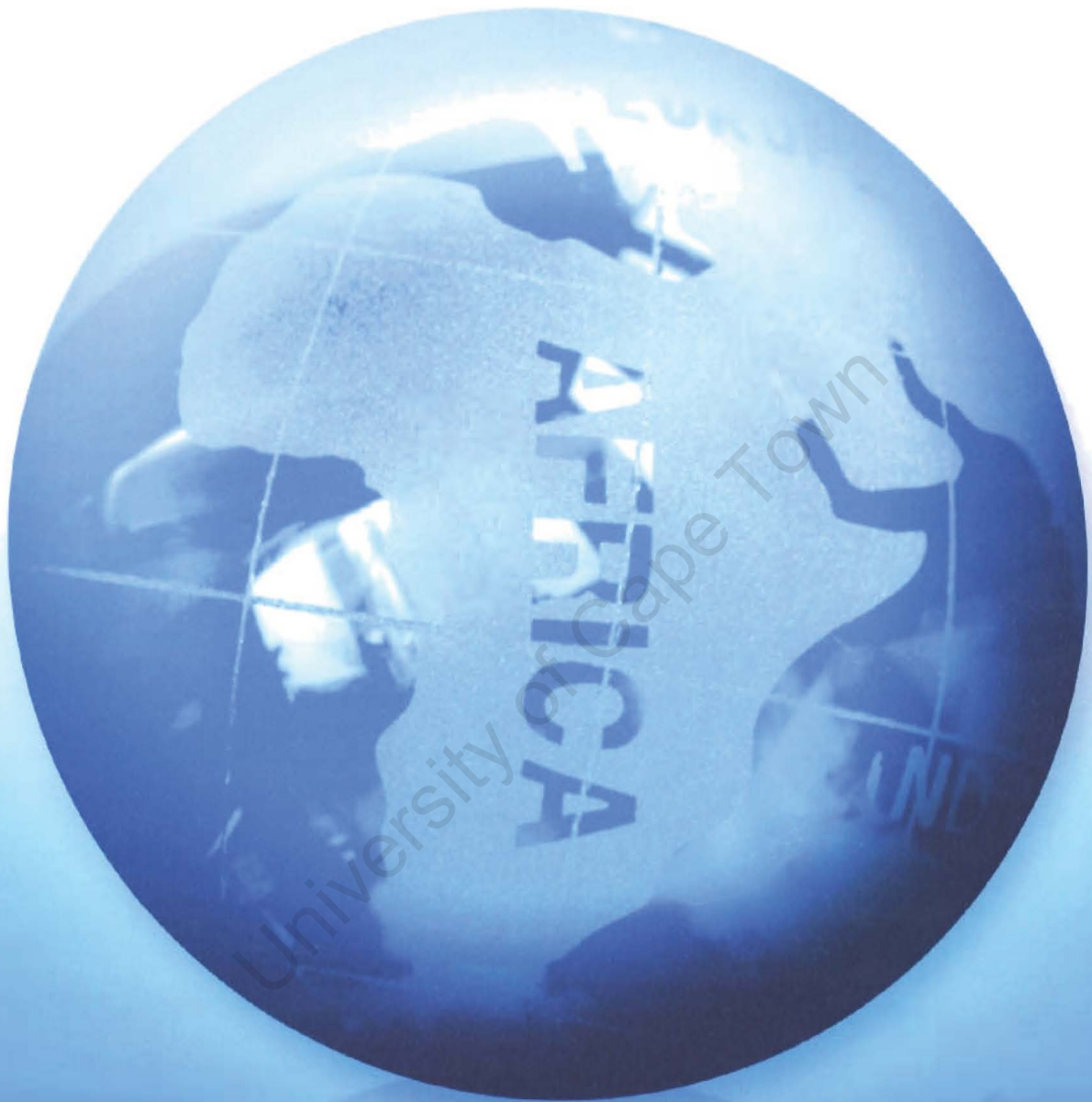


The lived experience of migrating women spouses

A phenomenological study



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In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
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Declaration

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Christina Louise Lindhardt

28.11.2025

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Abstract

Migration has become more common as globalisation has required more and more people to be transferred to countries other than their own for short or long term placements. Numerous women experience migration due to their husbands being transferred, yet the literature does not reveal much about how women adapt to their new situation as migrating women. If there are implications of this phenomenon for health, little research has been done to describe this.

The aim of this study was to explore the lived experiences of women who have migrated as expatriates. The study further aimed to ascertain if there were health effects as a result of migration, and how these are understood and experienced. This aim was achieved as the interviewed women all expressed health related issues relating to their experience of migration.

The phenomenological research method described by Giorgi was used. Six individual interviews were conducted with women who had experienced migration and five themes emerged:

- Feeling alienated
- Coping - struggling to find my feet
- Occupation – doing something worthwhile
- Disempowerment - pulled up by the roots
- Transition – being “in between”.

The study shows that migration has an impact on health and well-being for the expatriate woman. With increasing migration due to the demands of globalisation there are important implications not only for health professionals but also for international and multinational organisations and institutions which require their staff to relocate as expatriates.

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I dedicate this thesis to my participants and to the expatriate women migrants whose voices they present.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

“‘We’re being transferred’. Powerful, powerful words. Few interrupt the daily flow of family life as thoroughly. Do you remember where you were the last time you heard those words? For many people it’s rather like when they heard of the landing on the moon or the death of a national hero: the memory becomes frozen in time and frozen in memory”.

Schaetti (n.d.)

The second half of the twentieth century has been termed “the age of migration”. Especially in the last quarter with its increased globalisation our understanding of the complexities of migration has advanced considerably (Castles & Miller 2003; Arango 2000).

Migration has traditionally been viewed from the perspective of men as it has generally appeared to be related to the benefits they are pursuing (Boyd & Grieco 2003). Despite the fact that women often accompany their spouses, they have largely been ignored in migration research and literature (Iglesias, Robertson, Johansson, Engfeldt & Sundquist 2003; Shaffer & Harrison, 2001; Anderson & Hatton 2000; Zlotnik 1995).

Migrating women can be categorised as follows:

- Women who have moved accompanying their husband as an expatriate but planning to return to their home country after a certain period.
- Women who have left their home country permanently but essentially remain attached to the country they have left, i.e. retain strong emotional ties.

- Women who leave a country permanently and embrace the country in which they become domiciled.
- Women who seek work in another country for a period of time either as legal or illegal workers.
- Women who are displaced due to war, famine or other ecological disasters.

(Sweetman 1998)

In this study, migrating women are regarded as women who accompany their spouses abroad. When they are expatriated they may not know the precise duration of their stay. In this study the phrases 'migrating women' and 'expatriate woman' will be used interchangeably.

In this chapter, I will introduce migration broadly and outline my background as researcher in relation to the topic chosen.

1.1 Background

Migration is a human constant. Over the past 100 years migration theories have been developed but these have been focused primarily on how men experienced migration (Anderson & Hatton, 2000; Zlotnik, 1995). With increased globalisation, more and more people are being transferred to countries other than their own.

Ravenstein (1889, cited in Seeberg 2000) was one of the early writers on migration noting more than 100 years ago that, even though the numbers of women migrants exceeded those of men, little attention had been paid to women in migration theory.

Women who migrate have seldom been included in research (Iglesias *et al* 2003; Anderson & Hatton, 2000; Zlotnik, 1995). During the past 20 years increased attention has been paid to women and how they experience migration – mainly because of the greater emphasis on feminist and gender perspectives in the literature. Issues around the invisibility of women are often addressed from a feminist perspective and the tendency to undervalue women’s experiences or perspectives in migration is being explored (Boyd & Grieco 2003).

Traditionally women were regarded as waiting in their home country for their husbands to return or as passive dependants following their husbands. They were viewed as the migrants’ wives rather than as female migrants in their own right, and thus their role in the migration process and in the development of migration theories was considered less important (Simon & Brettell 1986). Meyer, Torres, Cermeno, Melean and Monzon (2003) state that migrant women are not always included in research. They concur with Hugo (2000) stating that in international migration statistics women migrants are often systematically ignored. Hugo (2000) further emphasises that this may be a reflection of these studies having been conducted by men. It might also reflect the assumption that migrating women are “passive dependants” of men and not regarded as key decision makers in the process. Many migrant women work in the home or even outside the home, but this work is not acknowledged by their husbands or society, and thus is unreported. Often, it is the man who is the key respondent in censuses and surveys and who is thus responsible for providing information about himself as well as the entire household.

For the past 7 years I have been an expatriate woman migrant. Living in an environment with migrating women from different areas I have been progressively exposed to a variety of issues relating to migration. I have often wondered how women coped with migration, especially as many of the women complained of not being happy and experiencing health problems. During this time I

read a book written by a journalist Anne Vibeke Holst (1999), which was based on the author's personal experiences. I realised there were similarities between her descriptions of life of migrating women and what I had experienced living among the same category of women.

As a Health Visitor I have become increasingly interested in how complaints about health, well-being and unhappiness originated and what triggered them. It appeared to me that many of the expatriate women I met, both through my job prior to expatriation and in my daily life as an expatriate woman, sought help and frequently consulted the medical doctors, without finding a solution to their troubles.

Some of the literature indicates that there is a link between migration and health - that the experience of migration is accompanied by stressors for the individual as well as for the whole family, but is particularly pronounced in the female population (Bhugra 2004a; Iglesias *et al* 2003; Copeland & Norell 2002).

