale

| Coping Scale | Loading | |
|---|---|---|
| | Factor I (Eigenvalue = 1.68) | Factor 2 (Eigenvalue = 1.26) |
| Stood your ground | 0.65 | |
| Doubted efforts | 0.47 | |
| Made a plan of action | 0.44 | |
| Talked to someone to find out more | 0.43 | |
| Talked to someone who could do something concrete | 0.4 | |
| Concentrated on something good | 0.35 | |
| Realised that you brought the problem on yourself | | 0.54 |
| Went on as if nothing happened | | 0.49 |
| Thought problems made you a better person* | 0.38 | 0.39 |
| Tried to keep feelings to self | | 0.39 |
| Wished the situation would go away | | 0.37 |
| Kept others from knowing how bad things are | | 0.37 |
| Refused to take the problem seriously | | 0.35 |
| Blamed yourself | | 0.32 |
| Hoped a miracle would happen | | |
| Got angry with the person responsible | | |

*This item was dropped after factor analysis

Factor analysis produced two factors reflecting direct coping and emotion focused coping. As shown in Table 9, one item loaded almost equally on the two sub-scales and was dropped in order to obtain a purer factor structure. The Chronbach Alpha Index for the direct coping sub-scale was 0.65, and 0.56 for the emotion focused sub-scale. Reliability of the total scale was 0.65 (Chronbach Alpha) with all item total correlations above 0.20. The Cronbach Alpha values for the subscales are marginally reliable (Nunally, 1978). This suggests that in the population investigated

for this study, there was variation in responses to the scale items. The moderate level of item correlation with the total suggests that caution is needed in interpreting results based on the Ways of Coping Scale as its reliability cannot be regarded as well established..Nonetheless, the two subscales were retained in this study since coping has a potentially powerful influence on the adaptation process.

## Factor analysis of Integration Level Scale

One item was dropped from the Integration level scale due to high missing values. Factor analysis of the scale resulted in the remaining five items being retained as one factor that reflects affiliation with home (see Table 10).

**Table 10** Factor Analysis of Integration Level Scale

| Integration Level Scale<br>Item | Loading<br>Factor 1<br>(Eigenvalue = 3.21) |
|---|---|
| Where do you feel you are right now?* | |
| Where do you feel you were when you first arrived? | 0.69 |
| Which of the two places feels more like home? | 0.75 |
| If you had the choice between the two, where would you be? | 0.87 |
| Which of the two places gives you the opportunity to be the person you would like to be? | 0.8 |
| Which would describe you best: more comfortable with home community; more comfortable with exile community? | 0.64 |

*This item was dropped before factor analysis

Reliability of the scale was .81 (Chronbach Alpha), with all item total correlations above 0.20

## Factor Analysis of Quality of Life Scale

Deletion of items with many missing values from the Quality of life scale resulted in three items being dropped. Factor analysis (see Table 11) of the seven remaining items indicated two factors, factor one relating to material emotional satisfaction (Chronbach Alpha 0.67) and factor 2 relating to satisfaction with social issues (Chronbach Alpha 0.62). Quality of life is a multidimensional construct and its

empirical measurement has not kept abreast with progress made in conceptualising it. The moderate Cronbach Alpha values imply that the scale that the scale needs to be refined. Given that quality of life is a key outcome variable in this study, this scale was nevertheless be retained for further analysis.

**Table 11** Factor Analysis of Quality of Life Scale

| Quality of Life Scale | Loading | |
|---|---|---|
| Item | Factor 1 (Eigenvalue = 2.7) | Factor 2 (Eigenvalue = 1.1) |
| How satisfied are you with: | | |
| The house/flat you live in? | 0.66 | |
| Family life? | 0.51 | |
| Neighbours/friends? | | 0.83 |
| Peoples' attitude? | | 0.54 |
| Safety in the neighbourhood? | | 0.45 |
| Means of earning a living? | 0.74 | |
| Job security?* | | |
| Present job?* | | |
| Community services?* | | |
| overall adjustment? | 0.41 | |

*These items were dropped before factor analysis

Reliability of the total scale was 0.73 (Chronbach Alpha) with all item total correlations above 0.20.

Factor Analysis of Psychological Well-being Scale

Factor analysis of this scale indicated two factors reflecting positive (factor 1) and negative (factor 2) well-being. This factor solution is consistent with the two-factor structure of the original scale. One item was dropped during factor analysis.

**Table 12** Factor Analysis of Psychological Well-being Scale

| Psychological Well-Being Scale | Loading | |
|---|---|---|
| | Factor 1 (Eigenvalue = 2.35) | Factor 2 (Eigenvalue = 1.86) |
| Felt particularly excited or interested in something | 0.59 | |
| Felt angry because of being misunderstood | | 0.45 |
| Felt proud because of the compliment | 0.53 | |
| Felt lonely or removed from other people | | 0.62 |
| Been pleased about having accomplished something | 0.61 | |
| Felt bored | | 0.68 |
| Felt on top of the world | 0.44 | |
| Felt helpless because of not meeting obligations | | 0.68 |
| Felt things were going right | 0.40 | |
| Felt upset because of criticism* | | |

*This item dropped during factor analysis

Reliability of the whole scale was 0.70 (Chronbach Alpha). Reliability of the two factors separately was 0.62 for the positive well-being scale and 0.86 for the negative well-being scale (Chronbach Alphas).

# CHAPTER 8

## Results

### A Description of the Data

In this chapter, I present the statistical findings and to further illustrate the context in which the experiences being analysed occurred, I conclude with two interviews which relate the contrasting experiences of one woman and one man.

### Exile Experiences

**Figure 5** Exile Experiences

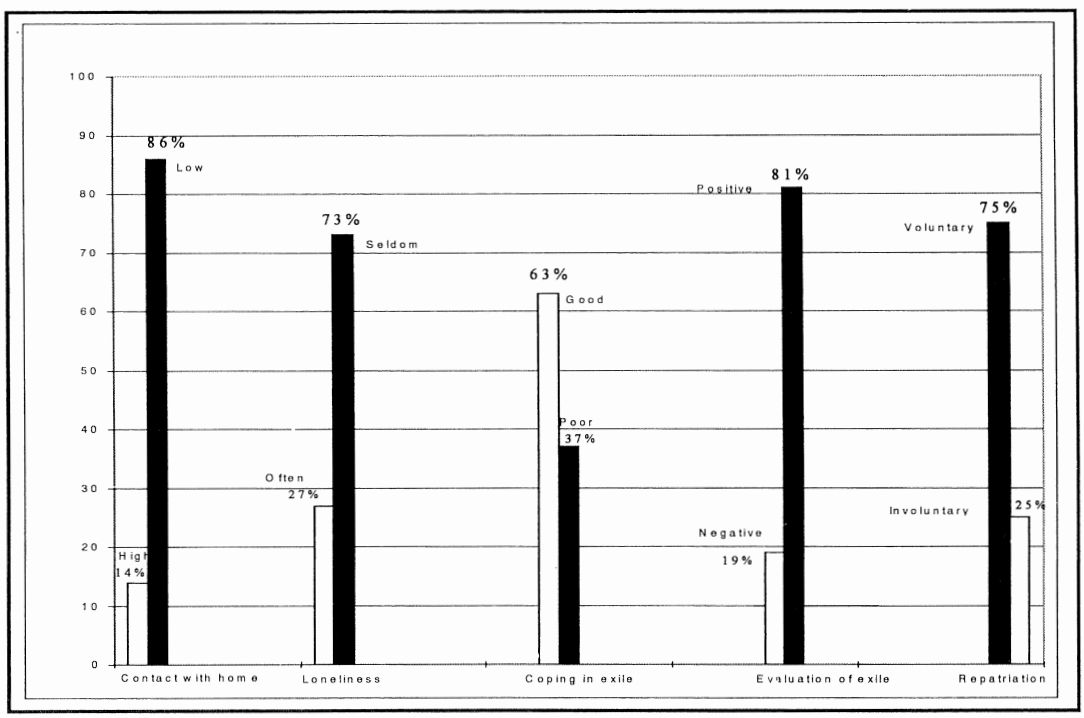
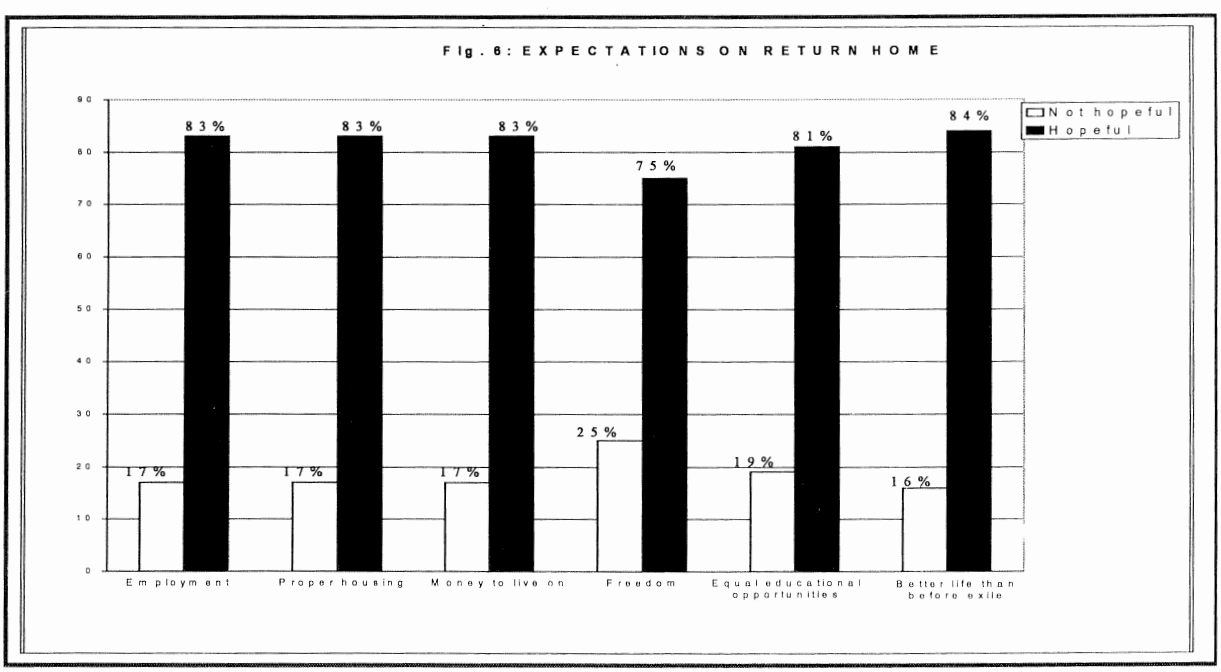


Figure 5 shows the respondents' responses to section b of the questionnaire, which documents certain dimensions of the exile experience. With regard to frequency of contact with family and friends during the period of exile, only 14 per cent reported that they were in frequent contact, while the majority, 86 per cent, reported that they did not have much contact. Asked about their experiences of loneliness in exile, the majority, 73 per cent, reported that they seldom suffered from loneliness and only 27 per cent reported being lonely most of the time. In response to the question of how well they coped with exile life, 63 per cent reported that they coped fairly to very well, and 37 per cent thought they did not cope so well. Regarding level of satisfaction with exile life, the majority, 81 per cent, was satisfied and only 19 per cent reported being dissatisfied. On the question of whether they came back voluntarily or not, three quarters of the sample, 75 per cent, said they wanted to come back home, while 25 per cent said they were forced to come back by the liberation movements.

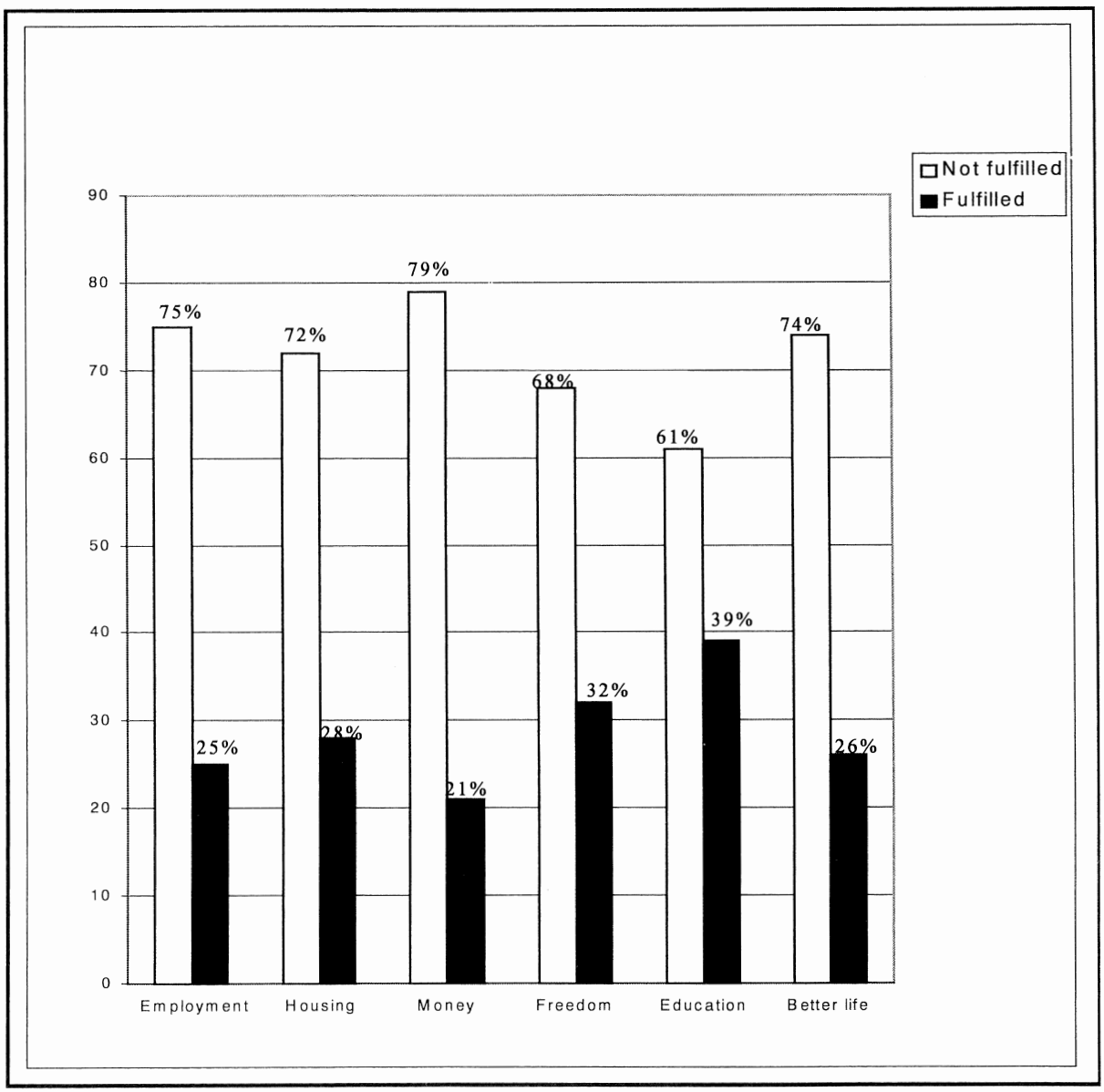
Expectations

**Figure 6** Expectations on Return Home



The results displayed in Figure 6 show that, in general, the sample under study had high expectations. It should be pointed out that the respondents were reporting expectations they had in exile retrospectively, after returning. Thus what has been measured is their perception of how things appeared in exile, not necessarily how they actually were.

**Figure 7** Fulfillment of Expectations on Return Home




As can be seen from figure 6, 83 per cent believed that they would obtain employment, proper housing and enough money to live on. 75 per cent believed that

the country would be free from apartheid, 81 per cent expected that there would be equal educational opportunities, while 84 per cent expected to lead a better life than they had before exile.

In contrast to the large numbers of people reporting high expectations, fewer people reported that their expectations were fulfilled. Figure 7 shows that the expectation for employment was fulfilled for only a quarter, 25 per cent, of the sample. Similarly, the expectations for housing, money to live on, and a better life were fulfilled for 28 per cent, 21 per cent and 26 per cent respectively. In the case of expectations for freedom and for equal educational opportunities, slightly more people reported these as having been fulfilled, 32 per cent and 39 per cent respectively.

**Table 13** Means, Standard Deviations and Matched T Values of Expectations and Fulfillment of Expectation Scores

| | **Expectations** | | **Fulfilment of Expectations** | | **Matched** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | $\bar{X}$ | **SD** | $\bar{X}$ | **SD** | **t** | **df** |
| Better life | 3.72 | 1.19 | 1.85 | 1.06 | 21.79** | 324 |
| Housing | 3.69 | 1.18 | 1.96 | 1.18 | 18.80** | 324 |
| Employ-ment | 3.66 | 1.25 | 1.75 | 1.26 | 20.97** | 324 |
| Enough money to live on | 3.59 | 1.14 | 1.76 | 1.05 | 21.83** | 324 |
| Education | 3.52 | 1.16 | 2.13 | 1.17 | 17.47** | 324 |
| Freedom | 3.50 | 1.34 | 2.05 | 1.06 | 16.67** | 324 |

Note ** $p < .01$

Differences between expectations and their fulfilment on return were assessed using matched t tests. These results are displayed in Table 13. The analysis shows that there were significant differences between expectations and conditions on return. In all cases, expectations were not met.