1.2 Problem statement

Numerous women migrate due to their husbands being transferred to a country other than their own, for career advancement and other reasons i.e. increasing globalisation. There has been little focus in either the general or the nursing literature on how expatriate women who accompany their spouses adapt to their new situation. Increasingly women are accompanying their spouses. Thus there is a need to explore the effects of migration on this group of women more thoroughly and consider if there are implications for their well-being.

1.3 Research question

The title of this mini thesis is:

The lived experience of migrating women spouses.

The following research question was identified

What is the lived experience of migration of expatriate women who accompany their spouses abroad?

1.4 Objectives of the research

- To achieve a greater understanding of expatriate women's experience of migration.
- To ascertain if migration has any implications for expatriate women's health and well-being by doing a phenomenological study.
- To make recommendations arising from the findings of this research to health care providers and organisations dealing with the expatriate community, where appropriate.

1.5 Statement of purpose

The aim of this study is to achieve a greater understanding of the lived experience of expatriate migrating women spouses.

1.6 Significance of the study

The impact of globalisation and the increasing numbers of people moving around the world has meant a corresponding increase in the numbers of women accompanying their husbands in expatriate postings.

The experience of migration will become more common and its impact on the daily lives of expatriate women could have significance for health care in order to secure their well-being. There is an increasing focus on the topic of migration as more and more people are migrating. Despite this, migration as a phenomenon has been overlooked as a health issue within the nursing profession. Therefore there is a need to develop a better understanding of the impact of migration on women specifically expatriates following their spouses and thus creating awareness and opening up a dialogue around this phenomenon.

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Chapter 2. Literature review

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of undertaking the literature review is to help the researcher to identify and refine the research problem. In this chapter, the following will be presented: a discussion on the use of literature in phenomenology; the search strategy used and the literature found through the search strategy. Literature relating to methodological approaches will be discussed in chapter 3 on methodology.

2.2 The use of literature in phenomenology

When undertaking a qualitative phenomenological study there are several considerations before actual data collection can start. The researcher may choose to follow one of several generally accepted schools, ranging from consulting the literature thoroughly before data collection to not consulting literary sources at all before data collection. The arguments for one method in preference to another are the following:

Reason and Rowan (1981) state that researchers should choose not to consult literature at all before data collection. A thorough investigation of the literature prior to data collection may put the credibility of the research at risk, as the researcher may be influenced by the assumptions made by others in the field.

Oiler supports this view by stating that "since the researcher's intent is to bracket explanations about the phenomenon, the literature should be delayed until the data is in" (Oiler 1982, p. 180).

Becby (2000) states that when researchers use phenomenology as a research method, they should be aware that both understanding and derived meaning should come from the data collected rather than from previous readings or their own experience.

Field and Morse (1985) emphasize the possible advantages of examining previous work, especially as a guideline for novice researchers. Oiler-Boyd and Munhall (1993) elaborate on this view stating that in order to see a phenomenon clearly, researchers must bring the phenomenon into view by explaining what thoughts they have about it. Reading alternative views on the phenomenon may help this process.

For this study I have chosen to follow Giorgi's phenomenological approach (This is discussed in detail in chapter 3). Giorgi recommends that one should not consult the literature before the data has been obtained and primary analysis is done (Giorgi 1975). I sought out literature to guide me about the topic in general to justify the need for such a study, to help refine the research question and to guide the development of the research design.

At this stage the literature review is limited. This is consistent with the choice of Giorgi's phenomenological methodology for this study. This requires that the literature review be completed after the data collection and primary analysis. This will then indicate the direction for the remainder of the literature review, which is documented in chapter five. Thus, at this stage, I have not searched literature specifically around the lived experiences of expatriate woman spouses. Neither did I do a review on health and well-being at this stage as it could influence the data collection process. This, however, is also addressed in chapter five.

2.3 Literature review search strategy

2.3.1 Databases consulted

As the topic being researched falls broadly into health and humanities, the initial literature search was conducted using CINAHL and MEDLINE (PubMed). Additional databases used for searching were:

- **Abstract online.** This database is produced by ProQuest Information and Learning. It consists of more than 1.7 million references covering almost all dissertations submitted to universities in the USA since 1961. In addition, the database has been supplemented with dissertations from 50 British universities.
- **Wilson Social Sciences Abstracts** produced by The H. W. Wilson Company, consists of more than 600 000 references to literature related to sociology, psychology and anthropology. The Wilson Social Sciences Abstracts has an index of more than 500 English journals and covers the time period from 1983.
- **Sociological Abstracts (SA)** is published by Sociological Abstracts Inc. and contains more than 500 000 references to English published literature, primarily in the form of journals. It covers the international sociological literature with its sub disciplines as well as a number of related disciplines like social psychology, social anthropology, criminology and social politics, from 1963.
- **PsycInfo** contains more than 1 million journals, chapters in books, books as well as reports and is published by The American Psychological Association. It covers a range of disciplines, including medicine, psychiatry, nursing, sociology, education, pharmacology, physiology, linguistics, anthropology and law, dating from 1967.

- Certain data has been extracted from internet sources e.g.

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/plat.htm>, and

<http://www.migration.org>

The Migration Information source is a project of the Migration Policy Institute. The Migration Information publishes the latest news on migration and migration issues on their website. The project is overseen by an advisory board and the data is peer reviewed.

The literature has been searched and structured into four distinct categories: literature accessed from the internet, literature accessed from the above-mentioned databases in journal form, literature accessed from books and literature accessed from newspapers and magazines. The motivation for including sources like books, magazines and newspapers has been the lack of data in peer reviewed journals. Further, the data from books and magazines explores the experiences of expatriate migrating women from another perspective. The results from this search essentially form the background for the study.

2.3.2 Time period of review

1995 was a milestone from a gender perspective with the 4th UN Conference held in Beijing. At the conference the importance of raising awareness of women and gender issues - including migration was discussed. The Beijing Platform for Action is regarded as a significant milestone in terms of issues especially relating to women and migration (Oishi 2005; United Nations 1995). Publications between 1995 and the end of 2005 were initially chosen for the literature review. However, due to the limited amount of literature I was able to access, it became necessary to include literature more than ten years old.

2.3.3 Keywords

The following keywords were used in various combinations:

'Migration and women', 'gender and migration', 'expatriation', 'spouses and migration', 'expatriation and spouses', 'families and migration', 'health and migration' and 'health and expatriation'.

2.3.4 Geographical region

The literature search aimed to cover relevant literature on international migration worldwide. This was done in order to get a broad description of the phenomenon from authors with different cultural backgrounds.

2.3.5 Language of publication

Documents, journals and books published in English and Danish were reviewed. Due to the language capacity of the researcher only articles written in English and Danish were included. English abstracts of non English articles were also included.

2.3.6 Type of migration and scope

The focus was on migrating women following their husbands as expatriates. To be able to gain an insight into the history of migration theories, literature that explains migration generally has been included. General theories of migration will be presented, as well as different categories of migration, women and gender issues relating to migration, and the range of reasons for women's migration (expatriation). In this study the terms 'women migrants', 'expatriate women' and 'expatriate spouses' will be used interchangeably.

2.3.7 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Having searched the keywords the initial literature review did not yield much. I therefore extended the search to include families, gender and male migration to get a broader understanding of the phenomenon. Exclusion criteria were immigrants, migration due to war and disasters, refugees, literature on single migrants (both men and women), families (parents of migrants) and expatriate missionaries.

2.4 Presentation of literature - Migration

The British Encyclopaedia (1999) defines the word **migration** as “people on the move”. It also refers to ‘immigration’ and ‘emigration’, both of which come from the Latin word *migratio*. This can mean from the countryside to the city or it can be from one country to another. It can also refer to an action – a move which is made by one or more people in response to a tragic event like war or natural disaster or because the migrating person or people more actively chose to move, aspiring to better living conditions (Seeberg 2000; Sowell 1996). Migration may also be defined as a collective action, arising out of social change and affecting the whole society in both sending and receiving areas (Castless & Miller 2003).

2.4.1 Historical developments

In human history, international migration is a constant rather than an aberration. Since prehistoric time people have been migrating, and world history is filled with descriptions of how and where these migrations have taken place (Castless & Miller 2003).

In the 19th century scientific disciplines started to develop theories around migration. Ravenstein, a geographer is considered to be the scientist who pioneered the migration theory. Towards the end of the 19th century he formulated laws on migration arising from theories of how populations shifted.

These 'laws' are based upon theories which are 'push- pull' theories, differentiating between the factors that motivate people to leave a certain area and those that seem to attract them to another (Castles & Miller 2003; Arango 2000; Ravenstein 1889, cited in Seeberg 2000).

Modern theorists claim that this approach to the migration concept is outdated and that an understanding of today's migration should be based on rational consideration of the individual person or groups with shared characteristics (Castles & Miller 2003; Arango 2000). It can be difficult to explain why it is not always the poorest people who migrate and why people migrate to already overpopulated areas: for example, the increasing number of nurses who migrate to large cities in order to get better jobs, even though those cities are overpopulated (Kingma 2006; Parrenas 2005; Linchan & Scullion 2004). Other authors state that this kind of example can be interpreted as a limitation of the rational theory (Seeberg 2000; Arango 2000).

Generally speaking migration theories do not address the gender aspects of international migration. This is largely due to the assumption that most migrant workers are men and that women are their dependants. Though this has changed over the past two decades, few theorists have incorporated women into international migration theory (Boyd & Grieco 2003; Hugo 2000).

2.4.2 Theoretical developments

Theoretical developments in migration research within the last 25 years can be divided into two main streams. The first is a debate that has led to the revision of the traditional perception of migration as a process in which people make rational choices to optimize the economic gain. Secondly, migration theories start recognising that female migrants make up a significant portion of the total migrant population and therefore should be factored into migration policies in a significant way (International Organization of Migration 2003; Arango 2000).

Arango (2000) states that there are many new migration theories to support the development of our understanding of migration. It is not my intention to present a critical review of the migration theories as this is not the scope of this study, but rather I will present a canvass of trends of migration theory development and those are most applicable to this study. This will provide a sense of the developing trends in the area of migration theory.

2.4.2.1 The Human Capital Theory of Migration originated in neo-classical economics and states that people migrate for the purpose of improving their economic status. This theory was inspired by Sjastaad in the early 1960s (Sjastaad 1962, cited in Arango 2000).

2.4.2.2 The Theory of Development in a Dual Economy was developed in the mid 1950s and although not specifically a migration theory, it became the forerunner of modern migration theories. It dealt with the role that labour migration played in economic development, with the capital sectors needing the labour from the agricultural sectors of developing countries in order for the developing countries economies to grow. The migration of labour is facilitated by the attraction of higher wages in the capital sector. This theory implies that female migrants should benefit from the migration by being freed from domestic service as the capital sector takes over their workloads through increased mechanisation. The women would also become part of the labour force and thus benefit from economic development (Elson 1999; Arango 2000).

2.4.2.3 The Neo-Classical Migration Theory is rooted in capitalist ideology and encompasses a combination of the structural reasons for migration and the individual behavioural reasons for migration. Structural reasons for migration focus on the worldwide differences in labour distribution. These can be measured by wages and standards of living. These will affect migration patterns as migrants seek the best possible economic outcomes for themselves. The individual will

seek to migrate to the country that provides the best benefits. This theory was developed by Lewis in 1954 and remains one of the most influential theories in the area of migration (Lewis 1954, cited in Arango 2000).

2.4.2.4 The Dependency Theory evolved as a Marxist challenge to the Neo-classical understanding of migration and was developed in the 1970s. This theory states that developed countries receive migrants from developing countries, often the more skilled and educated individuals – and Dependency Theory therefore reduces migration to a tool of the developed countries for maintaining their position (Fawcett 1989; Arango 2000).

2.4.2.5 The Dual Labour Market Theory focuses primarily on **immigration** and the relationships between structural factors and migrant motives. This has arisen from the labour market being split into two different markets: the capital intensive labour market and the labour intensive labour market. The theory was first introduced by Priore in 1979 (Priore 1979, cited in Arango 2000).

2.4.2.6 The World System Theory states that migration is the result of the effects of globalization on the economies of countries. Increased globalization and widespread capitalism have led to much greater labour mobility: people can migrate in order to access better economic opportunities for themselves. This theory was developed by Wallerstein in the mid-1970s (Wallerstein 1974, cited in Arango 2000; Fawcett & Arnold 1987).

2.4.2.7 The New Economics of Professional Migration Theory is a recently developed theory stating that migration is influenced both by factors that affect migrants in their home countries and the factors in the migrant's families. Families do not necessarily look to maximize their income at any cost. Migrants do not look exclusively at the wage differential between countries to inform their

decision about migration: a number of social and cultural factors are considered as well. This theory was developed by Stark in the early 1990s (Stark 1991, cited in Arango 2000).

2.4.2.8 Migration Network Theory seeks to explain migration in terms of the networks between migrants and people from their home country. These links reduce the cost of migration as well as the risk for potential migrants due to availability of help with finding jobs and accommodation as well as the possibility of financial assistance. The negative aspect of this network is the criminal element involved in migration: using the network to traffic women into situations of degrading labour or sexual exploitation. This theory was developed by Massey in 1987 (Arango 2000; Massey *et al* 1987).

These more or less recently developed migration theories were mentioned in brief to provide a picture of the complexities within the phenomenon of migration itself. 'The New Economy of Professional Migration Theory' and 'The World System Theory' are the migration theories that are most valid in relation to expatriate women migrants. 'The Human Capital Theory of Migration', which focuses on the economic reasons for migration by men, with women's contribution to the labour market mostly being underestimated, also falls into the category of theories relevant to expatriate women in the cases where the expatriate women cannot obtain jobs. These theories encompass the increased globalisation and the fact that people do not only migrate for economic purposes. As far as I have been able to determine from the literature on migration, there remain theoretical gaps in this area, especially as the world expands due to increased globalisation. An example could be that the migration research has mainly been gender insensitive.

2.4.3 Different types of migration

The main types of migration discussed in the literature are:

- **Forced migration**, where the movement of the migrant is not voluntary and usually the result of events such as natural disasters or armed conflicts (IOM 2003; Sweetman 1998).
- **Irregular migration**, where migrants seek to gain residence in a new country through illegal means (IOM 2003; Sweetman 1998).
- **Return migration**, where migrants return to their country of origin, either voluntarily or not voluntarily, after spending at least one year in another country (IOM 2003; Sweetman 1998).
- **Migration of women on their own** in order to earn money for their families left behind in their home country, e.g. working as nurses, housemaids, entertainers, factory workers or in the sex industry (George 2005; Oishi 2005; Parrenas 2005; IOM 2003; Jachimowics & Meyers 2002).
- **Migration of women and children following their husband's and father's families** to settle in a new country (Jones 2005; IOM, 2003; Castless & Miller, 2003; Kofman *et al* 2000).

Other categories of migrants include

- **Asylum seekers** who migrate across international borders without having obtained refugee status. These are refugees who fear persecution and choose to migrate.
- **Frontier workers**, migrant workers who return to their nation of origin at least once a week from the country in which they have found employment.
- **Seasonal workers** who migrate to work in another country for certain periods of the year and other economic migrants who leave their country to obtain a better quality of life.

- **People migrating due to globalization** and the increasing demand of highly qualified people e.g. executives, professionals and experts. These people are sent overseas to work either by their companies or by international organisations (Castles & Miller 2003).

The literature describes this last category as the new migrating group: often men married to women who are highly qualified as well and already working in their home country prior to migrating (Copeland & Norell 2002; Hardill & Macdonald 1998; Buijs 1993).

2.4.4 Women and migration

In the literature of the past 10 years few instances were found that paid particular attention to women migrants as expatriates. Most of the literature refers to how men experience migration, only referring to women as the index migrants under circumstances such as war, natural disasters or when seeking employment themselves (Boyd & Grieco 2003; Castles & Miller 2003; Kofman *et al* 2000).

Before the 1970s the predominant concern of migration literature was men (and their wives and children), with limited attention paid to women in their own right. Then the women's movement started questioning the invisibility of female migrants in migration theory (Boyd & Grieco 2003). Women were considered passive participants in the migration process and the activities of migrating women were regarded as being limited to the home (Boyd & Grieco 2003). Research in the 1970s and 1980s started including women, but this was not accompanied by a major shift in the theory relating to migration of women. One of the central issues during this period was whether migration "modernized" women: liberated them from their traditional values and behaviours as housewives (Boyd & Grieco 2003).

After the 1970s, research showed a greater degree of the “mix and stir” approach which meant that women in the migration context were incorporated into already existing theories of migration – against the background of men (Boyd & Grieco 2003). Research into migration did not question any of the theoretical models about why people moved, where they went or how they eventually became integrated into new societies. The focus was specifically on how migration was experienced by men and women as individuals, e.g. men migrating to Europe or women migrating in their own capacities as workers (Boyd & Grieco 2003).

The neoclassical economic models and the “push-pull” demographic models from the 1970s and 1980s saw migration as an act of individual decision. The suggestion was that, because of women’s responsibilities as wives and mothers, and men being looked upon as the breadwinners, women were less likely to participate in the decision making and more likely to leave the migration decisions to men. This also impacted the decisions when the women were entering the job market in the new country when they joined their husbands, for example which jobs were available to them. (Boyd & Grieco 2003; Copeland & Norell 2002; Zlotnik 1995). Other new ideas in economics theory state that the family or household are important in decision making. Decisions regarding migration do not always benefit all members of a family. A family or a household is a unit where production and redistribution take place, and within the unit people with different activities and interests can come into conflict with one another. In a family or a household there are ongoing power dynamics and due to different activities and interests, men’s and women’s choices may not always coincide. This can influence the decision-making about who migrates, for how long and to which country (Boyd & Grieco 2003).

The percentage of women in the migrant population, including both permanent and temporary migrants has been increasing since the Second World War and now women comprise the majority

of international migrants (Zlotnik 1998). Between 1965 and 1990 the proportion of women migrating worldwide has increased by 63% (from 35 million to 57 million), 8% more than the increase in the number of male migrants (Zlotnik 1998).

2.4.4.1 Reasons and experiences for women migrating

One of the reasons for the lack of information about female migration has been linked to the Human Capital Theory of migration which focuses on the economic reasons for migration by men, with women's contribution to the labour market mostly being underestimated (Instraw 1994). Theories suggest that women migrate for two reasons: gender empowerment, or in order to improve their economic potential (Sweetman 1998; Blumberg 1991).

Migration theories tend to view women as wives and mothers. However, it is emphasised that there is diversity in women's experiences and the fact that women migrate for reasons other than being a partner and following their husbands and families. Women migrate in order to look after themselves, as a result of being sent out by companies or organizations in their own right or to join family members who have already migrated (Kofman 2000; Zlotnik 1995).