## Re-Entry Difficulties

**Table 14** Re-entry Difficulties (Total Sample)

| PERCENT DIFFICULTY | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Difficult | Not Difficult |
| 1. Money to live on | 87 | 13 |
| 2. Being unemployed | 82 | 18 |
| 3. Adjusting to changes | 75 | 25 |
| 4. Housing conditions | 73 | 27 |
| 5. Atmosphere of tension in the country | 74 | 26 |
| 6. Meeting family expectations | 70 | 30 |
| 7, Confronting changes in family | 67 | 33 |
| 8. Children adjusting | 65 | 35 |
| 9. Working conditions | 63 | 37 |
| 10. Somewhere to live | 60 | 40 |
| 11. Inadequate community facilities | 58 | 42 |
| 12. Sharing exile experiences | 46 | 54 |
| 13. Being harassed | 28 | 72 |
| 14. Being discriminated against | 21 | 79 |

Table 14 presents the re-entry difficulties in order of frequency. As indicated, the difficulties were not regarded as of equal importance. The majority of the sample rated having money to live on (87 per cent) and being unemployed (82 per cent) as most difficult. On the other hand, conditions of a political nature such as being harassed by the police and being discriminated against were reported as difficult by only about a quarter of the sample (28 per cent and 21 per cent respectively). Emotional difficulties occupied an intermediate position. Two thirds to three quarters of the sample reported emotional conditions as difficult; for example, adjusting to changed living conditions (63 per cent), children adjusting to South Africa (75 per cent), meeting family obligations (70 per cent) and confronting changes in the family left behind (67 per cent). The only political condition that was reported as difficult was the experience of tension in the country (74 per cent).

Social Support

**Table 15** Average Ranking of First Source of Support

| Average Ranking of First Source of Support | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Instrumental %** | **Emotional %** | **Informational %** |
| Family | 59.8 | 45.5 | 38.4 |
| NCCR* | 20.4 | 22.5 | 20.7 |
| Neighbours/friends | 5.8 | 12.5 | 20.7 |
| Political organisations | 2.7 | 5.9 | 6.4 |
| Churches | 0.8 | 2.6 | 0.7 |

* National Co-ordinating Committee for Repatriation

Table 15 displays the proportion of respondents who ranked a particular source of support first, on three types of support (instrumental, emotional and informational). Thus most respondents saw the family as the most supportive institution regardless of type of support received. The NCCR followed next, but far fewer subjects ranked it first. Neighbours and friends were ranked highest on informational support by 20.7 per cent of the sample, while fewer subjects saw them as significant sources of emotional and instrumental support. Interestingly, political organisations and the church were seldom ranked as the most significant source of support.

The fact that political organisations were ranked as far less significant sources of support can be interpreted at two levels. First it is indicative of a change in the role of political organisations now that they were operating on home ground. They were no longer the all embracing providers of returnees' needs as was the case in exile. Most returnees had also reconstructed their political identities which meant a change in the nature of the relationship between returnee and political organisations. The fact that the NCCR was not ranked highly as a source of support simply reflects that it did not have much impact on returnees' lives.

Integration Level

Section F of the questionnaire attempted to assess the degree to which respondents felt more attached to home or to exile. In addition, questions explored which of the two was their preferred place of residence and their preferred identity. The seven point Likert scale used in this section was adjusted for scoring purposes. The three points closer to the exile and home ends of the scale were grouped together to produce a dichotomous variable. When asked about their sense of identification with home and exile, almost two thirds of the respondents, 64 per cent, thought they were closer to home and 36 per cent thought they were closer to exile. Similarly, when the respondents first arrived, 67 per cent were closer to home and 33 per cent closer to exile.

Regarding which of the two places felt more like home, 56 per cent placed themselves at the home end of the scale and 44 per cent at the exile end of the scale. In terms of preference for either home or exile, 59 per cent chose home while 41 per cent chose exile. Of the two places, 52 per cent indicated that home gave them the opportunity to be the ideal person as against 48 per cent who thought exile gave them that opportunity. When asked which community they had the closest affiliation to, 38 per cent reported being more comfortable with the home community while 63 per cent reported being comfortable with the exile community. Since returnees had been home for an average period of eighteen months, it is not surprising that the majority still felt more comfortable with the exile community.

To summarise, this section of the chapter presents the descriptive results of the study. It describes the following central issues: some experiences returnees had while in exile, their expectations of return and the extent to which these were fulfilled,

the difficulties they encountered upon return, their perceptions of the kind of social support they received and the extent to which they integrated back home.

Notwithstanding the fact that they were cut off from family and friends during their stay in exile, the majority of the respondents adapted relatively well to exile life. By virtue of having been political exiles, they had high expectations concerning what they would find upon return home. These expectations ranged from material concerns such as housing, employment, education and adequate resources to emotional and political concerns. Not surprisingly, the majority of the sample reported that these high expectations were not fulfilled, and this is confirmed by statistically significant differences between the means for the expectations and fulfilment scales.

Given this gap between expectations and reality, re-entry difficulties reported as most severe related to material needs such as finding employment and money on which to live. The areas of least difficulty were politically related events such as being harassed and being discriminated against. Emotional difficulties occupied a middle position. With regard to social support, the family emerged as the important source of support of all three kinds of support that were assessed: instrumental, emotional and informational. In terms of type of support, instrumental support was the most highly ranked. The extent of support from the family surpassed the combined support from the NCCR, friends and neighbours, political organisations and the churches. Asked about their levels of integration to either home or exile, most returnees indicated closer affinity with home. The only exception was their preference for the community of exiles as against the home community.

## Understanding the Difficulties of Return to South Africa

The first step in examining re-entry difficulties was to find out whether there were any significant differences in the severity of difficulties encountered by various sub-groups in the sample. One way analyses of variance were undertaken for this purpose. The sub-groups used in the analyses were identified on the basis of gender, age, marital status, highest level of education reached, occupational status, employment status, length of time spent in exile and length of time since coming back. Based on findings from previous research, it is reasonable to expect that certain demographic variables would have an influence on the extent of difficulties encountered upon return. Thus males would be expected to experience less difficulties than females; younger people would be expected to experience less difficulties than older people, people of higher educational status would be expected to experience less difficulties than those with lower educational status, professional people would be expected to have less difficulties than non-professionals, the employed would be expected to have less difficulties than the unemployed, those whose exile was of shorter duration would be expected to have less difficulties than those who spent longer periods away, and those who had been back for a short time would be expected to have less problems compared to those who had been back for much longer.

Table 16 shows that there were significant differences in difficulty levels in only two of the sub-groups: the marital and the employment categories. With regard to marital status; divorced, separated and single people reported significantly more severe difficulties than married people ($F= 2.82; p<.05$). Among the employment groups, the unemployed reported more severe difficulties than the employed ($F= 12.90; p<.01$).

The manner in which each of the three types of difficulties of return contributed to adaptation outcome was explored by means of regression analysis. Table 17 reports the results of forced entry regression analysis of material, social, emotional and political difficulties on quality of life and psychological well-being. For the dependent variable quality of life, all three material difficulties had significant t values and all three Beta weights were similar, indicating that they contributed similarly to the subjects' material difficulties. Material difficulties contributed most to a negative impact on the subjects' quality of life (accounting for 41 per cent of the variance), while emotional difficulties and political problems contributed 20 per cent and 10 per cent respectively. Adjusting to changed living conditions on return home, and confronting changes in the family since return contributed most to emotional difficulties. Security force intimidation and political tension contributed significantly to the returnees' experience of the political situation in the country.

**Table 16** Analysis of Variance of Difficulty Scores by Demographic Variables

| Source | | | SS | df | ms | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Gender*** | | | 18.9 | 1 | 18.9 | 0.22 |
| Error | | | 27330.9 | 320 | 85.41 | |
| | Mean | SD | | | | |
| Male | 42.9 | 9.7 | | | | |
| Female | 42.4 | 8.7 | | | | |
| ***Age*** | | | 734.9 | 4 | 183.7 | 2.17 |
| Error | | | 26184.9 | 309 | 84.1 | |
| | Mean | SD | | | | |
| 18-20 | 35.1 | 9.7 | | | | |
| 21-30 | 43.3 | 9.1 | | | | |
| 31-40 | 43.4 | 9.5 | | | | |
| 41-50 | 40.2 | 9.8 | | | | |
| 51-70 | 42.3 | 7,5 | | | | |
| ***Marital Status Now*** | | | 733.7 | 3 | 244.6 | 2.82* |
| Error | | | 26943.1 | 311 | 86.6 | |
| | Mean | SD | | | | |
| Single | 43.5 | 9.4 | | | | |
| Separated/Divorced | 44.4 | 8.6 | | | | |
| Married (spouse in exile) | 38.5 | 7.6 | | | | |
| Married (both in SA) | 41.4 | 9.7 | | | | |
| ***Educational Status*** | | | 398.6 | 3 | 132.9 | 1.55 |
| Error | | | 25762.6 | 301 | 85.6 | |
| | Mean | SD | | | | |
| Tertiary | 41.3 | 10.5 | | | | |
| Secondary (complete) | 44.5 | 9.1 | | | | |
| Secondary (incomplete) | 42.6 | 9.3 | | | | |
| Primary | 42.0 | 6.4 | | | | |
| ***Occupational Status*** | | | 287.1 | 3 | 95.9 | 1.11 |
| Error | | | 25395.3 | 295 | 86.1 | |
| | Mean | SD | | | | |
| Professional | 41.1 | 10.2 | | | | |
| Semi-skilled | 42.9 | 8.9 | | | | |
| Unskilled | 43.5 | 8.8 | | | | |
| Student | 41.6 | 9.4 | | | | |
| ***Length of time in exile*** | | | 534.5 | 3 | 178.2 | 2.13 |
| Error | | | 24402.9 | 292 | 83.6 | |
| | Mean | SD | | | | |
| 2-10 years | 41.5 | 9.6 | | | | |
| 11-15 years | 42.5 | 9.4 | | | | |
| 16-20 years | 41.5 | 9.3 | | | | |
| 21 years + | 44.7 | 8.3 | | | | |
| ***Time since coming back*** | | | 8.4 | 2 | 4.4 | 0.05 |
| Error | | | 26360.1 | 307 | 85.8 | |
| | Mean | SD | | | | |
| 1 year | 42.6 | 9.1 | | | | |
| 2 years | 42.4 | 8.9 | | | | |
| 3 + years | 42.8 | 10.5 | | | | |

Note: * p<.05
** p<.01

**Table 17** Multiple Regression Analysis on Dependent Variables: Quality of Life and Psychological Well-being

| ***Dependent Variable: Quality of Life*** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***Independent Variable*** | **B** | **Beta** | **t** |
| *Material Difficulties* | | | |
| Housing | -.15 | -.27 | -4.2** |
| Difficulty finding somewhere to live | -.10 | -.21 | -3.5 ** |
| Difficulty having enough to live on | -.17 | -.27 | -5.0 ** |
| $R^2$= .41 F(3,309) = 70.2 ** | | | |
| *Emotional Difficulties* | | | |
| Adjusting to changed living conditions | -.15 | -.25 | -4.4 ** |
| Confronting changes of family left behind | -.11 | -.20 | -2.9 ** |
| $R^2$= .20 F(4,308) = 19.7 ** | | | |
| *Political Difficulties* | | | |
| Being harassed, intimidated & assaulted | | | |
| By security forces | -.11 | -.21 | -3.3 ** |
| Experiencing an atmosphere of tension | -.08 | -.14 | -2.5* |
| $R^2$= .10 F(3,300) = 11.0 ** | | | |
| ***Dependant Variable : Psychological Well-being*** | | | |
| ***Independent Variable*** | **B** | **Beta** | **t** |
| *Material Difficulties* | | | |
| Difficulty having enough to live on | -.06 | -.28 | -4.34 ** |
| $R^2$= .02 F(3,153) = .96 | | | |
| *Emotional Difficulties* | | | |
| Adjusting to changed living conditions | -.05 | -.27 | -4.4 ** |
| $R^2$= .12 F(4,298) = 10.5 ** | | | |

Note: * p<.05
** p<.01

For the dependent variable psychological well-being, two independent variables had significant t values and similar Beta weights, indicating that they contributed similarly to the negative impact on subjects' psychological well –being. Adjusting to changed living conditions contributed 27 per cent to subjects emotional difficulties, which accounted for 12 per cent of the variance. Not having enough money to live on, on the other hand, contributed 28 per cent to material difficulties, which accounted for 2 per cent of the variance.

## The Role of Social Support, Coping and Re-Entry Difficulties as Influences on Quality of Life and Psychological Well-Being

In view of the equivocal findings regarding social support and adaptation outcome in migrant populations (Ager, 1993), the relative influence of social support, coping and difficulties of return on adaptation outcome was examined.

Accordingly, simple regression analyses were conducted with quality of life and psychological well-being as the dependent variables. Re-entry difficulties, social support, problem focused and emotion-focused coping were the predictor variables. With quality of life as the dependent variable, the model was significant, accounting for 39 per cent of the variance. As Table 18 shows, three of the four predictor variables emerged as significant. The standardised beta weights shown in the table demonstrate that re-entry difficulties made the highest contribution to quality of life (beta-. 59;p<. 01) in a negative direction. This means that more re-entry difficulties were associated with lower the quality of life.

**Table 18** Multiple Regression Analysis on Dependent Variables: Quality of Life, Psychological Well-being and Subscales

**Dependent Variable: Quality of Life**

| *Independent Variable* | B | Beta | t |
|---|---|---|---|
| Difficulties of return | -.56 | -.59 | -13.03** |
| Social Support | -.10 | -.12 | -2.6** |
| Problem focused coping | .05 | .12 | 2.6** |
| $R^2$ = .39 F(4,308 = 50.1) ** | | | |

**Dependent Variable: Psychological Well-being**

| *Independent Variable* | B | Beta | t |
|---|---|---|---|
| Difficulties of return | -.11 | -.34 | -6.2** |
| Social Support | -.03 | -.11 | -2.1* |
| $R^2$= .14 F (4,298 = 126) ** | | | |

Note *p<.05
**p<.01

Social support also had a significant negative effect on quality of life (beta=-. 12;p<.01). As indicated earlier, two interpretations can be given; people with more severe difficulties depended more on the social support from the family. Alternatively, the support that was offered was ineffectual insofar as raising quality of life was concerned. Problem-focused coping, on the other hand, made a positive contribution to quality of life (beta=. 12;p<.01), indicating that the more this form of coping was used, the more satisfied people were with various areas of their life.

With psychological well-being as the dependent variable, the full regression model accounts for 14 per cent of the variance. Two of the four predictor variables had significant negative effect, namely, re-entry difficulties and social support. According to the standardised beta weights, re-entry difficulties made the highest contribution

(beta- .34;p<.01). The more severe the difficulties of return, the lower the level of psychological well-being. Social support was the next significant contributor (beta=-.11;p<. 05). It is of interest once again to note the negative direction of this relationship. Here again, social support did not contribute much to psychological well-being, most probably because the re-entry difficulties faced were so overwhelming.

## The Role of Expectations

The fourth goal of the study was to examine whether expectations were fulfilled and what the impact of the expectations-reality gap was on adaptation outcome. Factor analysis of the Expectations Scale as reported in the preliminary analyses of results yielded two factors. The first related to the self and contained items such as expectations to get employment, proper housing and money to live on. The second factor related to social-political issues such as political freedom, better educational opportunities and a better quality of life. Results of the Expectations Scale show that, in general, the sample under study had high expectations. In order of frequency, the highest expectation was expecting a better quality of life and the lowest was having access to better educational opportunities.

In view of the fact that expectations were so high and fulfilment of these expectations so low, it was of interest to find out what the impact of these discrepancies was on quality of life and psychological well-being. Multiple regression analyses were carried out to assess this. For the dependent variable quality of life, one independent variable emerged as significant: the discrepancy between expecting the dismantling of apartheid and the fulfilment of this expectation (p<.05). This discrepancy explained 15 per cent of the variance.

For the dependent variable psychological well-being, three variables emerged as significant: the discrepancies between expecting proper housing and fulfilment ($p<.01$), equal educational opportunities and fulfilment ($p<.05$), a better life and fulfilment ($p<.05$). These discrepancies explained 25 per cent, 17 per cent and 17 per cent of the variance respectively. Even though significant, the combined influence of the three variables was quite low ($R = .07$). It is most probable that the large sample size contributed to the findings being significant despite the low $R^2$ value. The direction of this relationship is negative, meaning that a gap between expectations and fulfilment was associated with lower psychological well-being.