In many of the countries that accept migrants there are specific laws and regulations regarding migration. These may influence both the migrating men and women (Zard 2005; Boyd & Grieco 2003). Some receiving countries assume that women have a 'dependent' status. In official papers and passports women are classified in terms of their relationship to men, for example as wives or daughters (Zlotnik 1995). Thus women are placed in a 'family role' due to their status as 'dependants' rather than an 'index migrants'. This might be one of the reasons for what is described as the vulnerability of migrant women (Boyd & Grieco 2003; Copeland & Norell 2002; Zlotnik, 1995) because their 'voices' are barely being heard from the positions within their households. The

migrant women are thus remaining 'invisible' as they are not economically active in the labour market nor strong enough to obtain a position of their own. If the migrant women can work, they may be affected by the traditional sex role stereotyping and images regarding working women they encounter in receiving countries. This may influence the kind of work the woman can obtain and many women find that the work they eventually can obtain is within the realm of typical 'female' occupations like domestic service, childcare and nursing (Zard 2005; Boyd & Grieco 2003).

2.4.5 Expatriation

Expatriate comes from the Latin meaning 'out of the fatherland' (ex + patri). According to The British Encyclopaedia (1999) an expatriate is "a person living away from his own country". Adler (2001) defines an expatriate as an employee who is sent by a company to live and work in a foreign country. Certo (2005) expands on this stating that expatriates are members of organizations who live and work in countries where they do not have citizenship. The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Management (1997) states that when a person has an expatriate assignment, the employee's home base of business operations is in a foreign country.

Liu and Shaffer (2005) report that adjustment to changes and the expatriate lifestyle can be very stressful. Adler (2001) and Copeland and Norell (2002) describe the challenges the overseas assignment may hold for the non-working expatriate women following their spouses. They discuss the disruption in social support and the difficulties in finding new support systems as well as the stresses associated with the expatriate women's work situations and the cultural changes they negotiate. They further discuss the increased awareness of the effect of expatriation on dual-income marriages. An example of this might be a wife earning a high income in the home country or pursuing a career, for instance as a lawyer or doctor, which is not transferable during the expatriate assignment, so that her career is put on hold during this period (Hardill & MacDonald 1998).

Conclusion

The nature of the demand for and supply of migrants has significantly changed during the last 50 years as a result of globalisation, the age profile of the population in many developed countries, the shortage of skilled labour in both developed and developing countries and major changes in political and economic systems in some East European and Asian countries. The International Organization for Migration mentions these factors in their World Migration Report for 2005. In this report they explore the effect of globalisation and the increasing global demand for migration due to an expanding world (International Organization for Migration 2005). Their conclusion is that attention must be paid to this phenomenon and that protocols should be made in order to follow the development of the increased migration of people worldwide.

As migration due to globalisation increases and the world experiences 'people on the move' there is a need for a new understanding on women's roles in the migration process. There is very little written about the expatriate wife's experience of migration and almost no record of the impact of this experience on her health. I believe that this is an area which is under-researched and this justifies the need for the present study.

Chapter 3. Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research methodology, data collection and analysis. Qualitative methodology, specifically a phenomenological approach was selected as it was the most appropriate way of gaining an understanding of the subjects' lived experience (Creswell 1998; Giorgi 1975).

3.2 Motivation for choice of Methodology

In qualitative research the focus is on the participants and the meaning and interpretation of how they describe their world. Phenomenology is a qualitative inductive research approach (Giorgi 2005; 1997). The word "phenomenon" is used to describe the human lived experiences of a particular aspect of life. The nature of a phenomenon could be an everyday feeling like being tired or an experience like that of a child on its first bicycle ride. The purpose of phenomenology is for the researcher to make an attempt to describe and understand the essence of these experiences. Phenomenology is accessible to all researchers and suited to the study of abstract concepts such as care, love and happiness: issues which are difficult to quantify. Phenomenology is a way of looking closely at what seems to be ordinary, everyday experiences and to see the world through another person's eyes (Giorgi 2005; Stephenson & Corben 1997).

The aim of this study was to explore the lived experience of women who migrate following their spouses. Thus a phenomenological approach was most appropriate as the basic aim of the phenomenological method is to do justice to the lived experience of human phenomena (Giorgi 1985).

3.3 Phenomenology

Phenomenology deals with what we call human awareness or what we understand as the awareness of human experiences (Pallikkathayil & Morgan 1991; Giorgi 1975). A phenomenological study describes the meaning of the lived experiences of several individuals around a concept or phenomenon. Phenomenologists explore the structures of consciousness in human experiences (Polkinghorne 1989, cited in Creswell 1998).

3.3.1 Phenomenology as a research approach

Phenomenology has its roots in both philosophy and psychology. It is closely related to the hermeneutic research tradition which explores the lived experiences of people as a way of understanding the social, cultural, political and historical contexts in which this experience occurs (Polit, Beck & Hungler 2001).

The concept of phenomenology traces its roots back to the philosophical reflections of the 19th century. The ideas of German mathematician Edmund Husserl generated philosophical discussions in intellectual circles in which people such as Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Kierkegaard and Marcel participated (Burns & Grove 2001; Spiegelberg 1982, cited in Creswell 1998).

Phenomenology has also been applied to the social and human sciences, especially sociology. Other areas like nursing and health sciences as well as education, have also taken phenomenology into their practice (Giorgi 2005; Creswell 1998).

Researchers following the Husserl tradition search for the essential, invariant structure (essence) or the central underlying meaning of the experience. They emphasize the intentionality of consciousness where lived experiences comprise both the outward appearance and consciousness,

based on memory and image. This means that there is more behind what the person states than is visible at first sight (Creswell 1998).

3.3.2 Phenomenology as a research method

When using phenomenology as a research method the researcher is the study instrument and the participant's story, the data. A small considered sample is sufficient. When doing phenomenological research the researcher has to put aside all prejudgements. This is called bracketing or epoche. Here the researcher has to put aside his or her own experience and beliefs and look at the phenomenon with wide open eyes, with knowledge, facts and theories held at bay. Bracketing means that the researcher shifts attention and becomes more reflective, forgets about theoretical assumptions and "attends" the interview open minded. It is impossible to be totally free of bias in reflection on experience, but it is possible to control it. Bracketing is about peeling away the layers of interpretation (Merleau-Ponty 1956, cited in Oiler 1982).

As a qualitative phenomenological method was used in this study it required an in-depth interview to be undertaken. This could be done as an unstructured individual or group interview. In this study an in-depth unstructured interview using one leading question was used. Thereafter the interviewer remained an active listener, interrupting only to clarify, reflect or summarise at appropriate intervals. Examples of this are given in section 3.4.6.2.3.

3.3.3 Giorgi's phenomenology

There are two 'schools' of phenomenology, descriptive phenomenology and interpretive phenomenology and each has developed their own style. Descriptive phenomenology was first developed by Husserl. His philosophy emphasized descriptions of human experience.

The phenomenological school developed by Husserl includes theorists such as Colaizzi, Van Kamm and Giorgi (Polit *et al* 2001).

In general Giorgi's method guided the research process. Giorgi states that once the data is obtained it reflects the participants' lived experience at the time of the interview and cannot be changed.

Giorgi's method is distinguished from other methods by his belief that once the interview is done the researcher does not go back to the participant for proof reading and neither should the researcher rely on peer reviewing but merely on his /her own intuition. Giorgi describes a five step method of analysis where transcripts are coded and themes evolve.

1. Sense of the whole.
2. Discrimination of meaning units.
3. Transformation of meaning units.
4. Specific description of the phenomenon.
5. General description of the phenomenon (Giorgi 1985; 1975).

Data analysis is described in detail in 3.4.7.4.

3.4 The Research Process

3.4.1 Population

The study population consisted of women who had experienced expatriate migration when accompanying their husbands who were relocated for work or career purposes. In this study the two concepts will be treated equally.

3.4.2 Sampling

Qualitative studies use small samples as the in-depth nature of the interviews generates large amounts of rich data. In qualitative research theoretical richness is not dependent on the number of participants included in the sample. The focus is on description, so the participants' experiences are presented as richly and as accurately as possible (Morse 1991).

Sandelowski (1995, p.179) states, "Adequacy in sample size in qualitative research is relative, a matter of judging a sample neither small nor large *per se*, but rather too small or too large for the intended purposes of sampling and for the qualitative product. A sample size of 10 may be judged adequate for certain kind of homogenous or critical sampling, too small to achieve maximum variation of a complex phenomenon or to develop theory, or too large for certain kinds of narrative analysis". Coyne (1997, p.623) describes, "In qualitative research sample selection has a profound effect on the ultimate quality of the research". Coyne (1997) emphasizes that, describing the sampling strategy in detail increases the replication of the study for other researchers.

In considering the sample size one had to take into account that the number of women who have experienced migration due to expatriation is not widely spread through the general population and therefore purposive sampling would be required (Coyne 1997). In addition one would want the participants to meet the inclusion criteria, to be rich informants, and to have consented to participate.

It was decided to aim for an initial sample of 5 participants. Once these interviews were analysed it would be possible to ascertain if data saturation had been obtained, or if further interviews were required. Data saturation refers to a situation when no new information or insights are generated and participants are echoing each other so that redundancy occurs. It appeared that data saturation had

been obtained after 4 interviews. However due to the fact that there was a possibility that the expatriate status of one of the participants might have altered and this could have affected the data, my supervisor advised me to interview a further participant. The sixth interview confirmed the input from the other 5 interviews and it was decided that data saturation had indeed been reached. In fact her expatriate status did not change but it was still decided to include an extra interview despite the fact that data saturation had been achieved.

3.4.2.1 Inclusion criteria

- Women should have experienced migration as expatriates due to their husbands' work transfers, better job prospects or career advancement.
- Duration of migration should be more than one year.
- The women should still be living as expatriates at the time of the interview, having had a minimum of one year's migrating experience.
- If English is not their native language they should at least be able to communicate adequately in English (see ethics discussion in Chapter 3.7)
- At the time of the interview, women should be based in South Africa, Denmark or England. The motivation for having chosen three different countries in different continents was due to the researcher having spent five years as an expatriate in South Africa and having a network among the expatriate community there. Denmark was selected as this is where the researcher is presently located. The Danes have a tradition of migration and there are a variety of migrants /expatriates living in Denmark. England was selected as this is a country that has a large group of migrants from all over the world, and is easily accessible to Denmark.

3.4.2.2 Exclusion criteria

- Women who have migrated due to their husbands' vocational choices, for example, as missionaries. These women may respond differently to those women who have husbands transferred by their companies. The motivation for migrating as missionaries and the resulting dynamics of their experience could be substantially different from economic or career related migration.
- Women who have migrated for other reasons, for example war, natural disasters or in seeking employment themselves.

3.4.2.3 Sampling strategy

The sampling approach was that of purposive sampling, where the researcher's knowledge about the population being researched and its elements allows her to handpick the participants to be included in the sample (Polit *et al* 2001). Purposive sampling can be described as a method in which the researcher purposively chooses respondents or settings in order to ensure that the sample covers the full range of possible characteristics and represents all important groups of the population. Burns and Grove (2001) refer to purposive sampling as a technique to get information- rich interviews for an in-depth study.

In determining which participants might yield information-rich data, it was taken into account in the final selection that the participants had experienced a variety of experiences of migrating (e.g. 3-4 postings in different countries). An expatriate migrant woman who has experienced a single two year posting as her only experience may be as information-rich as a woman who has had more experiences, but if the woman with the single experience is deeply reflective and eager to share her story when approaching her by mail or phone, she nonetheless could be a suitable participant. In this study none of the women had a single experience of expatriation.

The method used in this research was snowball sampling and network sampling. Snowball sampling means asking people with local knowledge to assist in locating possible participants. Once the researcher has found a few potential participants, these participants may help with locating other potential participants with similar experiences. (Burns & Grove 2001; Benner 1994; Patton 1987). In this study one of the participants referred to another suitable participant who was approached and participated in the study.

Network sampling was the main strategy used in this research project, whereby participants were sought in expatriate communities or through people working for embassies or for worldwide international / multinational organisations. Because many migrating women are not allowed to work, they were more likely to be found through expatriate circles than through the formal employment sector.

3.4.3 Gaining access

Once ethical approval had been obtained (Appendix 1) I contacted four international schools telephonically. One school was in South Africa, two were in Denmark and one in England. I also contacted several large international companies, two embassies and one consulate in Denmark and England, and as well as local and international expatriate groups. A critical point for gaining access seemed to be in giving adequate information to the people approached. Time spent obtaining and giving information prior to my study turned out to be a good investment.

After the abovementioned organisations had agreed to forward my request to potential participants, I arranged for a letter of introduction and information (Appendix 2) to be sent to them. The information letter contained a contact telephone number, email address and physical address so the

possible participant could request more information or indicate her willingness to have her name forwarded to me (Appendix 3). Alternatively she could contact me directly. After about a month I had received the names of nine potential participants. Four of the names were forwarded by the abovementioned organisations and the remaining five women either emailed me or phoned me directly.

3.4.4 Consenting process

I spoke to all nine potential participants to clarify the purpose and scope of the study, their rights as participants, as well as to ascertain their potential to be information-rich. A consent form was forwarded to them by email or mail (Appendix 4). A follow up contact was made a week later to allow them time to reflect on their participation and to read the consent form. During the follow-up contact, further questions the potential participant might wish to ask were answered. The signed consent form (Appendix 4) was returned to me prior to the interview in a stamped addressed envelope provided by me. Once a person agreed to participate, an appointment was made for the interview, at a time and place convenient to her.

After the telephone conversation two of the potential participants withdrew, as they did not want the interview tape recorded. Another of the potential participants did not meet the selection criteria.

The remaining six participants met the selection criteria.

3.4.5 Environment

The choice of venue was made by the participants and all but one of the interviews took place in their homes. Two interviews took place in England and four interviews took place in Denmark. One woman was asked by her husband not to participate in the interview but she decided to participate nevertheless. This woman opted for the interview to take place in a coffee shop close to her home.

During the interviewing process, the tape recorder was placed on a table between the participant and the interviewer so the microphone received both voices clearly. Before the interview started, I tested the equipment to ensure that the sound came through clearly and I had spare batteries should these be required.

3.4.6 Data collection

Before the interview started, I ensured that the participant felt comfortable by asking everyday questions about the weather or how her day had been so far. Furthermore, I ensured that the participant did not have any unanswered questions regarding the interview process.

The participants were only interviewed once. The interviews were planned to last approximately an hour. This excluded briefing and debriefing time.

The main question, "How do you experience being a migrating woman"? - served as the trigger for the interview. I found that the participating women were very communicative and required very little prompting. However, techniques such as reflection, repetition and summary were used to try to elicit further explanation. After 40 to 45 minutes the women started repeating themselves, sometimes appeared a little weary, or asked /signalled to me to stop the interview.

3.4.6.1 Instrument for data collection

A phenomenological interviewing style was used to establish a collaborative and empathic atmosphere so the participants felt free to share their lived experiences. “The phenomenological interview is characterized by maximal mutuality of trust, attaining a genuine and deeply experienced caring between interviewer and interviewee, and a commitment to joint research for shared understanding” (Massarik 1981, cited in Dobbie 1991, p.826).

3.4.6.2 The role of the researcher

3.4.6.2.1 Preparation for the interview

There are three areas in which the researcher can prepare herself for when undertaking qualitative investigation (Polit *et al* 2001).

- An *environment was created for introspection and reflection*. Preconceived ideas of expatriation and migration were written down, this being similar to bracketing.
- *Personal preparation* was through a research journal kept throughout the research process in order to document and reflect on issues important to the study e.g. meeting places or small memos on what to remember.
- Throughout the interview, the researcher displayed *empathy* for participants’ and examined her own feelings and attitudes towards the participants’ experiences as women migrants.

Phenomenological methodology requires that the researcher remains open to the presence of unexpected descriptions. The natural, unfiltered reflections of the participant may contain surprising information, which the researcher must be ready to receive. Bracketing is an important part of phenomenology which should be applied at different stages of the research process. During the data collection, it should be used to prevent the researcher from influencing the quality of the data, which could happen if the researcher steered the interview into his or her preconceived ideas.

During the analysis phase, it should be used to ensure that an interpretation is rooted in the data and not influenced by the researcher's own experience.

Before conducting the interview I laid aside my preconceived ideas, thoughts and beliefs about women's experiences of migration. I recorded these in a research journal and I hereby thus became more in touch with and aware of my own beliefs around migration and the experience of women in relation to this.

The following guidelines were used to establish a trusting and open relationship with each participant:

- *Preparing for an interview.* This involved mentally and emotionally preparation by entering the world of the participants e.g. by reflecting on how to ask the questions and establish rapport with the participant.
- *Becoming acquainted.* The aim and purpose of the study was described and the practical side of the interview discussed with the participant. The participants felt secure and confident to speak freely during the interviews.
- *The contractual relationship.* The researcher explained to the participants that their role involved sharing their lived experiences of migration with other women and health personnel worldwide through this study.
- *The trust relationship.* The mutual trust between the participants and the researcher ensured co-operation as well as improving the quality of the data collected. At each interview, an environment was created where the participants felt free to share their own lived experience without fear (Schurnik & Schurnik 1988).

3.4.6.2.2 The Researcher as the Instrument

The researcher herself was the data collection instrument as she conducted the interviews with the participants. Being engaged in the data collection as the instrument requires attentive listening and the development of a genuine positive regard for the participants. This is to ensure an empathetic atmosphere in which the participant feels comfortable. Listening skills were essential as it is important to interpret the meaning of words accurately when interviewing as well as when transcribing the data.

This form of conducting unstructured interviews requires practice. This skill was practised and refined during the diploma course in health visiting and by her working in this field for a number of years. The researcher's previous experience enabled her to conduct the interviews so that all the participants felt at ease and freely shared their experiences. Knowledge of the research methodology chosen enables the researcher to elicit the information required to do a phenomenological analysis.

3.4.6.2.3 The Interview

Information

The interview began with the researcher sharing information about herself as a researcher and about the context of the study. Explaining the study at the beginning ensured that this did not have to be done later in the interview, disrupting the thoughts of the participant. This explanation was not transcribed.

The Exploring Question

The research question was formulated so the researcher's opinion did not influence the answer from the participant. This single exploring question was asked at the beginning of each interview.

"How do you experience being a migrating woman?"

At the beginning of the interview the researcher asked this question and remained an active listener thereafter interrupting only to clarify, reflect or summarise at appropriate times. If a participant suddenly stopped her story, I encouraged her by saying "...and ", repeating the last sentence she had said or a word she had said in the context of her story, in order to keep her focussed on the research question. Silences were allowed, so the participant had time to think and reflect. The verbal data were collected in a relaxed atmosphere where there was enough time for the participant to complete describing her lived experience or phenomenon.

Excerpts of the interviews illustrate these techniques.