## The Relationship between Predictor and Outcome Variables

This part of the result section will address the last question: what are the most critical variables for adaptation outcome? To answer this question, path analysis was performed using structural equations modelling (Bentler, 1989). The original hypothetical model was formulated on the basis of theoretical relationships among predictor and outcome variables as indicated in the literature, as well as from previous research on migrant populations. Results of this research identify a number of variables that are relevant for adaptation outcome. These include demographic variables, environmental stressors and facilitators, cultural skills, family relations and personality characteristics (Scott and Scott ,1989).

**Figure 8** Proposed Causal Model of Re-entry Adaptation

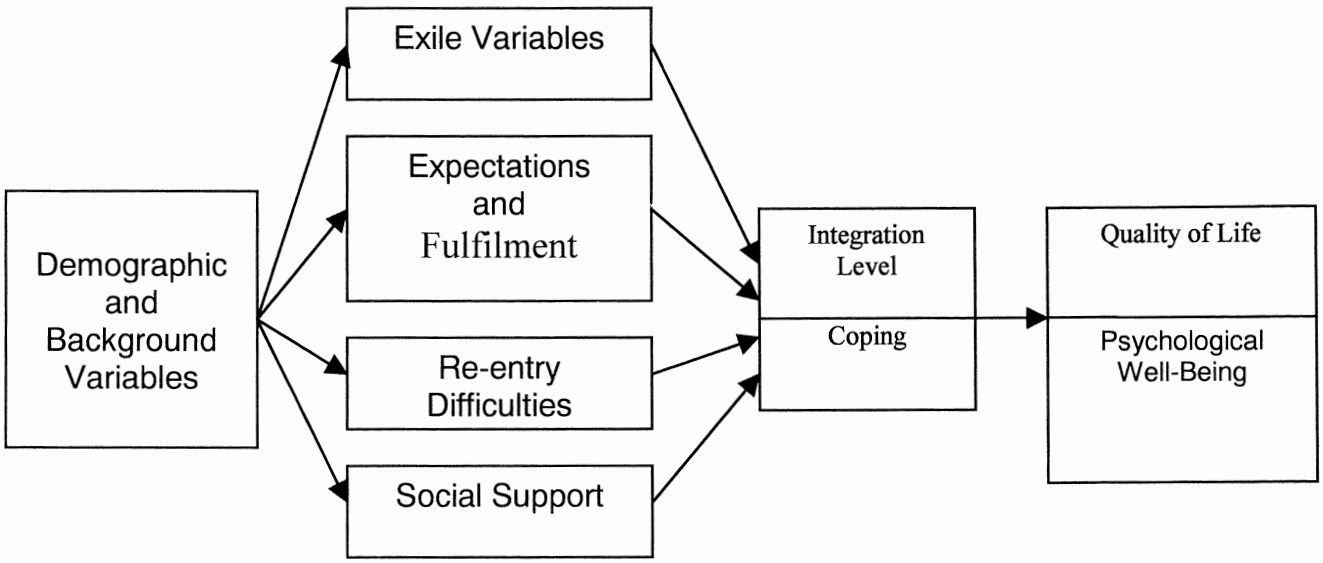



Figure 8 presents a hypothetical causal model of quality of life and psychological well-being of returning South African exiles. It is proposed in this model that quality of life and psychological well-being are influenced directly and indirectly by the following predictor variables:

- demographic variables: age, gender, marital status, educational status, occupational status;
- exile experiences;
- expectations about home;
- fulfilment of these expectations;
- difficulties of return;
- social support;
- coping;
- integration strategies.

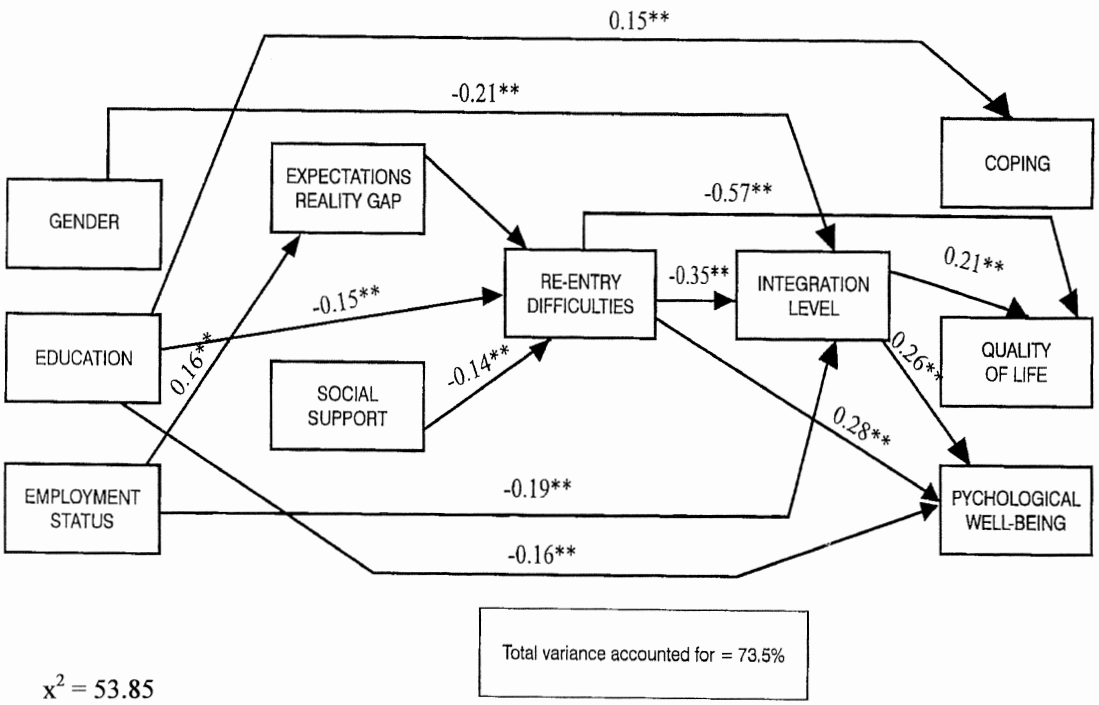
Adaptation outcome variables are:

- quality of life;
- psychological well-being.

The main purpose of this model is to provide some theoretical explanations for the two adaptation outcomes: quality of life and psychological well-being. Apart from assessing the direct and indirect effects of the predictor variables, the method of structural equations modelling used in the path analysis makes it possible to examine the goodness of fit of the model; in other words, to what extent the data supported the hypothetical model. There are many indices used to assess this and there is controversy about which is the most suitable. The goodness of fit measure used in this analysis was the $Ch^2$ :df (Bentler, 1989). By convention, if the ratio is less than 2:1, then the model is considered a good fit for the data.

In the revised model, a new variable, expectations–reality gap was created to replace the two variables, expectations and fulfilment of expectations. The new variable was computed by subtracting expectation scores from fulfilment scores for each of the items in the scales and summing up the scores. The revised model has a $Ch^2$ :df ratio of 1.8:1, indicating that it fits the data very well.

**Figure 9** Causal Model of the Factors which Influence Quality of Life and Psychological Well-being




$x^2 = 53.85$
df = 31
cfi = 0.80
(cfi = comparative fit index)

Note: **P<0.01

Figure 9 presents the significant direct and indirect effects of the variables as they appear in the revised model. Together, the variables explain 74 per cent of the variance in quality of life and psychological well-being.

## Predictor Variables that had Direct Effects on Adaptation Outcome

Re-entry difficulties and level of integration both directly predicted returnees' quality of life and psychological well-being. Severity of re-entry difficulties is an index of difficulties encountered upon return while integration level refers to returnees'

attitudes towards either exile culture or home culture and, essentially, how closely they identified with life in South Africa.

Of these two predictor variables, severity of re-entry difficulties had the strongest direct effect on quality of life ($b = -0.57; p<0.01$). The negative direction of this relationship implies that the more severe these difficulties were, the lower the quality of life. In similar fashion, severity of re-entry difficulties had the strongest direct effect on psychological well-being ($b = -0.28; p<0.01$). Again, the negative direction of this relationship indicates that more severe difficulties reduced the state of psychological well-being. Level of Integration had a significant direct effect on quality of life ($b = 0.21; p<0.05$) and psychological well-being ($b = 0.26; p<0.01$). This indicates that a closer affinity with South Africa improved the quality of life and psychological well-being of returnees.

The third variable which had a weak but significant effect on psychological well-being was educational status ($b = -0.16; p<0.01$). The significance level is probably accounted for by the large sample size. Thus a degree of association existed between educational status and psychological well-being. The direction of this relationship was a function of the way the education scale was constructed and indicated that those returnees with higher educational levels were in a better state of psychological well-being.

Predictor Variables that had Indirect Effects on Adaptation Outcome

Four other variables in the model had significant indirect effects on quality of life and psychological well-being. These are social support, expectations-reality discrepancy,

gender and employment status. Social support and the expectations-reality discrepancy both had direct effects on severity of difficulties (b= 0.14;p<0.01 and b= 0.37; <0.01 respectively). Consequently they exerted an indirect influence on quality of life and psychological well-being. Regarding social support, the results suggest that more social support from family was associated with more difficulties.

An alternative interpretation could be that people with more difficulties relied more on family support. It can also be argued that social support from family was in fact ineffectual. In other words, the support did not sufficiently address the reality of the material, emotional and political difficulties being encountered. More specifically, support was provided by family but did not have much impact in mitigating:

- the material difficulties of finding somewhere to live, housing conditions and economic survival;
- the emotional difficulties of adapting to changed living conditions, as well as confronting changes in the family;
- the political difficulties of being harassed by security agents and being discriminated against.

The finding that a greater expectations-reality discrepancy was associated with more severe re-entry difficulties is to be expected (b=0.37;p<0.01). As a direct influence on re-entry difficulties, the discrepancy had a stronger effect than social support and by implication, it had a relatively stronger effect on adaptation outcome.

Gender had a direct effect on level of integration (b= -0.21;p<0.01). Similarly, employment status also had a direct effect on level of integration (b= -0.19;p<0.01).

These two variables, therefore, influence quality of life and psychological well-being indirectly. Females and the unemployed found it more difficult to integrate to the South African way of life and thus had lower quality of life and reduced psychological well-being. Although it was envisaged that coping would be a predictor variable that would have an effect on adaptation outcome, the revised path model suggests that coping was an outcome variable that was predicted by educational status ($b= 0.18; p<0.01$). Path analysis employed the global coping scale, which is made up of two sub-scales: direct coping and emotion-focused subscales. To determine the direction of the association between coping and educational status more conclusively, the two coping subscales were correlated with educational status. The results showed that higher educational levels were associated with more effective coping skills.

Taken as a whole, the results reported in this section point to the fact that quality of life and psychological well-being were predicted by the same variables in the sample under study. This implies that the revised path model supports the hypothetical model. However, it must be pointed out that a recursive structural model as used in this study has some constraints.

Essentially, the revised model represents one empirical test and verification of the theoretical model. Consequently, the results must be interpreted with a certain amount of caution. The path analysis used here is only one test while in fact it would take a number of successive replications of this test before the revised model can be fully justified. Secondly, the path analysis model assumes zero measurement error

whereas a full structural equations model would in fact account for measurement error in the full estimation of the model (Bentler, 1989).

Given that the study was conducted with a real world sample, it is likely that measurement error would need to be accounted for. Nevertheless, this being the first study to estimate a hypothetical model of this nature and being a first attempt to identify critical factors in return adaptation in the South African context, it provides a useful starting point for further analysis. Another constraint of path analysis is its assumption that causality is unidirectional. Stated differently, this means that at a given point in time, variables cannot be both cause and effect which means that the one way causal flow of path analysis does not allow for reciprocal causation among variables.

Notwithstanding this, the present analysis represents the first testing of an integrated hypothetical model, which draws together psychological, social and emotional factors. These are factors which, though found to be related in the literature on adaptation, have hitherto not been gathered together within a unitary explanatory framework of this nature.

In summary, this second part of the chapter reports on the various analyses that have been undertaken. When re-entry difficulties were examined on the basis of the various demographic subsamples, no significant differences emerged among the subsamples. The only exceptions were the employed and married subgroups who had significantly fewer difficulties compared to others. To determine which difficulties had the most influence on the two adaptation outcomes, three types of difficulties

were regressed on quality of life and psychological well-being. All three types - material, emotional and political - predicted quality of life. Psychological well-being, on the other hand, was predicted by two, namely, material and emotional difficulties.

In order to determine relationships among the various predictor variables and adaptation outcome as well as how these variables collectively predict adaptation outcome, a number of multiple regression analyses were carried out. Of the three variables, re- entry difficulties, social support and coping, re-entry difficulties had a relatively greater influence on quality of life and psychological well-being. Contrary to expectations, coping had the least influence on the two adaptation outcomes. This result, obtained from multiple regression analysis was confirmed by the results of path analysis, where again, re-entry difficulties emerged as the most significant predictor of adaptation outcome. In the path analysis, coping had no significant effect on the two adaptation outcomes.

Further results from path analysis showed that integration level also had direct effects on adaptation outcome. Four other variables - social support, expectations-reality gap, gender and employment status - had indirect effects on quality of life and psychological well-being. The finding that the expectations-reality gap had an indirect influence on quality of life and psychological well-being confirms the results of the regression analysis of the expectations-fulfilment scales on the two outcome variables.

## Two Stories of Exile and Return

The literature on forced migration has identified certain consistencies in the exile experience which typically produce what is referred to as exile behaviour (for example, Baker, 1983,1990; Munoz, 1980). At the same time, and in contrast to the collective approach, there is wide diversity in the kinds of experiences encountered and the psychological reactions of individual exiles. As depicted in the literature, the stages through which an exile goes as he or she seeks to adapt to a foreign environment most often leads him or her to experience a range of negative psychological states. The two stories presented below are examples of two different reactions to exile and return, leading to two different adaptation outcomes. The stories are presented exactly as they were narrated. This has been done in order to preserve the immediacy of the experiences being recounted. The names of the narrators have been changed so as to protect their identities.

### Story One

Johanna is a woman in her late thirties who lives in an informal settlement largely populated by returned exiles. She was born in Soweto and lived there for the first sixteen years of her life before fleeing into exile. (Soweto is a vast, impoverished township of Johannesburg that was reserved for Africans only during the apartheid era.) Johanna was brought up in deprived family circumstances and, as she explains in her story, she did not complete her secondary schooling because her parents could not afford to pay for it. To support the family, she secured employment as a factory hand. This is where her political involvement began. As a member of a banned political organisation, she lived with the awareness that her life was in danger. She could be arrested at any time or be a target of harassment by the

security police. Her decision to leave the country was taken without much prior preparation. As such, it can be classified under the acute type of departure according to Kunz's kinetic model (1973). In flight, she and her group were subjected to extreme danger. In addition, they did not even have a clear idea of how to reach their destination. Reaching and crossing the border was therefore a huge feat under these circumstances. The unplanned nature of the journey shows up in the fact that the group had vague ideas about what would happen after reaching asylum.

**This is her story:** "In May 1976, when I was 16 years old, I left the country. I was working as I was forced to leave school because my parents could not afford it. I was recruited by the ANC at my workplace and I thought it was useless to stay when people were leaving the country. So I joined a party of four and I was the only woman.

We first set off for Zeerust and from there went to Mafikeng. We went on foot all the way - looking out for the way to Gaborone. We had no idea where we would go from there, but we thought vaguely about going to Tanzania. We did not even know where Tanzania was on the map.

In Gaborone we started looking for people from South Africa and we were directed to a refugee camp. We were vaccinated...the first time ever in my life. All of us were very sick in the little plane that took us to Zambia.

After two weeks we were back on a plane bound for Tanzania. We stayed in Dar-es-Salaam for a month. The place was so hot and humid, with plenty of

mosquitoes. We didn't even know then that one could get sick from mosquito bites. We left Dar-es-Salaam for Morogoro, where we had medical examinations.

I learnt there that I was two months pregnant. This was disappointing news because I had made up my mind that I wanted to study. Well, I had no option but to stay on in Morogoro. I gave birth to a daughter in 1977. The promise I made was that one day I would come back to South Africa no matter what. I brought up my daughter in Tanzania for a while. We were well looked after by many older comrades who had left the country in the sixties. In the end, the ANC established a home for unmarried mothers, where quite a few of us lived. We were about 21 in all.

In 1979 I left to do a course in book binding in Dar-es-Salaam. When I finished, I worked at the Government Printers for a while. It was in 1982 that I went to Angola for military training. During training, I was also given the opportunity to do book binding work. This was a good thing later when I had to stop training because of asthma attacks. So I got employed at a printing press in Luanda.

It was there that I met the father of my other two children. I had my second child in Morogoro, so that my daughter would grow up close to her brother. When I got on the plane I was eight months pregnant; it was quite a risk but I told the airline officials I still had two months to go! My son was born in 1984 and I stayed in Morogoro for the next three years, bringing him up.