Example 1, illustrating clarification:

"I was missing to work because I had just finished school and you expect, ohh, you just go and do what you have just learned to practice". (Anna)

"Learned to practise...?"(Interviewer)

"I did start to study as a dental technician; I was in the college and one year after we went to Canada". (Anna)

Example 2, illustrating summarising:

"We really, after those three years, I have to say, we also discovered something we didn't know was there – and also we are a strong team and can back up each other". (Anna)

"So what I hear you are telling me now, is that the team is important within a relationship when being expatriated!" (Interviewer)

I listened to the participant and at the same time observed verbal cues e.g. changing body posture or facial expression when referring to a specific situation. I monitored the environment and paid attention to how the participant experienced the interview situation. The phenomenological method where written notes as well as a tape recorder are used, guided me. I made notes on my own observations. During the interview I aimed to establish rapport with the participant in order to make her comfortable. I tried to maintain contact with her by adopting a body posture that intended to communicate trustworthiness and open-mindedness.

3.4.6.3 Pilot study

Although I had experience in interviewing through conducting a previous study in health visiting and in my work context, I had no prior experience of using phenomenology as a research method. In order to strengthen the process of data collection to ensure rigor, a pilot interview was conducted. According to Polit *et al* (2001) a pilot study is a small scale run of the study to obtain information for improving the project or assessing its feasibility. In this research project the pilot study was conducted with a volunteer unrelated to the project. The aim of doing the pilot study was to assess the question developed for the interview and to do an initial analysis to see if it yielded appropriate information. I asked how practical and feasible the study would be in relation to the question being asked. The scheduled time was given attention and reflected on afterwards. The pilot project was audiotaped, recorded and transcribed. The findings were not included in the study, but merely provided guidance for me before doing the research interviews. The tape and transcribed interview were kept in a safe place and destroyed at the end of the project. From the pilot study I learned that scheduling the time correctly was important as well as enquiring more closely into what the participant said by using the interview method described earlier in this chapter.

3.4.6.4 Verification of data collection

Supporting documents such as theoretical notes, observational notes, process notes and personal notes were included in the data and kept in a research journal. Theoretical notes are a way of clarifying interpretation: the way meaning becomes attached to what is being observed, or how what the participant says relates to a given theory.

Observational notes or process notes are objective descriptions of events and conversations. These might be information about activities, time and place and the conversation which took place, all of which would be recorded as precisely as possible.

Personal notes are the comments about the researcher's own feelings during the research process e.g. that the participant says something that deeply moves the researcher or the researcher finds herself feeling uncomfortable because of what is being said.

The information in these notes was only used once the initial analysis was done on the completed interview. The purpose was to bring greater clarity to what was communicated in the interview.

Sensitivity was needed when trying to record these notes. It may be very disturbing for the participant if the researcher sits and writes notes throughout the interview and seems to lose touch with what is being said. I warned the participants that I might take notes during the interview, though this did not actually happen. A way to deal with the potential disruptiveness of writing during the interviews is by making mental notes which can be transcribed as soon as the interview is completed and the participant has left the research area (Polit *et al* 2001). Appendix 5 is an example of field notes and personal notes made after an interview.

Due to working with multiple mother tongues I chose to involve a language expert to read through the transcripts from the interviews. She was required to make an undertaking to keep the

information confidential (Appendix 6). This was done in consultation with my supervisor and the chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee.

3.4.7 Analysis using the phenomenological method

Burns and Grove (2001) state that the process of data analysis guides the researcher to reduce, organize and give meaning to data. Polit *et al* (2001) state that the purpose of data analysis is to organize, provide structure to, and elicit meaning from research data. They also describe three major challenges of qualitative research:

- There are no systematic rules for analyzing and presenting qualitative data.
- An enormous amount of work is required.
- Data must be reduced for reporting purposes.

In phenomenological research there are a range of approaches to data analysis. In this study Giorgi's method was used. Two other phenomenological approaches within the Duquesne School of Phenomenology will be mentioned here briefly to explain the choice of Giorgi's method for this research project. The methods of Colaizzi and Van Kaam are similar to Giorgi's and are based on Husserl's philosophy. The basic analysis outcome of these three methods is the same, although they follow different routes. The description of how the meaning of a lived experience can develop is through identification of themes. Colaizzi and Van Kamm distil the approach into more formalised steps. Colaizzi specifically requires that the researchers return to the participants to validate the findings.

What distinguishes Giorgi's approach from that of the other phenomenologists is his belief that, when analyzing data the researcher must rely on her own opinion (Polit *et al* 2001). His view is that it is inappropriate to return to the study participants for validation of the findings or to use peer

debriefing. He prefers the researcher to maintain a sense of wholeness. This means that each participant's description must be seen in the light of the phenomenon explored. The frequency with which the phenomenon under investigation occurs is not as important as the intuitive judgement of the researcher. Giorgi considers it important to identify the relationship of the units to each other and to the whole and to look for common patterns shared by particular instances (Burns & Grove 2001).

Inspired by Husserl's phenomenological approach, Giorgi has developed a method for analyzing qualitative data. Even though Giorgi's main aim in developing this method was to apply it to psychological phenomena, he maintains that it can be applied to other areas as well e.g. sociology, anthropology and nursing (Giorgi 2005; 1985).

It is necessary to distinguish between the levels of application. While Husserl was talking about a philosophical method and applied this to basic epistemological problems, Giorgi's aim is to make Husserl's philosophical insights available for scientific work in the sciences of man and the humanities e.g. in nursing science (Giorgi 2005). To make this possible, the phenomenological method has to be modified to fit its "new" purpose.

"By mediation I mean that the general criteria of the phenomenological method can be accepted, but only by modifications" (Giorgi 1985, p.47).

However, it is still important to distinguish between the *philosophical level* and the level of *empirical scientific work* in phenomenology. Not to clarify which level one is taking about, is likely to be one of the sources of confusion related to phenomenology (Giorgi 2005; 1985).

Features of particular importance in the phenomenological method are *reduction, description, and essence*.

3.4.7.1 Reduction

Reduction refers to the researcher's attempt to set aside as many preconceptions as possible.

'Bracketing' is the corresponding term used by Husserl and inspired by Giorgi. In reality complete reduction seems to be impossible. A reasonable modification may be to aim for not letting previous knowledge about a phenomenon influence the observations. Here it is important for the researcher to come to terms with what he /she really knows about the phenomenon under investigation, and then do her best to meet the new experience with an open mind. In addition, he/she has to refrain from assuming that what is seen is what it appears to be. Failing to do so may prevent him /her from discovering new aspects of a phenomenon (Giorgi 1988).

For example, having had previous experience of being a woman migrant, I knew what it was like being in an expatriate environment. In the interview situation, however, I tried to detach myself from these presuppositions in order to come to understand the particular experiences of the women participating in the study.

The phenomenologist aims to go beyond theoretical knowledge. Spiegelberg (1984) urges that we turn towards phenomena that have been blocked from sight by theories which obscure them.

Phenomenology can provide the researcher with a tool for an in-depth investigation of a phenomenon.

3.4.7.2 Descriptions

The data consists of *descriptions* of the participants' experiences. According to Giorgi, this means that a participant should feel free to recount anything which she feels is important and related to the actual phenomenon. In the present study the complete interview with the participant's and the researcher's contributions were transcribed verbatim, even when the participant seemed to have been sidetracked. At the transcription stage it is impossible to know the potential importance of what is said. During the interview, special attention should be given to obtaining as much information as possible about the complete experience. Seen in the light of these descriptions, the researcher tries to discover step by step what seem to be the essential features of a phenomenon.

The phenomenological description is mediated through spoken communication, which means that it is language-dependent. The implications of only including English speakers in the sample are discussed in the ethics section (3.7.4). Phenomenological description presupposes a framework of class names and categories which are already known. When "new" phenomena are discovered, we still have to describe them in "old" or familiar terms. Metaphors can be used, - this may be a drawback, because phenomenology wants to go beyond the language of scientific tradition.

Nevertheless, it is the only option we have. However:

" We can not rule out the possibility that by discovering a new meaning of a phenomenon, we will import this meaning into language. Further it is important to note that much of our everyday knowledge is unarticulated. Hence, phenomenological descriptions can never be more than indicative. In addition it will always be limited, because it is impossible to exhaust all aspects of a phenomenon" (Spiegelberg 1984, p.694).

In spite of this, phenomenological description represents one possibility for understanding lived experience. To be faithful to this experience, the phenomenological researcher tries to see the phenomenon under investigation from the perspective of those participating in the investigation. Then he has to take the context of the situation into consideration. Spiegelberg calls this operation 'imaginative self-transposal', where "the investigator imagines himself as occupying the real place of the other, and views the world as it would present itself in this new perspective" (Spiegelberg 1975, p.48). Access to this world is derived from firsthand perception of the other. It is thus important to register as data anything that the participant feels worth mentioning about her experience, even if at first it does not seem to be essential. Similarly, it is important to consider all the participants' descriptions seriously and carefully before starting to analyze the data including notes of reflective observations and field notes.

3.4.7.3 Essence

The aim of using a phenomenological method is to shape or discover something which explains the general *essence* of a phenomenon. Merleau-Ponty is quite clear about this:

"Phenomenology is the study of essences; and accordingly, all problems amount to finding definitions of essences; the essences of perception or the essence of consciousness, for example" (Merleau-Ponty 1962, vij).

For Husserl the essence is the most invariant meaning or identity that can be assigned to a phenomenon in a given context. In order to comprehend such general essences, it is necessary to apply imaginative variation to look at a particular description and see how much the description can be changed without changing the phenomenon.

Giorgi illustrates this by using a chair as an example.

“We can easily imagine different chairs which differ in qualities such as shape, colour and materials. We can imagine chairs with and without arms, legs and backs. We can even imagine wall-fixed chairs. But we can hardly imagine a chair without a seat. In all these cases the meaning of a chair remains the same: a chair is made for sitting. Thus the seat is the main quality, or the essence, of a chair” (Giorgi 1988, p.172).

3.4.7.4 Giorgi’s phenomenological method for analysing data

This analysis employs an inductive approach which is key to phenomenology. Giorgi’s description is detailed because he wants the researchers “to leave their cards open” so that the readers can follow their work step by step, and assume the researcher’s perspective. This procedure will enable the reader to see what the researcher has seen. Furthermore, the reader has an opportunity to agree or disagree with the interpretations given. In the following account, each step will be presented and illustrated by examples from my own research, so that the reader can see how the analysis has developed.

Giorgi divides the analysis method into five steps:

1. Sense of the whole
2. Discrimination of meaning units
3. Transformation of meaning units
4. Specific description of the phenomenon
5. General description of phenomenon (Giorgi 1985).

Following Giorgi’s five step method for data analysis, decision rules for coding were made after thorough readings of all the transcripts to get a sense of the whole. If, for example a word such as

'frustration' were a frequently used word in the first two or three transcripts it would be used in the coding of the later transcripts. At the same time, when transcribing I referred to my observational notes to see if there was any record made of any other signals from the participant when she spoke of her feelings. It could be that the participant mentioned 'frustration' while smiling and therefore this feeling word must be coded with similar instances of the word 'frustration' spoken while smiling. Alternatively the participant could have mentioned 'frustration' while looking sad. Here the word frustration would be coded as speaking about frustration while looking sad. I listened to all the taped interviews twice, in order to become familiar with the content and the participants' voices, before transcribing them. Then all the tapes were transcribed and the texts were reread as often as was necessary to get a good grasp of the whole (Giorgi 1985).

3.4.7.4.1 Sense of the whole

First I read the entire transcribed interview (Appendix 7) in order to get a general sense of the entire content and the participant's non-verbal vocal cues which then served as the basis for the subsequent step. This sense of the whole does not picture all the details in the interview. This may be a pitfall, because the parts are not seen continuously in the light of the whole interview. In extracting parts of the interview, some important information may be lost. Nevertheless, in spite of this risk I have chosen to present these parts to demonstrate the various steps in the analysis (Appendix 8).

3.4.7.4.2 Discrimination of meaning units

Then I read through the text again and each time identified the topic of the conversation in the interview. I used my field notes to support me if I had observed any verbal cues. During the transcribing I had also noted when I could hear changes in the tone of voice, for example, if the voice sounded hesitant or eager. These perceptions were consciously allowed to be influenced by the research question about the phenomenon being searched. Giorgi emphasizes the fact that reality is always more complex than one can cover in a study. I made various statements in the margin with a number beside the written text so it could be recorded and assigned to the relevant unit or theme. Statements in the interview were underlined in different colours each colour referring to a different unit of meaning. This could, for example, be 'Anxiety of living abroad'. Then I cut the differently coloured statements into pieces and reorganised them in diagram form so each meaning unit was collated. Once the units were identified I considered which themes would be relevant for my study.

While doing this, I focussed simultaneously on the research question and the expatriate women. When the themes had been selected, I represented them in diagrammatic form in order to get a better picture of the pattern the themes may have formed. Consequently, the meaning units do not exist as such, but only related to a context. The researcher's perspective and the research question focus on a particular aspect of reality and this limits the range of possible interpretations. The understanding of the whole is crucial to understanding the parts.

3.4.7.4.3 Transformation of the meaning units.

At this stage of the analysis, and taking the research question as a starting point, I transformed the content of the meaning unit into a more compressed and explicit form. The transformations were performed by means of reflection and 'free imaginative variation' (Giorgi 1987, p.47). The object is to concentrate on the most important parts of the phenomenon. I asked the question "What does this

meaning unit say that is of importance to the phenomenon under investigation?" Appendix 8 demonstrates how the five meaning units were transformed.

3.4.7.4.4 Specific description of the phenomenon

Based on the all the meaning units I then formulated a specific description of the phenomenon's main characteristics as they are expressed by each participant (Appendix 8).

3.4.7.4.5 General description of the phenomenon

On the basis of the specific descriptions it has been possible to identify the general themes of the phenomenon under investigation (Appendix 8).

Giorgi's five step analysis process as outlined above was followed, with the result that four themes emerged from the analysed data. This process is summarised in the analysis audit trail (Appendix 9).

3.5 Literature and supporting documents as data

In this study using a phenomenological approach it was very important to be open-minded in order to avoid any bias. As it was my intention to bracket explanations about the phenomenon in the early stages of the research, I was careful not to be influenced by the literature. This was discussed previously regarding bracketing, where Giorgi's stance is that the data should be used in a snapshot manner and not referred back for verification. Once the major themes had been identified, a literature search strategy was developed and implemented. Relevant data was used to verify the findings and to dialogue further with the themes identified in the analysis (Oiler 1982). This is presented in Chapter 5.

3.6 The scientific rigor of the study

According to Burns and Grove (2001), methodological congruence has four dimensions which are

- rigor in documentation
- rigor in procedures
- ethical rigor
- auditability.

After the research proposal was approved by the postgraduate and research ethics committees of the University of Cape Town, a contact was made by phone and copies of the introductory letter were forwarded to the secretaries of local and international expatriate groups, Headmaster of International schools and the secretaries of the embassies. I arranged for a letter of introduction and information (Appendix 2) to be forwarded to potential participants by these groups, schools or embassies and that they would either contact the school, international group or embassy about agreeing to participate or would contact me directly (Appendix 3). The information letter contained a contact telephone number, email address and physical address so the possible participant could request more information or indicate her willingness to have her name forwarded to me or to participate. When access had been agreed and potential participants have agreed to participate, I selected six out of those nine potential participants that approached me to participate in the interview.

3.6.1 Rigor in documentation

Rigor in documentation means that the researched study is presented in such a way that every step is explained thoroughly. Every step in the process is examined for its completeness, to eliminate any threats to rigor in documentation. In this study the 5 steps of Giorgi's analysis were followed carefully and each step was documented. Furthermore, a file was kept of the documents and notes so it was easy to track any of these if needed. The field notes were recorded directly after the interview to ensure that information was not overlooked.

3.6.2 Procedural rigor

Procedural rigor means that the researcher needs to make sure that data are accurately recorded and that the collected data are represented as a whole. The researcher examines the description of the data collection process and the study findings for threats to procedural rigor. To ensure rigor in terms of procedures the researcher can reflect the questions back to the participants. This was not followed in this study.

3.6.3 Ethical rigor

Ethical rigor was maintained and the ethical implications related to conducting this study were discussed with the participants. Consent was obtained from the participants and documented (see earlier in this chapter). I ensured that the rights of the participants were protected during the consent process, data collection, analysis and presentation of findings. I followed the ethical rules by obtaining consent from the participants so that their autonomy was maintained. This aspect is discussed further in the ethics section (3.7).

3.6.4 Auditability

Auditability means that the reader can track the researcher's study process. In order to achieve auditability, I recorded all decisions involved in the transformation of data in the field notes (Appendix 5) and the analysis audit trail (Appendix 9). This reporting should be conducted so another researcher could use the data from the transcripts and the decision trail in order to achieve similar conclusions as in the original research. For example, a threat to auditability would be if the description of the data collection was not sufficient or that the evidence for how conclusions were reached was not presented (Burns & Grove 2001).

3.6.5 Trustworthiness / Credibility

Qualitative research aims to ensure trustworthiness, whereas in quantitative studies reliability and validity determines rigor. In qualitative research the researcher is one of the most important instruments as she interacts closely with the participants. Training the human instrument enables the research to be trustworthy (Lincoln & Guba 1985). In this study establishing trustworthiness was required to make it credible, and arrive at results that were "worth paying attention to" (Lincoln & Guba 1985, p. 290). In this phenomenological study, trustworthiness was ensured through bracketing. This meant that I became increasingly reflective and "put aside" all past knowledge that might be associated with the phenomenon being explored, so it could present itself in its fullness during the interviews (Giorgi 1999).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) refer to the rigor of qualitative research as trustworthiness and have presented qualitative analogues, which they claim are more appropriate to qualitative research than their quantitative counterparts. These are transferability for applicability, dependability for consistency and confirmability for neutrality and credibility for truth value.

3.6.5.1 Transferability

Transferability means that the data collected can be generalized and can be transferred to the lived experience of migrating expatriate women. The reader should be able to identify similar settings or groups to whom the data would also be applicable.

3.6.5.2 Dependability

Dependability of qualitative data refers to stability of data over time and over conditions. A way to achieve dependability is by means of inquiry audit. An inquiry audit involves critical observation of the data and in this research, relevant supporting documents. In this study, theoretical notes, observational notes and process notes were available to an external reviewer. The researcher used her supervisor in this capacity (Polit *et al* 2001). Dependability was ensured through inquiry audit. My supervisor critically went through the data presented: theoretical, observational and process notes produced during the interviews.

An audit trail was laid from the transcribed data and the analysis. This contributed to the dependability as well as providing a rich source of descriptive material. An audit trail is an essential component of any qualitative research study (Lincoln & Guba 1985) The audit trail provided explanations and justifications for decisions and changes that were made at each stage of the .research process. This was important as the researcher was responsible for all the analysis of data and documentation related to the research.

Field notes are a daily log of events and conversations, but these are more analytical and broader than mere jottings on scraps of paper. The field notes represent the researcher's effort to record information. They also afford the researcher an opportunity to reflect deeply by writing down thoughts and being attentive to 'ones' senses. Methodological documentation requires that the

researcher has written down all her thoughts regarding how data were collected, how she got to the venues of the interview and kept a log on people to contact regarding the research. Analytical documentation is the analysis audit trail (Appendix 9) (Denzin & Lincoln 2002; Polit & Hungler 1999).