In 1987 I was given forms to fill in and the reply came back within a month. I was to be sent to Germany for further studies in printing. It was painful to leave my children but I had no other choice. But the ANC had adequate child-care facilities and I knew that they would be well looked after. As I left, I told my children, 'You know...although I may be your mother, your real mother and father are the ANC. The ANC will look after you, feed you and clothe you.'

I arrived in Germany in 1988 and was sent on a German language course in a remote village in the east. It was tough beginning. People in those places had never come across a black woman before. They used to touch my hair and my skin, thinking I had not washed properly! It was a daily problem. Learning German was not an easy task either. But I learnt by relating it to Afrikaans somehow. At the end of the course I passed the exam and went on to Leipzig. There it was much better, even though the social attitudes were not that good. You had to be indoors by six or seven o'clock at night.

Racism was everywhere - in public places too. You could never get a seat in a full bus if you were black. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, things changed dramatically. Suddenly most of the social problems seemed to disappear.

In 1990 I had my third and last child. Again, being the only black woman in the ward was a novelty. My baby was taken all over the hospital for the staff to see. They were excited to see a pure black baby, instead of the many mixed-race babies they had seen.

I wanted to come back to Africa but it was not easy to leave Germany with a German-born child. After a long time, I went to join my two other children in Tanzania. Three weeks later we were repatriated. We arrived in South Africa two years ago and for me it was the beginning of a life of problems.

My twin brother came to fetch me from the Spar Hotel. It was very exciting to think I would see my mother and siblings again. On my way home, I stopped at the OK Bazaars to buy my mother's favourite sweets. When we got home, I went straight to my mother's bedroom. I looked around for a long time and I knew that she had died a long time before. I was very angry and said, 'Why did you lead me on all this time?' I blame my family for not letting me know the truth. They were writing all the time saying my mother was waiting for me. Had I known, I would never have bothered to come back.

My coming back has been in vain. The person I came for is no longer here. I came to nurse my mother, look after her and show her that I have achieved something in life. Why they never told me the truth I don't know.

You see, I came from a family of seven, all of them useless and leading unproductive lives. What's happening now is that we are all fighting over this little four-roomed structure we call home. It was all right when I still had money and was buying groceries. When my money ran out, things turned sour. When my sister bought soap and I was having a bath, she would ask, 'How many times do you bath a day? We only bath once a day to save soap.' On top of that, my children did not get food. They would come back from school to nothing.

I stayed on for a while and put up with remarks like, 'I'll get the exile to go back to where she came from.' What made me leave the house finally was a violent quarrel I had with my niece. It got to the point where she went and got two young men to attack me. I had no option but to go out and look for my own place to live.

It was not easy to get started. I had no money to buy a stand, to get material to build the shack I'm living in now. I had to live like a slave with another woman while we tried to put the shack together. My children had to live with friends as I had nowhere to send them. Only my younger child stayed with me. She had a bad attack of diarrhoea - obviously because of the hopeless conditions here. In order to get a meal, I had to go and work in my sister's shack, cooking and cleaning, without any proper sewage facilities. Luckily we now live on food parcels we get from the Red Cross.

In the meantime, my relationship with my family has broken down completely. My sisters continue to say the most unpleasant things. Like when I got a little money from MK, one of them said, 'She's getting money because of the corpses she left behind in Angola.' They have no time for me. I have really made a mistake by coming home. I regret returning from bottom of my heart. If I had my way, I would go back to Germany right now."

Comment on story 1

Going into exile

In spite of the dangers to which Johanna and her group were exposed during flight, having set off on foot and crossing borders without a clear idea of which direction to take, they eventually landed in a refugee camp in Botswana. The resilience of this group demonstrates how a stressful in-flight period can produce characteristics like aggressiveness and a willingness to take risks (Keller, 1975).

According to the Cultural Bereavement hypothesis, the experience of loss in people who have been forcibly uprooted can be expressed as anger (Eisenbruch, 1990). While this may have been the case for Johanna and her group, their ideological commitment and sense of purpose overshadowed any anger they might have felt. This strong commitment provided the motivation to go through inconveniences like the heat and the possibility of malaria attacks as they went through a number of countries before reaching the first country of asylum. We could even go to the extent of saying, rather than perceiving their flight from the point of view of losing a homeland, for this group these experiences amounted to acquiring a new identity, that of freedom fighters.

In terms of Berry's acculturation modes, Johanna assimilated to the culture of exile in her first country of asylum. This was made possible by the fact that she landed in a totally South African environment and in the first three years, had minimal contact with people of her host country. In fact, life in this new environment became an extension of home for Johanna. This initial encounter with a foreign country prepared Johanna so well that she adapted relatively easily in the first three years, during the

course of which she took up further studies. After completion, she had the opportunity to put her newly acquired skills into practice, first in Tanzania and later in Angola. Johanna experienced her first culture shock in Germany, where she had gone to further her studies in printing technology. She nevertheless did not reach a state of acute psychological distress. She managed to complete her studies successfully once more, having integrated to life in this new, alien environment.

Return

A notable feature in Johanna's story is how her experiences of coming back home presented far more difficult challenges than when she first went into exile. Coming back home produced a sense of marginalisation and loneliness unlike anything she had experienced in exile. Her life was disrupted to a far greater extent than when she was first uprooted. Johanna did not have much opportunity to plan her return to South Africa. She had just come back form Germany to Tanzania so that she could be reunited with her other two children who had remained in Tanzania while she went to further her studies. As she says, "Three weeks later we were repatriated." There was no stage of preparation to allow her to say goodbye to her exile, nor did she have much time to anticipate what it would like to separate herself from her exile experiences. To some extent, this was a repetition of what happened when she left South Africa in 1976. It was also an abrupt uprooting.

Initially, Johanna experienced the euphoria of coming back. She was finally accomplishing the goal she had nurtured throughout her exile life, which was to come back to her family. Looking after her mother was the unfinished task she had set herself. She thought she was coming home in the psychological sense of returning to a place in which one's affections centre or where one finds refuge, rest

or satisfaction. Her sense of being back home was shattered by the revelation that her mother had long since passed away. Her first moments at home turned into a state of confusion and unreality. Her rejection of home is later revealed in her reconstruction of home as "that four roomed structure we call home".

She did not expect much material support from her family whom she referred to as "useless". As long as she could meet their expectations, she received a measure of social support. The fact that she had nothing to offer them after a while led to her being violently kicked out. Over and above her rejection by her family, Johanna felt an additional sense of loss at two other levels: loss of work role and loss of her political identity. In spite of her technical qualification in printing, Johanna could not find suitable employment. She long gave up looking for a job largely because she did not have the material and logistical means to do so. The loss of a work role robbed her of the sense of agency she had managed to cultivate during her long years of exile, and exacerbated her sense of discontinuity. More significantly, the fact that she was back home meant an end to the role of political exile and freedom fighter. Back home, her sense of agency was so eroded that she gave up further political involvement.

It is therefore significant that coming home produced a state of internal exile. Johanna's experiences with her family left her with a feeling of not belonging, of being a stranger to the very people she came back to. Her attempts to negotiate her way back into South African society can be illustrated more cogently by referring to the predictive model used in this study. Johanna's experiences are consistent with the finding that re-entry difficulties had the most influence on the adaptation process.

Results further showed that women found it more difficult to integrate into South African society than men. This can partly be attributed to the fact that women have to face the additional burden of having to conform to traditional gender roles that South African society prescribes. In Johanna's case, this found expression in the remark regarding her involvement in the military wing of the liberation movement: "She's getting money because of the corpses she left behind in Angola." Instead of being welcomed as a heroine, she was vilified. To survive, she had to renounce the independent identity she had established in exile in favour of more socially accepted feminine conduct.

Johanna's coping repertoire was seriously undermined by these initial experiences. Punamaki-Gitai (1990) suggests that exposure to hardships sets in motion different kinds of coping processes depending on the prevailing historical-political conditions. In the case of Johanna, it can be argued that she could cope relatively better in exile. The nature and stage of the liberation struggle then meant that she benefited from the strong ideological support it offered to political exiles. Johanna's journey on foot across the borders was part of a collective response. As clearly indicated in her story, coming back did not offer an opportunity for such a collective approach to problem solving. Indeed, lack of social support from her family exarcebated her sense of loneliness. Deprived of a feeling of belonging and no longer having the resilience of youth reduced her coping resources. For example, she did not engage in coping behaviour directed at active problem solving. She readily gave up looking for employment. This is despite the fact that she had certificates in printing from Germany and Tanzania. Apart from being forced, through sheer necessity to build a

shack in which to live, her main form of coping was emotion-focused, in this instance self-blame; "I have made a mistake by coming home".

At this point, it is worth asking the question: what is it about exile that made it possible for Johanna to cope better than when she came back home? Johanna's psychological distress can be explained by reference to the life events and social support hypotheses that have been used to explain the relationship between migration and mental health (Adelman, 1988; Thoits, 1981). Findings from the life events literature suggest that the experience of major negative life events often leads to mental and physical illness. The applicability of the life events approach to Johanna is apparent. From the time she left South Africa, Johanna's life was characterised by a series of separations and losses. Going into exile meant a loss of home and family. When she had to leave Tanzania to undergo military training, she had to leave her child and the secure life she had led. Again, when she went to Germany, she had to leave her two children behind. Finally, when she came back home, she had to come to terms with the loss of her mother. The unexpectedness of the last loss and the negative impact it had demonstrates one of the major findings of the present study.

Johanna's psychological distress can be further examined in the context of the vulnerability hypothesis, which suggests that exposure to the occurrence of many stressful events with little or no social support makes it difficult to cope. This especially is the case for people who are relatively disadvantaged and come from lower socio-demographic groups. Indeed, the findings of the present study are consistent with this. Divorced, separated and single women found it more difficult to

integrate into South African society. Against these odds, it is not surprising that Johanna ends her story on a negative note, "I regret returning from the bottom of my heart. If I had my way, I would go back to Germany right now."

Story Two

As depicted in the literature, the stages through which an exile goes as he or she seeks to adapt to a foreign environment most often lead him or her to experience a range of negative psychological states. However, in the exceptional case, the process of adaptation can take place without being necessarily stressful. The following story is an example of successful adaptation during a stay of more than thirty years in exile and once again over the four years since coming back. This story will illustrate how a particular combination of psycho-social factors can create an environment conducive to positive adaptation.

John is a white South African man in his 80s who was forced to leave the country abruptly. He belongs to the first wave of exiles that left in the early 1960s. Typical of this generation of political activists, John was a member of two banned organisations at the time he left. Consistent with findings from the literature that before being uprooted, people often suffer disruptions in their lives, John spent time in prison, most of it in solitary confinement. Being politically active in South Africa during the apartheid era was risky. It certainly took a high level of political commitment to make the sacrifices such activity involved. In addition to being imprisoned, John was served with banning orders in 1953.

**This is his story:** "Before I was arrested under the 90 Days Act, I helped Mandela to go underground. From then on, I was very actively involved in South African politics. Then came the Sabotage Act. The warden told me I was the first

one to be arrested under the Act. He seemed very pleased about the fact that he was putting me into my solitary confinement. I was there for quite a while. Friends of mine were also imprisoned.

One day the Chief of Police came to me and said that Vorster was prepared to give us an exit visa just to get rid of us. Several of us detainees got together and held discussions through the gate bars. We decided to take the offer. They arranged visas for us and got in touch with our families. After that we were just part of the whole process. They took me down underground from Jo'burg to Cape Town, where a large part of my family were. From here I went over to England.

I did have problems when I got to England. When I arrived in Southampton with an exit visa, immigration officers threatened to send me back. Luckily I managed to get hold of a telephone on board ship and I phoned the Anti-Apartheid Movement and Amnesty International. The issue was raised in parliament in the House of Commons. At about four o'clock that afternoon, parliament voted that I should be allowed in.

I stayed with a friend's father for a while. First I got a job selling books, which didn't pay me enough to live on. Then myself and other exiles has a stroke of luck. A sympathetic comrade at Abbey Life employed us. Who else would have us? Nearly a hundred exiles were employed by Abbey Life. I worked there for quite a while. Then the company decided to move to London. I didn't want to go to London. I had made enquiries about going to Africa but I was told that it

wouldn't be permitted. The Tanzanian Government wouldn't allow certain people to join the ANC in Morogoro where the ANC headquarters were. So I stayed in London - for 20 years.

I definitely enjoyed my new life in such a famous city. I used to do a lot of walking. I got to know London so well that when anyone came to London and got in touch with the ANC, they sent them to me. I used to take them around London, I grew to love the city.

Later I made enquiries about going to Africa again. But this time it was a different story. I managed to talk to several people like Joe Slovo and Oliver Tambo. Tambo said to me, 'Come out, have a look'. I had been in London for 20 years, without my family. It wasn't much of a problem getting out.

I still missed South Africa, but on the other hand, I grew to like the relative freedom in London. My eyes nearly popped out of my head when I saw mixed couples walking around as if it was the most natural thing in the world to do - which it was. There was freedom of movement and you could mix with whoever you wanted to.

Bad things did happen in England, but you knew there was legislation in the House of Commons to fight against the apartheid that existed in places like Brixton. But it wasn't an all-embracing racism.

After I left London I came down to Tanzanian through Kenya and looked around. Then I travelled to Angola. I had only been in Angola for a month, when I had an attack of malaria. That same night all hell broke loose. A little opposition group who wanted to overthrow the government attacked. It went on the whole night. Bullets were flying over our house. I had been a Second World War solider so I knew what fighting was. I knew this wasn't an exercise. It was an attempted coup. But it was soon over.

In Luanda, the Angola capital, we had two diplomatic houses in the street. I visited some of the camps nearby just outside the city. My job was to find aid for our camps and our people. Luanda is a big sea port. After being there for nine months, headquarters called back to Lusaka, and I was made Head of Logistics within the Treasury Department. I did this job for the ANC for about eight and a half years. I was moved a lot - back to Luanda, to Morogoro, to London, to the Soviet Union, and to countries in Western Europe.

I had to get in touch with government officials and find food, clothing, furniture and many other valuables. I was trying to get anything that could make things more pleasant for exiles both in and outside the camps. It was a very responsible job.

Later I became ill and had to have an operation, a rather serious one. I thought I had cancer. I spoke to the Treasurer-General. I told him, 'If I have got what I suspect, I would rather go to England and sort it out there.' I went to England. It wasn't cancer but it was a very serious operation. I had a three-in-one operation

which nearly killed me. Thereafter I stayed in London. But I continued working for the ANC. I was with the newspaper as a journalist and later I became a manager.

In 1990, when Mandela was released, I was in London and there was a huge gathering that day. It was a terrific occasion. Every few minutes we heard, 'He is out.' We celebrated - people went mad that day! Immediately I started preparing to go home and I managed to get some money together. I decided that instead of waiting and spending the money, I would go straight away. That was February 2. My niece booked a flight for me. I landed in Jo'burg and I thought Customs was going to ask about my past and who I was. I had been banned from 1953 onwards. While they checked the person in from of me, I was worrying. I thought they would keep me for a long time. But I was welcomed back and told to have a nice holiday. I walked straight through. It was the shock of my life. I couldn't believe it.

I met my brother there and stayed with him for a week. I came down to Cape Town to see the rest of my family. I had a twin sister who was very sick and I was pleased to see her. I had a nice month just looking around. The changes were incredible. If you dropped me blindfolded into Cape Town I would never have known where I was. So many changes have taken place. All those high-rise buildings in the distance, weren't there when I left.

I went back to London to get everything together and I came back for good in 1991.

I had grown to love London and I also like Luanda. I have very emotional feelings for Luanda and for Maputo, but not so much for Lusaka and Dar-es-Salaam. I liked the culture and the whole big metropolis of London. It was so cosmopolitan that it fascinated me. I had already made up my mind that I was not going to say, 'I am in exile, I am not going to moan and groan about it.' I thought I was going to make the best of it and see what I could do to make my life bearable. I think I was caught up in the culture to some extent.

I used to dream about Table Mountain and I would think, 'Am I never going to see it again?' I tell people how when I landed at DF Malan and looked at Table Mountain and Devil's Peak - I saw then bowing to me, welcoming me back to South Africa.

I had mixed feelings for a while. I found a flat in Observatory and one of the first things that happened to me was that I came back from a walk one afternoon and found a burglar in my flat.

This man saw me as I opened the door. I stepped back. He had a lightweight jacket on, and he had his hand in it like this, and he said, 'Your money or I will shoot you.' I thought he was going to kill me. It lasted for 10 minutes, but it felt like a lifetime.

I had had a heart attack in London in 1988 and I had to take it easy. Now I live in Tamboerskloof and I have settled down. I was nominated as a candidate for the

region, but I withdrew because I don't like that type of life. I don't like the idea of travelling around and I can't do it anymore. The greatest thing that happened to me since I came back was being invited to the inauguration in Pretoria to see Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki inducted. That was great. It was the most wonderful occasion in my whole political life, in my whole life, for that matter. I was also invited to the House of Assembly when Parliament opened and Nelson Mandela made his presidential speech. It was wonderful to sit there and see everybody that I had worked with before. Now I am truly back.

I often think of London, Europe, Maputo and Luanda. Hopefully now we are going to see the beginning of what is really a proper democratic South Africa for which many of us spent 50 years in the movement, and for which we have fought for so long. It is a marvellous experience. We are seeing it all here before our eyes. I still can't believe it. In parliament years ago, all I saw a sea of white faces. Now there is a good representation across the colour line. That is how it should be."

Comment on story 2

Going into exile

John's flight out of the country conformed to one of Kinz's kinetic types: the acute, which typically results from an overwhelming push. In John's case, this was a result of government policy which meant he had to leave without prior planning and with little or no thought given to the consequences of flight. In the initial stages after reaching a place of safety, exiles are often confronted by the reality of what has been lost, for example their culture and sense of identity. In John's case, adjustment in

these early days was greatly facilitated by the fact that his host country was culturally similar to where he came from; English speaking South Africa. In addition to this, John was assisted by a well-established network of friends who further cushioned his adjustment. Against this backdrop and not being a stranger to behavioural and material aspects of Western culture, John did not suffer unduly from the negative effects of culture shock.

According to Berry's acculturation model, John fits into the integration mode of acculturation. This is borne out by the fact that while he maintained his exile identity, at the same time he was completely at home in London. In terms of Berry's model, he considered it of value to maintain relationships with other groups. John continued with his characteristic mode of integration even in the various countries he visited and lived in subsequently. Maintaining his exile identity was helped by the fact that he had to visit and arrange logistical support for the ANC camps. At the same time, the high profile job of being a representative for the ANC in different countries made it possible to form relationships with other groups and institutions, thus facilitating his adaptation in a variety of circumstances. His realistic expectations also contributed to this. As he says, "I had already made up my mind that I was not going to say, I am in exile, I am going to moan and groan about it." This reflects a coping strategy that was to sustain him throughout his exile life. What are the key features in John's life that contributed to successful adaptation throughout those long years in exile? As the results of the present study suggest, there are a number of psycho-social factors whose combination contributes to a positive adaptation outcome.

First of all, John does not represent the typical helpless, dependent image so often associated with the word 'exile'. He left the country at a mature age, having served already as a soldier in the Second World War. Hence he was no stranger to encountering new environments. He was not married and so did not have the additional problem of arranging for a family to join him in exile. What is particularly striking about John are his remarkable coping skills. Right at the beginning of his sojourn, when he was faced with the possibility of being sent back to South Africa on arrival in England, he had the presence of mind to phone the House of Commons and have his case debated in parliament. This is a good example of the aggressiveness noted by Keller (1975). Such a willingness to take risks is evident throughout John's story. While he had his fair share of problems, just like any uprooted person, John's attitude made it possible for him to adopt a problem solving approach to coping (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). At the same time, he had, as already noted, realistic expectations and a good network of social support. Over and above all these attributes must be mentioned the buffering effect of strong ideological commitment. Within the ranks of political activists, John clearly belonged to a select group that gave him access to high political circles with their associated decision making powers. With a supportive political environment like this, it stands to reason that John's exile experiences would differ significantly from those of the rank and file freedom fighter.

Return

Unlike his initial flight into exile, John's return involved a good deal of planning and took place in an orderly manner. To begin with, John had ample time to plan his return following the significant turn of events in his home country. Not only did he plan carefully, but the preparatory visit he undertook before finally coming back

made it possible to get a realistic picture of conditions he would encounter when he finally returned. The act of mentally separating himself from exile was made easier by the stage of life John had just entered. It was fortuitous that just at the point of return, he had been forced to relinquish the important position he held on account of ill health. Since an active lifestyle was no longer possible for him, he was ready for change. Nevertheless, if we consider the stages of return as proposed by the Fasic group, the preparatory stage did bring with it some ambivalent feelings. It was not easy to say goodbye to some of his host countries. However, he could deal with the emotional and cognitive challenges involved in the encounter with the home situation. In similar vein, he could integrate his exile experiences without much difficulty, especially as the democratic process that unfolded vindicated the beliefs he held throughout his exile years: that the significant political changes he had fought for all his life could indeed be realised in his home country. This more than anything reinforced the sense of accomplishment he felt, having embarked on the political path he chose as his life's mission. The stage of adapting home was also facilitated by having a history of frequent moves to a variety of host countries.

In short, this is one case where the sojourn into exile and the return journey back have both turned out to have been positive experiences. In many ways this case study supports some of the results of the empirical part of the study. Instead of the high expectations that characterised most of the sample, John's realistic expectations can be linked to the relatively few difficulties he has experienced since coming back. His positive attitude to integrating back in the country is consistent with his positive reaction to what he considers some of the most significant events in his life: going into exile and coming back.

Finally, this case study, with its own unique story is atypical. It illustrates that adaptation is the result of various psycho-social factors. Even though going into exile and coming back have been studied as stressful events, John's story demonstrates that going into exile and coming back can have positive outcomes.

# CHAPTER 9

## Discussion

The overall purpose of this study was an attempt to gain a picture of the personal and social factors that determined how well returning South African exiles adapted back in the country following their return. The theoretical framework for the study is informed by Berry's acculturation model (1997), complemented by the Transition Cycle theory (Nicholson 1990). As discussed in Chapter 6, the focus of this conceptual framework is on how individuals who have developed in one cultural setting manage and adapt to new contexts. The framework suggests that acculturation and adaptation are shaped by a variety of factors that reside in the society of origin, the society of settlement and other phenomena that arise prior to or during the course of acculturation. While Berry's model was developed in the context of work with immigrants and other acculturating groups in North America, it is applicable with some modification to returning people and in this particular case to returning exiles in an African setting. The results of the present study are broadly in line with the rationale of both Berry's acculturation framework and Nicholson's transition theory, which is that there is a complex pattern of continuity and change in how people go about their lives in a new society. A significant finding running through most of the analyses carried out was that re-entry difficulties contributed more than any other variable to adaptation outcome.

With particular reference to acculturation strategies, the results lend support to previous findings that the acculturation strategy of integration predicts positive adaptation outcome. The revised path analytic model shows that integration level

was both an outcome variable and a predictor variable. As a predictor variable, it had a significant positive relationship with psychological well-being and quality of life. In other words, the more people had positive attitudes to both exile and home, the better their psychological state and satisfaction with various areas of life. In addition, level of integration was also influenced by gender and employment status. Females and unemployed returnees were less integrated into South African life than males and the employed. The indirect predictor effects of integration level on adaptation outcome meant that females and the unemployed had lower psychological well-being and poorer quality of life.

This supports earlier findings that females have poorer adaptation outcomes compared to males (Boyd,1984; Searle and Ward, 1990; Hauff and Vaglum, 1995, Ager, Ager and Long 1995) in resettlement countries. The results also support earlier findings on return migration which suggest that females find it harder to cope on re-entry compared to males (Gama and Pederson, 1977; Brabant et al., 1990). With regard to employment status, the findings are consistent with the centrality of economic difficulties in returning populations, which are in turn attributed to the reduced access by returnees to the employment market (Rogge, 1991; Van Hear, 1992; Preston, 1993; Hagos, 1994).

On the basis of the fact that broad classes of variables need to be taken into account when studying acculturation (Berry, 1997), the present study utilised a predictive approach to determine which of those it had identified would be critical to the adaptation of returning South African exiles. A significant finding of the path analysis carried out was that re-entry difficulties and integration level contributed more than

any of the other variables to quality of life and psychological well-being of returned South African exiles.

Beginning with an examination of difficulties encountered upon return, the study went on to investigate the contribution of other psycho-social variables to the adaptation outcomes of quality of life and psychological well-being. In view of the central role re-entry difficulties played in predicting adaptation outcome, this first part of the discussion will address the first three questions regarding the nature of re-entry difficulties and their impact on adaptation outcome.

As a direct predictor, re-entry difficulties had a very great impact on quality of life and psychological well-being a negative direction. This means that the more severe re-entry difficulties were, the lower the quality of life and the lower the level of psychological well-being. At the same time results of path analysis showed that difficulties had an indirect effect on these two outcomes by way of impacting on the extent of integration into South African society. Thus we are dealing with re-entry difficulties having both direct and indirect effects, that is, these difficulties operate at two different levels to influence outcome of adaptation.

## Re-Entry Difficulties

In line with studies that have identified re-entry difficulties as the main issue in repatriation, two aspects of return presented the most difficulties for the sample under study. The first relates to material conditions of life such as money to live on, housing conditions and finding somewhere to live. The second relates to the social emotional difficulties of coming to terms with changed living conditions, confronting these changes and meeting family expectations.

The South African context in which these difficulties arose is to some extent consistent with the situations identified by Rogge (1991) as most likely to lead to difficulties of return. The South African government cannot be said to have welcomed its returning citizens. In fact, the actions of the government contributed to making life difficult for returnees; for example, its unwillingness to provide reception centres as well as the role played by security agencies in the harassment and death of some returnees.

### Material Difficulties

The economic difficulty of not having enough money to live on and the accommodation problems that follow clearly underscore the fact that economic integration was a key issue among returning exiles. In the present study, these material difficulties impacted negatively on the returnees' satisfaction with various areas of their lives and on feelings of well-being. According to Rogge (1991), the process of economic integration is contingent upon a number of variables, such as length of time away, level of self-sufficiency and skills acquired. He adds that adapting fully is a long-term process especially if considerable changes have taken place. Indeed, this is even more pertinent in the present study where lengthy periods

of time were spent in exile. This underscores the fact that when people are repatriated, leaving a host country entails economic disruption.

Sussman (1986) takes this issue up when she suggests that adaptation problems are characterised by the unexpectedness of re-entry difficulties. This point of view is reiterated by Martin (1984) who draws a distinction between difficulties of encountering a new culture and those experienced when re-entering home. In the latter case, the individual is unlikely to expect to have difficulty. After all, he or she is home again, where the environment will surely be familiar. Furthermore, not only are friends and family unlikely to expect the returnee to have problems but they tend to show little or no empathy for the returnee's difficulties. Consequently, reverse culture shock is increased as neither the returnee nor the social system is prepared for any re-entry difficulties (Martin, 1984). Another important element in coming back is the awareness of changes that have occurred. Adler (1981) suggests that awareness of changes is a prerequisite for a re-entry experience characterised by growth. From findings of the present study, it appears that even though returnees may have been aware of changes, it was difficult to come to terms with them. This is reflected in the fact that adjusting to changed living conditions was rated quite high on the difficulties scale, with 75 per cent of the sample reporting this to be a serious difficulty. The findings of the present study are similarly echoed in a study of returnees to Ethiopia. Reporting on the return of Ethiopians from various countries after 1991, Hagos (1994) noted that prolonged economic and social disintegration as well as infrastructural destruction posed a great challenge. In fact, return for these Ethiopian refugees was as hard as when they were first forcibly displaced, if not harder. Lack of housing and employment were the major constraints faced by the majority of his

sample. Urban returnees were often blamed for creating shortages of essential commodities in markets, for the rising cost of living and for causing housing problems. Similarly, Van Hear (1992) reported that while the return of Yemenis from the Arab states increased money supply temporarily, their return imposed severe strains on educational, health and other social services. Even after two years of the mass return, the increased investment did not reduce the level of unemployment.

The theme of economic difficulties thus appears to be recurrent in most studies of returning populations. In a study of Central Americans returning to Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala, Manz (1989) noted that the most important problems facing them were economic conditions and general standards of living which had not improved since they left. If anything, returnees encountered deteriorating economic conditions which presented a challenge for effective adaptation.

Given that at the time this study was undertaken, about 48 per cent of the sample were unemployed, it is not surprising that these difficulties had such an important influence. In the particular case of returning South Africans, return took place against the background of a declining economy and astronomically high rates of unemployment. Even at the current rate of growth, estimated at less than three per cent a year, the South African economy cannot at present produce enough jobs to keep up with the number of people who enter the labour market every year. For returning exiles, the chances of being absorbed into the labour force were even less promising. As to be expected, those with higher levels of education fared better in terms of finding employment. In the first two to three years following return especially, it became commonplace to hear that, "Life is very hard for returning

exiles. There are no jobs, no accommodation, not a lot of hope" (Mda, 1993). This problem is all the more acute when considering the demographic make-up of the sample. About half were in the age group 21 to 40 years. The unemployed were highly represented in this age category.

When viewed in the broader socio-economic context of the country, the figure of 48 per cent unemployment among returning exiles is however consistent with the general unemployment rate in the country, estimated at about 43 per cent. Nevertheless for people who still had to re-negotiate their way into a new society, economic difficulties were bound to be extra stressful. It is worth noting that inability to find employment was related to more difficulties. This underscores the fact that the challenge for sustained and effective adaptation is enormous in the face of bleak economic conditions.

With regard to finding accommodation and housing it was to be expected that many returnees would have problems. One respondent remarked, "When I came I thought it would be a matter of three months before I get a place to stay. It is a year now and I still don't know where I am. I am still living with relatives and that is my biggest problem. I will only feel I am home when I have a place of my own to stay in." For the most part, the families the exiles were returning to were themselves living in poor overcrowded conditions. This is a reflection of the fact that South Africa is faced with a fast growing housing backlog, reflected in the poor state of housing for the majority of black families in the country. Tensions were bound to arise under such conditions. In a study by FASIC (1981), it was found that problems faced by Chilean families were related to their ability to find permanent housing. Ability to find

permanent housing was directly related to employment opportunities or lack of them. Those returnees who had access to economic resources also had access to housing and consequently adapted more easily. In similar vein, findings in the present study indicate that those who were gainfully employed had the least problems finding accommodation.

The impact of lack of housing is aptly captured in the following vignette. One returnee had left as a young man in the wake of the 1976 Soweto uprising. He came back with a Tanzanian wife and three children. Due to his inability to find accommodation, they were forced to live with his family at his mother's house. As time went on, difficulties arose, reaching a peak when they were forced to leave. This is how he describes his ordeal: "Serious tensions developed between my mother and my wife. Because of a language barrier, my wife could not make herself understood and whenever there was conflict between them I took it upon myself to mediate. I soon realised the futility of my efforts one day when my mother told me to take my wife back to her country. As the argument between us heated up my mother angrily threw our belongings out into the street yelling abuses at us. Then I realised I had no home."

Writing under the heading "Home Sweet Home" one of few concerned journalists wrote: "When the first group of exiles came back in March 1991, their smiles were a mile wide. Emotional crowds thronged the airport in Johannesburg waving banners. Full of optimism the exiles were home. Two years later more than 14 000 have come and there are very few smiles to be seen" (Mda, 1993). Yet another newspaper columnist commented, "Like Vietnam war veterans who returned to the

United States unheralded and unappreciated, these veterans of apartheid's wars also feel they had been relegated to the outer edges of a divided and economically tattered society " (San Francisco Chronicle, April 1994).

Social Emotional Difficulties

The pre-eminence of difficulties of return in the present study is consistent with what some researchers have suggested - that returning to one's home culture may be more difficult than adjusting to a foreign culture (Westwood et al., 1986; Adler, 1981; Brislin and Van Buren, 1974; Gullahorn and Gullahorn, 1963). While it is acknowledged that the re-entry process may bring with it growth and development in the individual, studies undertaken right from the beginning of re-entry research identified difficulties of return as the main finding. In the present study, adjusting to changed living conditions was one of the main social emotional difficulties that impacted negatively on quality of life and psychological well-being.

To fully understand the psychological processes underlying these social emotional difficulties, a theoretical framework is necessary. This is best provided by the Transition Cycle theory of Nicholson (1990), discussed in Chapter 6. This section will discuss the results as they relate to the first three stages of Nicholson's theory. These are:

- The stage of preparation;
- The stage of encounter;
- The stage of adaptation;

- The final stage of stabilisation will not be considered as it comes about after several years of residence in a new place.

Preparation

The decision to return to one's country is strongly influenced by the idealisation of home while in exile. This is reflected in the present study by the fact that more than 75 per cent of the respondents indicated that they came willingly and had no initial ambivalence about coming back. There was also a political dimension as expressed in the following comment, "I knew I had to come back. The unbanning of the political movements was an indication that things were changing in South Africa. This presented a better option than staying in exile where one was always aware that one is not at home. I had a job teaching at the University of Botswana but it was uncomfortable at times." This is how another returnee explained his decision to come back, "My wife and I often spoke about returning to South Africa when things changed. We dreamt of a new and just social order, living wherever we chose, being able to vote, and freeing our families from poverty, poor education and the political strife we left behind us. Our years of exile were years of waiting to return home."

There was not only a political obligation to come back but also a social obligation. Before return, most exiles had experienced cultures and societies that were entirely different from South Africa. More importantly they had built up significant emotional, professional and social ties. However, the thought of coming back home far outweighed any nostalgia about leaving exile. Every thought was focused on the idea that things at home would be alright. After coming back, exile now came to be seen in a new light in terms of how good or how bad it was.

The story of Mary, recounted in Chapter 5, illustrates how, after being home for three years, Mary was no longer certain that she had made the right decision to leave Zambia. South Africa had nothing to offer her but hardships. She longed to go back to Zambia where she had led a relatively comfortable life. As reflected in Mary's case, the process of separation from exile, which is implied by this stage, is by no means an easy feat.

Encountering the Reality of Home

Although the preparation stage starts while people are still outside the country, it continues even as returnees enter the encounter stage. Encounter implies emotional and cognitive reintegration to the realities of life in South Africa. The fact that the stage of encounter was not an easy one for the present sample is demonstrated by the negative correlation between the difficulty of adjusting to changed conditions of living and satisfaction with various areas of life in the country. This is a reflection of the fact that the concept of return is problematic. It implies that the reality of return makes the returning person a stranger in his or her own country. As Warner (1994) states: "The concept of return blurs the meaning of home." He further suggests that "elements of time and change contribute to this blurring."

All the time during the period of absence, the South African exile held ideals or carried actions hostile in spirit to those of the apartheid regime. But on coming back, and following the political reforms currently taking place in the country, he or she had to interpret the subtexts of everyday life in a new way, in order to understand the new codes of how to live from day to day. Having arrived back, the returned person had to recognise that he or she does not possess the symbolic cues that will allow him or her to operate in the new reality. The ideal country differed from reality. As

one female returnee put it: "I had no problems in deciding to come back. However, I have been psychologically affected by the fact that I am not accepted. People do not understand what exile was about and I cannot form a sense of identity. Unlike in the U.S. where I knew where I stood, people here are resentful. I'm still looking for a social network. It is difficult to enter the South African culture." This remark also demonstrates how females found it relatively more difficult to integrate, a process which may result in feelings of rejection which in turn interfere with adapting back.

According to yet another respondent: " After many years away, coming back to a divided society such as South Africa is itself a shock. The country still feels heavy with oppression and the cruelty that results from a policy of separate and unequal." At a psychological level, returning exiles had to integrate themselves into the personal and collective experience of racial tensions and fear that exists among racial groups. Added to this reality was the fact that returning exiles were not coming back to a stable country but to a country in transition. "There is not one South Africa to adjust to, there are many: there is the South Africa we left, the South Africa we are now in, and the future democratic South Africa we are looking for." Having to deal with a changing social and political environment exacerbated problems of encounter.

Furthermore, it has been observed that a split almost always takes place between those who have stayed and those who went away. According to Ranger (1994:291), "integrating back is a dynamic, contested process of power and inequality. A great deal depends on who is laying down terms for integrating." One newspaper report commented that exiles returning to South Africa came to a country that was not

ready for them either structurally or emotionally" (Mda, 1993). At the same time, integration depends largely on terms laid down by this same country.

Encounter also entails reconstructing affective links. The social context undergoes changes both for those who left and those who stayed. Both groups change because of new social habits and attitudes. In trying to deal with these changes returning exiles often complained of what I call the problem of 'connectivity'. They could not form links with close friends or families that they had before. The returned person came back to find a big gulf. "I find that I have grown apart from the people I knew before I left. I now have the feeling that my friendships are disjointed and I have very little in common with them." One other returnee complained that, "Every time I am in the company of old friends the only things we talk about relate to what happened in the past." He had not shared a common history with his friends during all the time he was away and had some catching up to do. Ironically he found this 'uncomfortable'. The past was a focus of social interaction but at the same time the returning person found it uncomfortable because it represented a break in his life. Eventually, this divergence of interest resulted in difficulties in communication. The gulf that develops between those who left and those who stayed has been well documented in studies of return to Latin America (Manz, 1989).

Zarzosa (1998:192) offers a sociological explanation for this. She writes, "The growing everyday life distance between home and host country cannot be measured in exile. Even if one is constantly informed about it, the vital social interaction with home is absent. Exile and home have their own time and space and both evolve in those spheres totally separated". Zarzosa maintains that both exiles and their

compatriots in the home country undergo changes and it is the confrontation between these two different kinds of changes that contributes to re-entry difficulties for returnees.

In a study of the return of Chilean exiles, two distinguishing patterns were observed in how returnees recreate the social spaces that will enable them to have a feeling of belonging (FASIC, 1981). The first pattern relates to persistent difficulties in accepting changes in the old reference points, which means that while the returnee was away in exile, life went on without him or her. This response pattern can be observed among the present sample of returning South African exiles as expressed by this respondent: "My sisters have changed - they don't want to talk about the past or the reasons why I left. Instead, they judge me for leaving and betraying them, and won't speak about Mpho, my brother who was killed, or my uncle who died in township violence. No one mourns the way I do. I'm really hurting inside. I feel I don't belong."

The second pattern relates to the tendency to shelve the exile experience - that is, to block it from consciousness. This again is observed in the present South African sample. For example, one respondent remarked, " Sometimes, it is as if my life has been frozen for the last thirty years." This implies a difficulty that comes from the returnee's state of unreadiness to unbundle their problems. Yet another respondent stated: "Mine is a very long story that I have not even begun to understand myself." This inability to place exile experiences in proper perspective exacerbated the state of social isolation, which was commonly reported by returnees.

The central role played in the study sample by extent of integration in predicting quality of life and psychological well-being represents what I would consider the quintessence of the return problem. This is aptly captured in the comment, "Exiles - they never completely left. Return - but they will never be entirely back" (Llambias-Wolff, 1993). The problem with 'being back entirely' was reflected in the findings that a lower level of integration predicted a lower quality of life and reduced psychological well-being.

Adaptation

Adaptation implies integrating exile experiences to the home encounter. This is reflected in the present study by the findings that higher levels of integration were associated with better quality of life and a better state of psychological well-being. After lengthy periods in exile, exiles adopt social attitudes that are different from those they had before leaving. This is inevitable given the overwhelming need to adapt to countries of asylum that have vastly different traditions and value systems. To return then is bound to be marked by innumerable contradictions within the returning person. "I will find it difficult to integrate back. It is as if my life has been frozen for the past 30 years. It is only now that I am looking for my future but South Africa is a closed society" commented one returnee. The difficulties in adapting and integrating one's experiences to a closed society are quite evident here. Many such comments were made that symbolise the inability to adapt. A very striking feature of coming back to this closed society was the big silence. From the returned person's perspective it was as if no one wanted to know about the suffering that exiles went through. In the words of one respondent, "Seeing that people don't relate to or understand what exile was about or meant to us, I keep my experiences to myself." At the same time this silence is like a double-edged sword. While South African

society was turning a deaf ear, the exile was also unwilling to confront the shattered dream of coming back and this resulted in a lot of anxiety and stress.

A number of psychologists have written about what they term 'disavowal' or 'the big silence'. It is well documented that when a society has been struck by a catastrophe it usually takes years before the enormity of what happened is acknowledged. At the individual level this is an attempt at shutting a certain reality out of one's mind. Hence comments like this were frequently made: "I have never had time to think about my feelings, to think about how I reacted to coming back. I just get by with the business of surviving from day to day."

To trace the origins of this silence on the part of the exile we have to go back to the exile's past. We can understand the dynamics of exile from the perspective of dissociation. The process of dissociation refers mainly to the coping mechanism exiles employed in order to deal with the vicissitudes of their life in exile. The process of dissociation has an emotional and a cognitive dimension. It is an ego defence process that involves a splitting of thoughts from feelings (McCann and Pearlman, 1994).

It is a means of psychological survival. One slogan that the Liberation Movement used very effectively during the exile period was, "the struggle continues. There is no time to mourn." This slogan symbolises the cognitive splitting off of the emotionally painful realities of exile and repressing them into the unconscious. According to McCann and Pearlman, dissociation is characterised by an alteration of

consciousness in which experiences and affects are not integrated into memory and awareness. Hence the difficulty in retrieving these memories.

The Jewish exile writer Ezrahi (1992) writes: "The past is remembered as part of a creative process in the present." After coming home, exiles were faced with the task of integrating the nostalgia they had to the reality of the present. The difficulty of achieving this in turn complicated the process of integrating and adapting. Hence the remark, "It is as if my life has been frozen for all the years." In the words of Warner (1994), "(there is) a distance between the nostalgia for that world that can never be and the reality of return." We can thus logically conclude that this constitutes the fundamental contradiction of return and echoes Bernstein's (1994) 'rift that can never be healed' in the context of return.

Kovalsky (1988) elaborates on this further: "Implicit in the return is the grieving over a double loss, the loss of one's country that once was and no longer is and the feeling of loss for this new welcoming country, the one that was left behind and idealised from afar and now is impossible to revive."

The sudden realisation that home can never be the same came as a big shock, hence difficulties of re-entry were so central in this study. It is, after all, a natural human reaction to look for sameness, for the familiar when faced with change. Similarly, the returning exile searches for the familiar home he or she left behind. The search goes on for a while with flashes of hope here and there. In some cases home remained forever illusive: "I returned to South Africa last year and tried to trace my family in Worcester but their houses have been demolished. I don't know where

they are living now. I am very disappointed. The government doesn't look after exiles. We are having a problem trying to reintegrate. Nobody notices me." Here there was no illusion - not even a faint sign that the rift could be healed. The physical loss of home had become enmeshed in the greater psychological sense of loss and despair.

## Social Support, Coping and Difficulties of Return

The fourth question in this study was about the contribution of social support, coping and difficulties of return to quality of life and psychological well-being. Results of multiple regression analysis used to answer this question supported the findings of path analysis. Compared to social support and coping, difficulties of return again emerged as the most significant factor in determining how well returning South African exiles adapt. After difficulties of return, social support was the next most significant contributor to adaptation. This again was consistent with the revised path model where social support had an indirect effect on adaptation but a direct effect on difficulties of return. The latter result could be interpreted to mean that people who received more social support had more difficulties of return. It would, however, seem contrary to conventional wisdom that social support should lead to more difficulties. Another interpretation could be that people with more difficulties relied more on social support. Nonetheless, while the first interpretation may seem controversial, it may well bring up aspects of support that have not as yet been addressed by social support research.

The first of these is the question of people's evaluations of the social support they receive. According to the results of the difficulty scale used in the present study, one of the items rated quite highly was the difficulty of meeting family expectations. It would seem that evaluation in this case was linked to the question "What can I give back in return?" - a question of reciprocity. Social support theory has not yet enquired into issues of reciprocity. If a person believes they cannot reciprocate the support they receive what are the implications? Social support is an interactive process in the sense that there is no recipient without a donor. However, little is known about how donors and recipients exchange roles and what conditions lead to withdrawal of support which so often happened in the present sample.

A second and related question has to do with the match between social support and what people really need support for. In other words, does receiving social support address the particular problems for which people need help? As noted in the present study, instrumental support from the family was most highly ranked. But did this adequately meet the needs of returnees? Commenting on initiatives by the NCCR, one returnee had this to say: "We do not want grey blankets, we want our dignity." This statement expresses returnees' need for emotional support.

Although Berry and Kim (1988) contend that social support is found to moderate stress in the acculturation context, its effects have yet to be clearly established in migration samples. Cohen and Wills (1985) found evidence of the buffering effect of social support only when the social support measure assessed interpersonal resources that are responsive to needs elicited by the stress of migration. This brings up the question of whether the buffering effect works at high levels of stress as in the

migration context (Punamaki, 1987). It can certainly be argued that the present sample of returning exiles experienced high stress levels. There is a set of studies (Westermeyer, 1983; Rumbaut, 1991; Punamaki, 1987) which should caution against a naive belief in the power of social support to protect individuals from exposure to stressors. However, other studies are more positive. McCallin and Fozzard (1990) found that among Mozambican refugees, perception of family as supportive led to better psychological adjustment. Similarly, McSpaden (1987) reported better psychological well-being among volunteer supported Eritrean refugees.

The study of South East Asian refugees (Beiser et al, 1989) which also indicated a protective function for social support provides insight into potential causes of these contradictory findings. Social linkage, defined as links with ethnic community and having an intact marriage, was found to moderate the impact of stress in the resettlement environment. However, it served no buffering function with respect to prior stressors in camps. Thus social support protected the refugees against stressors of adaptation by enhancing belongingness rather than mitigating the effects of trauma. If we are to infer from Beiser's study, we could argue that while social support does mitigate present problems of adaptation, it does not protect returnees from effects of traumas suffered while in exile. It is against this background that we should interpret the present finding that more social support was associated with more difficulties of return.

Taking this issue further, Adelman (1988) elaborated on the effectiveness of support by asking how effective can support be from providers who are themselves facing

similar threatening and uncertain conditions. In the South African context this applies, for example, to the basic support of providing returnees with a place to stay. Homelessness is at the same time the fate of millions of the country's black population who are forced to live in temporary shacks in overgrowing squatter settlements on the periphery of major cities. How can such families offer tangible support? Adelman believes that support from such sources becomes ineffectual in active problem solving. Indeed the experiences of one respondent illustrates this point rather well. "When I first came I was well received by my brother-in-law and sister but as time went on and because I was not working we started having clashes. Relations between us got so bad that they would tell me 'Don't bother to come back here after 9 p.m.' So now I only go to eat at their house and not to sleep. Now I stay with a woman friend in a shack. There is no relationship between us. If I don't stay with this person, my aunt is the only other alternative and she has one tiny room. I have to share the bed and we have problems getting food. She is unemployed and I am unemployed."

One of the basic assumptions of this study was that coping would play a central mediating role in the adaptation process. As defined by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), coping includes those behaviours and thoughts that are consciously used by an individual to handle or control a stressful situation. Accordingly, coping has two main functions: firstly to change the actual terms of the troubled person-environment relationship, and secondly to regulate emotional distress. In the original version of the Ways of Coping Scale (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984), coping contained two general dimensions: problem-focused and emotion-focused. In this study, these two forms of coping had a relatively lower impact on adaptational outcome than would

have been expected. Perhaps this might be explained by reference to the fact that coping also depends on secondary appraisal. Secondary appraisal refers to assessing whether a situation can be changed or accepted as it is. This precedes judgement as to whether one can improve the troubled person-environment situation and, if so, which coping options might work. In the face of overwhelming odds, this raises the question of whether the majority of returnees thought that they could cope. How do people cope with a perpetual state of homelessness or unemployment?

Problem-focused coping did contribute positively to quality of life, emerging as the third most significant variable after re-entry problems and social support. This finding is in line with research which indicates that this type of coping is positively linked to self-confidence (Billings and Moos, 1984). As coping was predicted by educational level, it follows that returnees with higher levels of education employed this coping strategy more. On the other hand, emotion-focused coping had a significant but negative contribution to psychological well-being. This means that those who used emotion-focused coping had poorer psychological well-being, thus implying that this form of coping is rather conducive to the development of psychological distress.

At a theoretical level, studies on the two constructs of coping and social support focus on their effect on psychological functioning independently of each other. While these have yielded useful information, lately there have been calls for a unifying and more comprehensive view of coping that links it with social support both conceptually and empirically. For example, in the medical field, there is now more emphasis on interpersonal factors as important predictors of an individual's ability to manage

illness (De Longis and O'Brian, 1990). Within the field of acculturation studies, it would be useful to assess how far theoretical developments and empirical research linking coping and social support are relevant to acculturation or reintegration. This is in view of the high demands placed on coping resources in cross-cultural encounters.

Contributing a theoretical perspective on social support Adelman (1988: 183) states, "Our ability to cope with daily stressors, critical life transitions and environmental or cultural change is inextricably tied to the social ecology in which we are embedded." In elaborating the nature and functions of social support, she regards it as functioning to enhance control (and thus coping) through skill acquisition, tangible assistance, acceptance and realisation of feelings. In her study on the contribution of social support to coping, Greenglass (1993) argues in favour of a coping framework that includes social support in the construction of coping strategies - in essence advocating for a third dimension of coping - social coping. At a theoretical level, this means broadening the concept of coping as it has been traditionally defined.

Empirically, the results of this study underscore the need for such a broader concept of coping. The fact that coping as assessed by the Ways of Coping Checklist had no demonstrable effect on adaptation outcome points to the need for an instrument that will take the social context of coping into account. In essence, the Ways of Coping Checklist adopts a too narrow and individualistic approach. This is most probably the reason coping did not emerge as a significant predictor of adaptation outcome in the present study. It was considered at an individual level, which brings up another

dimension to coping strategies used by this particular sample, that is, collective coping. If we consider the nature of return in the present sample as indeed in most cases of return from exile, the collective dimension becomes an important consideration. This is because people came back as groups, not as individuals. Even on arrival, South African returnees were welcomed as groups, hence they continue to see themselves as part of a collective. Thus, the instrument used in this study could not by its nature capture this collective dimension of coping, clearly implied in the present circumstances of return. The present results can therefore be interpreted as highlighting the need for a measure of coping that takes into account the social nature of coping, especially as it applies to cross-cultural situations. These results therefore imply that returning exiles actively seek to modify their environment through incorporating social support networks in their coping strategies.

## The Role of Expectations

The last issue in this study is the question of expectations and how the discrepancy between expectations and their fulfilment contributes to adaptation outcome. Results show that in the sample under study, expectations were very high. In view of this, it was important to establish whether they were fulfilled. Without exception, these high expectations were largely unfulfilled. This is a significant finding of the present study. Returnees came back only to be hugely disappointed that conditions in the country were not as they expected. Findings from the path analysis revealed that these discrepancies had direct effects on difficulties of return. This means that the greater the discrepancies, the more re-entry difficulties were reported, resulting in negative adaptation outcome. The results of the multiple regression analysis confirm this. The

expectations-reality discrepancies impacted negatively on quality of life and psychological well-being. This finding is consistent with the results of Rogers and Ward (1993), who reported that experienced, but not expected, social difficulty was associated with psychological adjustment problems. Rogers and Ward's results support the key findings of the present study regarding the relationship between real and unexpected difficulties and its consequences for adaptation outcome.

The discrepancies between expectations and actual experiences and the psychological effects of these discrepancies in the cross-cultural context have been a matter of concern to researchers. Comparing cross-cultural transition with re-entry, Adler (1981) has argued that returning to one's' original culture is often more difficult than moving into a foreign culture. Adler drew primarily from qualitative data which suggested that the returnees' psychological distress was frequently associated with negative job experiences compared to relatively positive pre-return expectations. Research that has been carried out on expectations-reality discrepancies falls under two competing hypotheses. First it has been suggested that realistic expectations facilitate adaptation. This hypothesis is implied in a study by Weissman and Furnham (1987) which compared expectations and experiences of American sojourners in the United Kingdom by considering the absolute discrepancy between the two and its relation to mental health. A second and more refined approach incorporates an evaluative dimension into the analyses and emphasises the direction of the expectations-experience discrepancy. Cochraine (1983) found that in studies of West Indian and Asian immigrants to Britain, under-met high expectations resulted in adjustment problems. Krupinski, quoted in Furnham and

Bochner (1986), on the other hand suggested that under-met low expectations led to better adaptation in Vietnamese refugees living in Australia.

Results of the present study are consistent with the hypothesis that the direction of discrepancy, in this case high unmet expectations, influence adaptation outcome. These results are consistent with those of Rogers and Ward (1993) who found that large discrepancies between expectations and experiences were associated with psychological distress only when experiences were more difficult than originally anticipated.

These findings corroborate the long standing association that has been made between expectations and adaptation in migrant populations (Gullahorn and Gullahorn, 1963; Klineberg and Hull, 1979; Sussman, 1986). To a large extent, the present findings also support Berry's model of acculturative stress which indicates that psychological and psychosomatic symptoms are predicted by *inter alia* social problems (Chataway and Berry, 1989).

The results of the revised path analysis model used in the study underscore the fact that the greater the discrepancy, the more difficulties of re-entry were experienced. This is the reason for the great disappointment about coming home. The dream of return that had maintained returnees throughout their long years of exile did not correspond with reality upon return. Given that we are dealing here with a sample of political exiles, it is to be expected that expectations would be high. By definition, exiles are highly idealistic. It follows, therefore, that upon return they will hold high ideals and the high expectations that go with them. Similarly South African political

exiles who make up this sample were forced to leave their country but did not consider their period of residence abroad permanent. In this sense they can be said to have lived in a discontinuous state of being, the overriding factor being their historical mission to bring about circumstances favourable to their return to South Africa. Foremost among the expectations the exiles had before return was the expectation that quality of life in South Africa would be better than when they left. This was not fulfilled. Similarly, expectations for better economic circumstances were not met either. The fact that expectations for political freedom were lower in the scale means returnees were more realistic about unfolding political developments in the country.

From a methodological viewpoint, a word of caution must be voiced when interpreting this section of the results. It should be noted that in spite of these findings being consistent with those of other studies, the methodology used may not have captured the wide range of expectations entailed in an undertaking of the kind being studied here, that is, returning to a place of origin after protracted periods of forced absence. First of all, crossing cultures involves a wide range of expectations and the expectations elicited in the present do not by any means capture the many varied expectations that a population of exiles would have. The findings should therefore not be extended beyond the domains covered here.

To conclude, this section of the study has demonstrated that discrepancies that arise because expectations are more positive than experiences contribute to low satisfaction with various areas of life and poorer psychological well-being. The findings have theoretical and applied implications especially as this aspect of return

is under-researched. Conceptually, the findings support Rogers and Ward (1993) in their emphasis of directionality of expectations-experiences matching. Theoretically, since expectations are a popular topic, more extensive investigation of the expectations-experiences discrepancy is called for to enrich theoretical analysis. At the applied level, the study of expectations has implications for cross- cultural training. Previous research has emphasised the importance of preparing returning exiles for their return so that people develop realistic expectations. The implications from present results are that more emphasis should be placed on the effectiveness of training.

The in-depth interviews are useful in discovering how returnees reframed their expectations after coming back to bring them in line with their experiences. The following comment illustrates this: "None of us expected life to be better or worse when we returned. We just expected it to be normal, like it was before we left. However, conditions since we came have been far worse than I had expected. I was not prepared for the crime and violence in the townships, which seem to have drastically increased over the fifteen years I have been away. Not long after I arrived, I was stabbed in the back during a robbery attempt. Doctors told me I would never be able to walk again...We have been through a lot and there are still many problems."

Overall the in-depth interviews tell of the varied experiences of exile life. They depict the process of return as a paradoxical process that threatens to reproduce the experiences of exile at home. While people reacted in different ways to their exile experiences, there were commonalties as well. All exiles experienced culture shock

in one form or the other - their reactions to it varied however. By its nature, the act of going into exile entails loss - of emotional links to people and to the motherland, and this inevitably leads to feelings of ambivalence. To survive and cope with this sense of loss, the coping strategy of dissociation was commonly used. Dissociation is paradoxical in nature. While it prevented breakdown of the personality in exile, upon return, it creates obstacles to adaptation.

In their various host countries, all exiles felt a sense of mission - to continue the struggle against apartheid. Consequently, there was no hesitation about coming back. The decision to return was reached without difficulty. Once home, the crux of what came out of the interviews was a situation where most have not yet fully integrated themselves into the daily life of the country. In other words, people were still grappling with the difficulties thrown up by the encounter stage. To proceed from this stage to the adaptation stage in the transition cycle, they had to accomplish a number of tasks:

a) They had to integrate the past with the present and hence project themselves into a present and future different from what they anticipated before they returned.
b) They needed to understand the changes within those people who make up their emotional and social circles.
c) They needed to come to terms with the reality of the country as it was.
d) They had to recover their personal and social identities within a society whose own identity was undergoing tremendous changes - some of them traumatic.

In summary, the returning exiles' subjective experience was riddled with ambivalence, superimposed over the joy and elation of coming back. It is as if the anxiety producing state of suspension that existed in exile is being replayed all over again. In order to rationalise their feelings, returnee's reactions run the gamut from self-isolation to intense involvement in work or political activity. Many will not or hav not given themselves time to work through these feelings and ambivalences. This begs the question: are we not going to observe after a period, when the intense activity is over, a return of these old feelings - more or less reminiscent of the experiences of soldiers who after years of successful post-war careers retire, and suddenly find themselves having to deal with issues they never confronted?

The interviews to a large extent substantiate the findings of the quantitative study. With very few exceptions, all the respondents commented on the difficulties they had encountered. Economic difficulties were a constant theme. The difficulties were in turn related to integration levels, that is, how close or how distant people felt they were to the South African way of life. This came out clearly in the following remark, "We are scared to tell some of them (South Africans) that we were exiles. We feel that some don't like us even though we were born here." This echoes a phenomenon that has been well documented in Latin American studies of return (Manz, 1989) - the gulf that develops between those who left and those who stayed behind.

## Limitations of the Study

To be most useful, any study of acculturation and adaptation processes needs to incorporate multiple variables at various levels (Dyal and Dyal, 1981; Martin, 1984; Berry, 1997). The present study is an attempt at a multivariate approach to the study of adaptation in a migratory context. However, it is necessary to specify some of its limitations. By addressing these limitations, it should be possible to highlight future areas of research.

The first consideration in discussing the limitations of the present findings concerns the research methodology employed. The study was cross-sectional thereby limiting the strength of causal inferences that can be extrapolated from the findings. While the interactions associated with structural variables are of considerable research interest, as the predictive model employed in the present study illustrates, it is even more important when studying adaptation to detect change in psycho-social behaviours and to describe the processes which mediate this change (Dyal and Dyal, 1981). For a study of adaptational outcome following return, it would have been ideal to combine a cross-sectional with a longitudinal design. Indeed, such a combination was built into the original design for the present study. However, it was impossible to carry out the longitudinal component. This is because many respondents refused to give their names and particulars due to the suspicions and fears they had for their safety at the time data was collected. This problem underscores another methodological issue related to accessing returning populations. Unlike refugees, who are usually fairly accessible in host countries, returnees tend to disappear into the local population once they get back, thus highlighting the practical difficulty involved in research of this nature.

Nevertheless, future studies could benefit from the approach suggested by Lazarus, Cohen et al., (1979) which combines large scale cross-sectional analysis with repeated in-depth evaluations of small scale samples. Although directed at research on coping, this suggestion applies equally to a study of adaptation where the use of a large scale cohort design would allow for inferences to be made about change. Future research could also make use of longitudinal research to identify temporal sequencing of adaptation. Furthermore, a longitudinal design would allow for controlled and uniform assessment of factors related to adaptation such as social support and coping which have been found to buffer the impact of adaptation difficulties. Future research could examine the moderating role of these variables, thus providing critical information for the interpretation of the changes which are inferred from cross-sectional and longitudinal data.

A related limitation to the cross-sectional approach is that the study covers the first two to three years after return, implying a short-term approach to return. As articulated in previous studies (Rogge and Akol, 1989; Allen, 1994), return from exile is a long-term process. It has also been conceptualised as a transition (Nicholson, 1990). Consequently, addressing it from a one-off short-term basis does not do justice to the topic. Being a process, return cannot be assessed as a static, discreet set of events. As can be gathered for the results, the short-term approach has highlighted difficulties of return as the main issue of return in the study sample. In all probability, a long-term approach would bring out longer-term outcomes and perhaps benefits of the return experience. Such an approach could be useful insofar as

shifting the focus away from return as a problem to a more positive growth oriented conceptualisation.

Even though data was collected using mainly quantitative methods complemented by a few in-depth interviews, the focus of the study was to test the proposed predictive model of factors involved in the adaptation process empirically. However, while the in-depth interviews provided some scope for looking at different factors in the return process, the interviews were not carried out in systematic way. The inclusion of interviews should have presented the study with the possibility of intensive investigation of the factors involved in the adaptation processes so as to provide critical information for the interpretation of the survey results. Given the informal way in which the interviews were carried out, such information could not be elicited from the interview material. In retrospect, the interviews fell short of covering salient issues in the study. For example, the collective dimension of return is evidently significant. Integration into the home country involves *inter alia* society's response to the returning individual and hence is a group dynamic process. A more sophisticated approach to the interviews could have afforded the opportunity to describe and explain this process more intensively.

A further limitation relates to the fact that the sample in the present study was obtained by convenience sampling. This limits the extent to which findings can be generalised to other returning exiles. Another feature of the sample may add to this limitation. The sample consisted mainly of black African men and women, with a few exceptions. The focus on this group was based on the fact that they made up the largest proportion of South Africans who went into exile. Furthermore, this is one

section of the population that bore the brunt of the oppressive measures of the apartheid regime. They were thus typical examples of people who were pushed out of their country after suffering severe deprivatons. On coming back, they again made up the section of the returnee population who were most likely to experience the most severe material difficulties on account of the depressed socio-economic conditions to which they were returning. In this sense, the present findings cannot be generalised to the whole population of returnees and should therefore be considered exploratory.

Finally, the research instruments used are mainly self-report measures. It is well documented that self-report, paper and pencil techniques may produce artefactual results through acquiescence, response tendencies, faking and social desirability. However Anastasi (1988) defends the use of paper and pencil techniques, describing them as sensitive to a broad range of measurement contexts and highly amenable to actuarial methods of scoring.

## Implications of the Study

Psychological research in the field of forced migration has broadened our horizons and has contributed to a better understanding of the process of return after a protracted absence from a country of origin (for example, FASIC, 1981; Kovalsky, 1988; Llambias-Wolff, 1993). Continuing in this tradition, the present study has a number of implications for policy makers and practitioners. Having established the prominence of difficulties of return in people who have been forcibly uprooted, the central role of planning a repatriation exercise is brought to the fore.

This central role of planning can also be linked to Horenkens's (1985) argument that return cannot be judged by how properly conducted the physical movement of people is, but by how well returnees have settled. The South African repatriation underscores very clearly the crucial need for resources and proper planning of the repatriation process if the economic well-being of returning people is to be guaranteed. If either is inadequate, returnees become an additional problem, especially in highly polarised societies such as South Africa. Not only must planning be conducted at the national level, there needs to be more collaboration between international aid agencies, local NGOs and communities where returnees are settled. This means that planning must be based on a firm institutional and legal basis. As indicated by Kibreab (1991), such planning can only succeed if it is based on a developmental framework. In undertaking the process of receiving and relocating returnees, it would seem that one way of ensuring successful planning is for all the national and international agencies involved to come together as a multi-disciplinary task force. Inter-agency co-operation and co-ordination achieved through such co-operation would go a long way to ensure the success of the planning process.

Planning by its nature has to be based on a thorough needs analysis of a returning population as well as the country to which they are returning. Apart from its instrumental value, a proper needs analysis carried out before embarking on a repatriation process has a potential impact on policy. For example, Loescher's (1989) idea that the critical issue is to determine when repatriation is the most durable solution can best be addressed by a properly conducted planning process. Indeed, if planning is to be used to invest in strategies for long-term policies, the

outcome of a planning process should be well laid out tasks that are well co-ordinated to ensure continuity between relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development.

Following the planning stage, a number of steps are important in order to implement an effective repatriation policy. A central goal should be to understand the problems and concerns of a particular repatriating group. For example, one of the findings of the present study is that expectations were high among the sample of South Africans studied. These expectations were mostly unfulfilled. An implication arising out of such a finding is that returning people who have been away from their home countries need to be supplied with accurate, factual information about what to expect when they return to their home country. This should not be a once-off exercise undertaken when people are on their way back as so often happens. It should be an ongoing exercise that begins in exile and continues even as people are being resettled.

A complicating factor in the case of returning South African exiles may be that promises of future well-being had been a major part of the motivating strategy used throughout the liberation war by leaders of the two main liberation movements, the African National Congress and the Pan-Africanist Congress. As a consequence, some returnees would still be looking up to the state or party to provide for their needs. For example, 84 per cent of the sample expected to have a better life when they came back compared to what they had before exile, and 83 per cent expected that they would obtain proper housing. If up-to-date factual information about standards of living and housing conditions in the country had been given, this would

have resulted in more realistic expectations in these two areas. Instead, a majority of those interviewed remarked about the culture shock they had at the sight of sprawling squatter settlements dotted all over the country next to major cities.

In view of the prominent part played by re-entry difficulties in all studies of return, notably those of a material and socio-economic nature, the provision of basic support systems to returnees becomes a priority. Having said this, while any initiatives undertaken should focus on returnees, they should in no way exclude other sections of the community who might wish to avail themselves of the services offered. This would run the risk of fuelling potential antagonisms created by perceptions that returnees are receiving preferential treatment. Among a range of strategy options open to policy makers, evidence from this study suggests the following as the most pressing service needs for returnees:

1. Programmes to meet basic assistance needs

For any returning population, there is always a need to solve the most urgent needs. Among the types of assistance returnees would benefit from are economic programmes to cover housing and food, legal, medical and dental services. In general this type of assistance is usually a high priority as returnees lack the resources to meet these needs. In particular, vulnerable groups such as single, divorced and widowed women, children and demobilised soldiers clearly need to be given priority attention. In the long run these services become less important and give way to more longer-term integration projects. Of these initial services, mental health should feature prominently as the likelihood of post-traumatic stress is high when a population has been subjected to organised violence and other atrocities. Psycho-social services are generally indicated not only for those who went into exile

but for those who remained behind as well (Summerfield, 1991). In this sense, most of the problems confronting returnees are inseparable from those of the broader community. Targetting returnees can then be an impetus for the introduction of wider community based programmes.

In addition, return to a country of origin entails an adaptation process between those who remained and those who went into exile. Returnees come back to a country that has changed geographically, economically, and socio-culturally as a result of the disturbances that took place in their absence. The multiple changes in family structure and roles at different levels, make it necessary that time be given to the process of adaptation. Mental health services are ideally suited to meet this kind of need for both the returning population and those who stayed behind. As there tends to be a shortage of skilled, professionally trained people to offer such a service, this calls for the training of local personnel. Mental health training for primary health care workers, the training of community volunteers, the preparation of material for human rights bodies, churches, schools and other organisations are all approaches that can be considered so as to widen the range of training that can be offered.

2. Programmes for Employment and Employment Advice

One of the basic findings of the present study was that only 28 per cent of the sample were in part-time or full-time employment. Almost half of the sample (47 per cent) were unemployed. Furthermore, those people with better levels of education had better chances of being employed. The limited access of returnees to job market points to the need for some form of employment advice service, especially for urban returnees who have to fit into the wage economies of these areas. Such advice

offices could provide a range of services both to returnees as well as to the population at large; these might include access to national newspapers, advice on job applications, information on existing job vacancies. The programme could also give advice on possibilities that exist for training programmes and skills upgrading. In this regard, advice offices could play an important role in liasing with employers and in identifying areas of skills shortage. It is worth noting that for the sample under study, the family, NCCR and friends and neighbours were ranked quite high as sources of informational support. Presumably, an important aspect of the information gathered this way was related to employment opportunities. The liberation movements and churches featured minimally as sources of information. Indeed, the NCCR in particular took it upon itself to provide employment advice services for a short period of time before it had to shut down its offices prematurely. This is all the more reason why employment advice should not be an *ad hoc* measure but should feature prominently in any repatriation plan.

3. Training and Education Programmes

In any returnee population, there will be those in need of retraining and educational upgrading. While such an initiative would logically form part of a broader national plan, it is important to avoid long delays before initiating retraining people who have come back after long periods away. In-service programmes would seem to lend themselves to the immediate needs of returnees. This is especially the case for those returnees with lower educational levels. As this study shows, people with higher levels of education fared better in terms of finding employment and hence were better off in terms of psychological well-being. Taking into consideration that some exiles will have acquired skills that are not relevant to their country's needs,

part of this programme should be to provide them with training courses that will provide them with skills that can match employment needs. One third of the sample in the present study did not have the opportunity to take up further education while in exile. Even so, about half could not find employment, meaning that in spite of having had some education, the South African job market could not accommodate all those who had received opportunities for further education. This implies that retooling people by way of skills training or upgrading would make them more marketable. An added bonus would be some measure of confidence and a sense of agency that would accrue from such training.

4. Programmes for job creation

The creation of economically viable employment-generating projects is a top priority for returning populations. This is to benefit people who are unlikely to fit into the formal wage sector of a country's economy. To accomplish this, structures have to be created with the objective of analysing and evaluating the establishment of projects proposed by returnees and to offer consultant services on an on-going basis. The key words here are continued sustainability of this kind of initiative. This is because while the establishment of a small business support programme for returnees was attempted by the NCCR for returning South African exiles, it only lasted about six months. It is highly unlikely that this programme had any impact on the lives of returnees. Instead of being built into the planning of the repatriation exercise, the inclusion of this component as part of the work of the NCCR came at the tail end of the NCCR's lifespan. Most of the projects that were approved ranged between manufacturing and services. These included projects like hawking, petty trading, brick making, import-export, knitting, carpentry and tailoring. Projects of this

nature normally take time before a sustainable margin of profit can be realised. Ideally, such projects have to be instituted right from the time returnees arrive so that they can start receiving some form of income early in the post-arrival phase. This way they can come to terms with the new economic conditions in their countries while deciding on other employment options. By virtue of having an income, returnees would be able to build on their early experiences and go on to more satisfying and better paying positions.

## A Development Based Model of Repatriation Assistance

Since economic integration has emerged as a key issue in this study, it raises a number of practical questions. For example, how can repatriation assistance be designed such that it mitigates the material difficulties that go hand in hand with repatriation? According to Kibreab (1991), repatriation assistance is by its very nature developmental. Return to situations of conflict necessitates this developmental approach as it often coincides with the resettlement of internally displaced people. Proper assistance therefore means reconstructing whole communities. Such assistance should ensure that both receiving communities and returnees are equitably assisted to avoid privileging only returnees. In the South African case, the problem of internal displacement far outweighed that of people who returned from exile. Precautions should therefore be taken to avoid exclusion of the most deprived groups in such a situation.

One way this developmental approach can be realised is by involving returnees themselves in efforts to integrate back. To begin with, we need to study the different

individual, family and group strategies that returned populations have used to cope with their lives. For example, the cultural dimension needs clarification. Did those returnees who went through traditional welcome ceremonies integrate better than those who did not? Furthermore, the capacity of familial networks to provide effective support needs to be given more attention. This is especially important since one of the key findings of this study is that the family was the main source of material, emotional and informational support. Since institutionally based intervention has not always proved effective, repatriation programmes need to support community efforts on their own terms. This in turn requires the enhancement of community based, long term development schemes that will build on the strategies communities have used to restructure themselves after being disrupted by movements of people in and out. Clearly, attention to such community efforts means a reversal of the top down approach so prevalent among relief agencies. The potential of community initiatives to inform policy is thus strongly indicated.

Calls for returnees to be involved at the planning stage as well as at the level of implementing programmes have been made repeatedly, but in most cases not realised. It is critical that this issue be given more priority if national and international repatriation programmes are to function effectively. In essence, this means that strategies should be well co-ordinated in order to develop a comprehensive, equitable and sustainable plan of action. Such a plan should ensure continuity between humanitarian relief, repatriation, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development in the country.

## Theoretical implications

From the point of view of research, one of the most immediate tasks for psychologists is to enlarge upon the as yet small database that currently exists about adaptation in the context of migration and return. The literature is growing, but via small-scale unco-ordinated studies. Questions concerning the extent to which re-entry difficulties influence returnees' adaptation over time have not been adequately explored. In particular, there is need to explore how different predictor variables interact to determine adaptation outcome. There is also need for more qualitative research that tells about the onset of different influences in the adaptation process. This should make significant contributions to understanding and facilitating psychological adaptation. Group dynamics in the adaptation process should also feature more.

With regard to theory building, more systematic testing and development of Berry's acculturation model is needed. As the model covers a wide range of variables, it lends itself to a variety of empirical studies in order to test the many hypotheses it is likely to generate. For example, the relationship between social support and coping in the adaptation process has not been adequately analysed. Models have to take better account of the positive outcomes of adaptation in the migratory context. Lastly, we need to develop theory that locates these processes in their social context by relating knowledge about group dynamics to established theories of adaptation.

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# APPENDIX

**Re-entry Adaptation Questionnaire**

## Home at Last

A General Survey of Reintegration Issues and Problems

This questionnaire is designed to find out about the experiences you have had in settling down since you came back to South Africa.

It aims to gather information on social/psychological problems of return in order to better understand and more effectively address reintegration following a period of exile.

Your co-operation will be highly appreciated.
Complete confidentiality is assured.

Thank-you

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DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
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# SECTION A

## NUMBER

## PERSONAL DATA

*Please tick or fill in the correct response on the dotted line:*

1. Gender

   a) male
   b) female

2. Age.....

3. Age at time of leaving for exile.....

4. Racial group :

| African | Coloured/Malay | Indian | White | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|

5. Country/Countries of exile :

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Europe | Africa | U.K. | U.S.A. | Canada | Asia | Eastern Europe |

6. In which country did you have most contact with the local people?

   .....

7. How long have you been back from exile?

   .....

8. Marital condition before going into exile :

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Single | Separated or divorced | Married, spouse stayed in South Africa | Married, both of you went into exile |

9. Marital condition now :

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Single | Separated<br>Widowed<br>Divorced | Married,<br>spouse<br>still in exile | Married, both<br>partners in<br>South Africa |

10. Nationality of spouse

| South African | Non-South African |
|---|---|

11. Occupation : .....

12. Did you at any time enrol for a course of study

| Yes | No |
|---|---|

13. Highest level of education reached : .....

14. Current employment situation

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Working full-time | | Seeking work | |
| Working part-time | | Volunteer work | |
| Not working (e.g. Retired) | | Student | |
| Self-employed | | | |

15. If not employed, which of the following are relevant to your failure to find work?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lack of appropriate skills or training | | Discrimination | |
| Qualifications not recognised | | Racism | |
| No demand for skills | | Illness | |
| Financial/Transport difficulties | | Other | |

15. How actively have you been trying to find employment?

| All the time | Very often | Regularly | Sometimes | Not at all |
|---|---|---|---|---|

## SECTION B

This section is about your exile experience and what you think of it now.

1. How often were you in touch with your family/friends in South Africa while in exile?

a) very often
b) often
c) sometimes
d) not so much
e) not at all

2. Did you suffer from loneliness?

a) all the time
b) quite a lot
c) a lot
d) not so much
e) not at all

3. How well would you say you coped in exile?

a) very well
b) fairly well
c) some difficulty
d) not so well
e) not at all well

4. How satisfied were you with life in exile?

a) very dissatisfied
b) dissatisfied
c) neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
d) satisfied
e) very satisfied

5. Did you come back because you wanted to or because you were forced to come back?

.....

.....

6. Before you came back, what were your expectations about the following?

| | Not at all hopeful | Not very hopeful | A little hopeful | Hopeful | Very hopeful |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Getting a job | | | | | |
| Getting proper housing | | | | | |
| Having enough money to live on | | | | | |
| Dismantling of Apartheid | | | | | |
| Having access to equal educational opportunities | | | | | |
| Having a better life than before exile | | | | | |

## SECTION C

A) In respect to the following today, to what extent have your expectations been fulfilled?

| | Not at all | Not very much | To some extent | Mainly | Totally |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Job satisfaction | | | | | |
| Housing | | | | | |
| Money to live on | | | | | |
| Freedom | | | | | |
| Education | | | | | |
| Better Life | | | | | |

B) For the following question please choose your responses for each question from the box below.

| | |
|---|---|
| a | **Family** |
| b | **Neighbours / Colleagues** |
| c | **NCCR / Fellow Returnees** |
| d | **Political organisations** |
| e | **Churches** |

From the box on the previous page, please rate in order of importance the people or organisations in your social life who have:

1. Expressed interest in your well-being?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |

2. Provided you with an opportunity to talk about difficulties of return?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |

3. Provided you with a place to stay when you needed it?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |

4. Provided you with financial support / food etc.?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |

5. Provided you with means of transport when you needed it?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |

6. Gave you information on how to go about with your daily life? (e.g. getting a job, finding accommodation)

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |

7. Gave you feedback on how you are getting on with the tasks in 6 above?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |

8. Invited you to some social activity?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |

# SECTION D

It is completely normal for a person who has been away for a long time to have difficulty in adjusting to his/her home country. Please indicate how much difficulty you have had with the following since you came back by writing the appropriate number in the box next to each item:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| No difficulty | Little difficulty | Some difficulty | A lot of difficulty | Extreme difficulty |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Finding somewhere to live | |
| 2. Housing conditions | |
| 3. Having enough money to live on | |
| 4. Being unemployed or losing your job | |
| 5. Working conditions | |
| 6. Adjusting to changed living conditions | |
| 7. Your children adjusting to life here | |
| 8. Sharing your exile experiences with friends/family that you left behind | |
| 9. Confronting changes in the family that you left behind | |
| 10. Meeting family expectations | |
| 11. Experiencing an atmosphere of tension in the country | |
| 12. Being harassed, intimidated or assaulted by security forces | |
| 13. Being discriminated against (e.g. in shops, at work) | |

| | |
|---|---|
| 14. Inadequate community facilities (e.g. health care, transportation, education) | |

## SECTION E

In the past seven days, what have been the 3 most stressful problems you have had?

.....

.....

.....

Could you answer YES or NO to the following ways in which you have tried to deal with these particular problems:

1. Double your efforts to make things work.

| YES | NO |
|---|---|

2. Talked to someone to find out more about the situation.

| YES | NO |
|---|---|

3. Hoped a miracle would happen.

| YES | NO |
|---|---|

4. Tried to keep your feelings to yourself.

| YES | NO |
|---|---|

5. Concentrated on something good that could come out of the whole thing.

| YES | NO |
|---|---|

6. Blamed yourself.

| YES | NO |
|---|---|

7. Went on as if nothing had happened.

| YES | NO |
|---|---|

8. Stood your ground and fought for what you wanted.

| YES | NO |
|---|---|

9. Made a plan of action and followed it.

| YES | NO |
|---|---|

10. Talked to someone who could do something concrete about the situation.

| YES | NO |
|---|---|

11. Wished that the situation would go away or somehow be over with.

| YES | NO |
|---|---|

12. Kept others from knowing how bad things were.

| YES | NO |
|---|---|

13. Thought that the problems you have had have made you a better person.

| YES | NO |
|---|---|

14. Realised you brought the problem on yourself.

| YES | NO |
|---|---|

15. Refused to take the problem seriously.

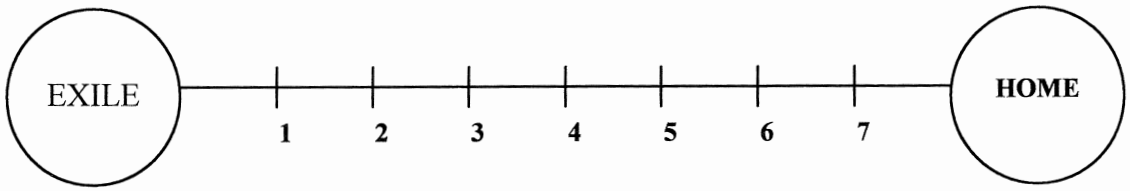
| YES | NO |
|---|---|

16. Got angry with the person who caused the problem.

| YES | NO |
|---|---|

## SECTION F

For the following six questions indicate the number which best shows on the line how close you feel to one or the other end of the two places in the circles:




1. Where you feel you are right now

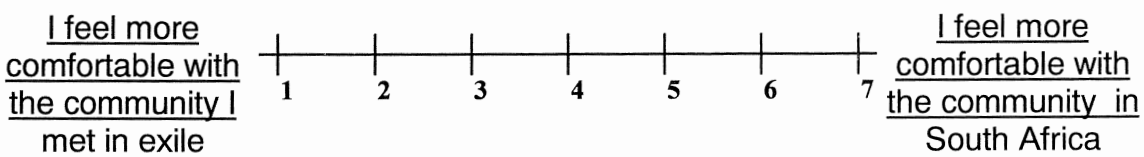
2. Where did you feel you were when you first arrived .....

3. Which of the two places feels more like home? .....

4. If you had the choice between the two, where would you be? .....

5. Which of the two places gives you the opportunity to be the kind of person you would like to be? .....

6. Which of the two statements below are you closer to? .....




## SECTION G

1. How satisfied are you with the house/flat you live in?

a) completely satisfied
b) very satisfied
c) fairly satisfied
d) a little dissatisfied
e) very dissatisfied

2. How satisfied are you with your family life?

a) completely satisfied
b) very satisfied
c) fairly satisfied
d) a little dissatisfied
e) very dissatisfied

3. How do you feel about your neighbours/friends?

a) pleased
b) mostly satisfied
c) mixed
d) mostly dissatisfied
e) unhappy

4. How do you feel about people's attitudes to you as a returning exile?

a) pleased
b) mostly satisfied
c) mixed
d) mostly dissatisfied
e) unhappy

5. How do you feel about safety in your neighbourhood?

a) pleased
b) mostly satisfied
c) mixed
d) mostly dissatisfied
e) unhappy

6. How satisfied are you with the means of earning a living that you have?

a) completely satisfied
b) very satisfied
c) fairly satisfied
d) a little dissatisfied
e) very dissatisfied

7. How satisfied are you with job-security in South Africa?

a) completely satisfied
b) very satisfied
c) fairly satisfied
d) a little dissatisfied
e) very dissatisfied

8. How much do you like your present job?

a) like it very much
b) like it fairly well
c) in-between
d) dislike it somehow
e) dislike it very much

9. How satisfied are you with services in your community (e.g. transport, health care, education, recreation)?

a) not at all
b) not very much
c) in-between
d) quite well
e) very satisfied

10. Overall, how well do you think you have adjusted to life in South Africa?

a) not at all
b) not very well
c) undecided
d) rather well
e) very well

## SECTION H

During the past few weeks have you:

1. Felt particularly excited or interested in something

| YES | NO |
|---|---|

2. Felt angry because people do not understand you

| YES | NO |
|---|---|

3. Felt proud because someone complimented you on something you had done

| YES | NO |
|---|---|

4. Felt very lonely or remote from other people

| YES | NO |
|---|---|

5. Been pleased about having accomplished something

| YES | NO |
|---|---|

6. Felt bored

| YES | NO |
|---|---|

7. Felt on top of the world

| YES | NO |
|---|---|

8. Felt helpless because you are not able to meet your obligations

| YES | NO |
|---|---|

9. Felt things were going your way

| YES | NO |
|---|---|

10. Felt upset because someone criticized you

| YES | NO |
|---|---|

Thank-you for your co-operation and time!