3.6.5.3 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the neutrality of the data in such a way that two or more independent people would be able to agree about the data's relevance or meaning. In qualitative research, the confirmability refers, not to the characteristics of the researcher, (for example whether the researcher is biased), but rather to the characteristics of the data, i.e. is the data confirmable (Polit *et al* 2001). Records of preconceived ideas regarding the study were noted in the researcher's journal. The research journal was a record of ongoing thoughts and feelings, and enabled the researcher to minimise bias. Throughout the interview process and analysis phase the capturing of the participants' experiences was a priority.

3.6.5.4 Credibility

Credibility refers to gaining knowledge and understanding of the true nature, essence, meanings attributes and characteristics of the particular phenomenon being studied. Measurement was not the goal; rather, knowing and understanding the lived experience of expatriate women was the goal (Leiniger 1985). To achieve credibility the research was conducted in such a manner so as to ensure the phenomenon (the lived experience of women migrants) was accurately identified and faithfully described.

In qualitative research credibility is subject-oriented and in this study it was obtained from the discovery of women's lived experience as expatriate migrants as this was perceived by the

participants. Confidence in the findings (participant's experiences and the context in which the study was undertaken) was established. Throughout the research process the findings were submitted to and discussed with the experienced research supervisor, thus enhancing the credibility of the study. The research supervisor provided guidance.

Lincoln & Guba (1985) recommend that credibility be heightened by establishing four steps:

- Triangulation
- Member checking
- Peer debriefing
- Prolonged engagement.

3.6.5.4.1 Triangulation

Triangulation is used to improve the likelihood that qualitative findings will be found credible.

Denzin & Lincoln (2002) mention four types of triangulation, *data triangulation*, *investigator triangulation*, *theory triangulation* and *method triangulation*. Triangulation is a concept used by a number of qualitative schools; however, Giorgi does not support the need for triangulation.

In this study phenomenology was used as the method of data collection and analysis. This method was applied to the data. Supporting documents i.e. theoretical notes, observational notes and process notes were used as additional reflective notes for the researcher.

3.6.5.4.2 Member checking

Member checking refers to the provision of feedback to the study participants regarding the data collected and the researchers' evolving findings and interpretations includes securing the participants reactions (Denzin & Lincoln 2002). Giorgi discourages member checking emphasising that it is the interviewer and not the participants who conduct the research and the researcher must rely on her own intuition (Giorgi 1985). The interview represented the participant's lived experience of migration, as it was recalled on the day on which the interview took place.

3.6.5.4.3 Peer debriefing

Peer debriefing refers to an external check by an experienced person outside the research (Polit & Hungler 1999). It is Giorgi's opinion that the researcher must rely on herself and not use peer debriefing (Giorgi 1975). However as this is a study at masters level I considered it appropriate for me as a novice, to use my more experienced supervisor for peer debriefing.

3.6.5.4.4 Prolonged engagement

Prolonged engagement refers to the investment of sufficient time in the data collection activities for the researcher to develop an in-depth understanding of the culture, language or views of the group under study. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 304) prolonged engagement is a recommended activity that increases the likelihood of producing credible data and interpretations. Prolonged engagement is also important for building trust and rapport with informants.

As part of building trust, I gained access to the women via a third party instead of making direct contact, in order to give them a sense of autonomy regarding their participation in the interviews. This was to assure that the women knew that they were respected by me and could trust me. At the

beginning of the interview I planned to have an 'icebreaking period' and a debriefing period at the end. A few weeks after the interview I made a final follow up contact telephone call.

3.7 Ethical considerations

In general there are four ethical principles accepted as foundational to ethical practice. These are:

- Autonomy, i.e. informed consent and the right not to participate
- Non-maleficence, i.e. not doing any harm
- Beneficence, i.e. doing good
- Justice, i.e. being fair.

The methodology of this study raises some specific concerns relating to these ethical issues, which will be discussed with reference to the codes of international organisations, viz. International Council of Nurses Code of Ethics (International Council of Nurses 1999) and the World Medical Association Helsinki Declaration (World Medical Association 2000).

3.7.1 Autonomy

Autonomy refers to the ability of people to choose freely for themselves and to direct their own lives. Respect for autonomy involves respecting people's right to make decisions based on their personal values and beliefs free from the controlling influence of others (Lyon & Walker 1997). In research, participants' autonomy may be influenced by information or lack of information (see clause 22 of the Helsinki Declaration (World Medical Association 2000)). The ICN Code of ethics states that nurses must ensure that the individual receives sufficient information and the patient /person's right to autonomy is ensured or respected. The nurse holds personal information around the patient /person in confidence (International Council of Nurses, 2000).

In any research on human beings, each potential subject must be adequately informed of the aim, methods, sources of funding, any possible conflicts of interest, institutional affiliations of the researcher, the anticipated benefits and potential risks in the study and the discomfort it may entail. The subject should be informed of the right to abstain from participating in the study or to withdraw consent to participate at any time without reprisals. Afterwards it must be ensured that the subject has understood the consent, preferably in writing (World Medical Association 2000 clauses 20 & 22).

When it comes to publishing the results, the authors and publishers must ensure that the accuracy of the results are preserved and both positive as well as negative results must be available to the public (World Medical Association 2000 clause 27).

In the present study the potential participants were approached through an organisation or third party (Appendix 3) and granted permission for their names and contact details to be forwarded to me. This was in order to respect the potential participants' privacy and autonomy. After they had agreed to their names and contact details being available to the researcher, the potential participants were contacted telephonically and had an opportunity to discuss the study in more detail. In particular, this covered the implications of their participation, i.e. time required, confidentiality, storing the data from the interview, tape and transcript and the fact that the original data would be destroyed after the completion of the study. I explained the process to each potential participant and it was important that they felt under no obligation to participate. There was no pressure from me and there were no false promises of benefits to entice them to participate. It was clearly stated in the information sheet (Appendix 2) that they were under no obligation to take part and there would be no negative consequences for them if, for any reason, they withdrew from the study.

The participants were informed that strict confidentiality would be maintained and that published findings would be presented in such a way that they would not be identified. This meant that names and references to the participants' circumstances that might reveal their identity would not be mentioned or would be changed. After this had been explained and before the interview took place the participant's signed a consent form to agree to their participation in the study (Appendix 4). This complies with the provisions of clause 22 of the Helsinki Declaration (World Medical Association 2000). When it became necessary to engage an English language translator to check the transcripts, she was required to sign a declaration agreeing to keep the information confidential (Appendix 6). This procedure was approved by the chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee.

A telephone call was made to the participants one to two weeks after the interviews to ensure that they were not left with any questions regarding the interviewing process. This also contributed towards securing the participants' autonomy.

3.7.2 Non-maleficence

Non-maleficence is the duty not to inflict harm, either physical or emotional harm. For example, it is possible that interviews might seem harmless but could cause distress by raising emotional issues or causing disclosure of previously private painful experiences. In an interview, aspects of a participant's past life can be recovered or relived, leaving them uncomfortable and with no options for resolving the issues that surface. If the researcher ignored the signs of a participant's feeling uneasy about issues expressed, the criterion of non-maleficence would not have been met (Lyon & Walker 1997).

I took this into consideration during the planning of the interview and a plan of contingency was put in place prior to the interview in case a participant showed distress during or after the interview.

The participants were informed through the information sheet that if they felt distressed due to the interview debriefing or counselling would be made available locally and at no cost to them. As mentioned before a telephone call was made after the interview to ensure that the participant was well. None of the participants required debriefing or counselling.

3.7.3 Beneficence

Beneficence builds on the principles of non-maleficence in that it goes beyond preventing or removing harm, to doing or promoting good. In the World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki it states, *inter alia* that “In medical research on human subjects, considerations related to well being of the human subject should take precedence over the interest of science and society” (World Medical Association 2000, clause 5). Further it says that “Medical research is only justified if there is a reasonable likelihood that the populations in which the research is carried out stand to benefit from the result of the research” (World Medical Association 2000).

In nursing beneficence could be illustrated by a scenario of acting as an advocate for patients who are involved in research conducted by others or by the nurse herself. The principles of beneficence could lead to questioning the ethics of research if it is purely for the benefit of the researcher, in a case where she wants to prove a hypothesis, but there is no indication that the results will benefit the participants (Lyon & Walker 1997). It appeared that the participants appreciated the opportunity to reflect on their experiences which would in itself be considered a benefit. It is my belief that some of the women even felt it as a relief to share their experience with someone else:

“It feels like something has been taken off my shoulders” (Gemma) and

“I was very nervous before you came. But afterwards I really felt comfortable and special as it had been my time and my story” (Anna).

3.7.4 Justice

The principle of justice (being fair) is based on Aristotle's belief that the way individuals are treated relates to their position and worth in a given society (Lyon & Walker 1997). This might mean that not all people are valued equally in society. Similarly, when doing research participants and patients might be selected according to race, age, gender, sexual orientation or social status and this might constitute discrimination against them. The principle of justice also refers to the fact that the benefits of the research should be experienced by those who have been involved in the interviews and the researcher has an obligation to ensure that the findings of the research are presented to the participants after the research has been completed (Lyon & Walker 1997).

In this study the participants were women who had experienced migration. As the scope of the study was specifically looking at women's experience, the selection of a population which consisted only of women could be justified, thus satisfying the principle of justice. I did not make any distinction in terms of age, sexual orientation or social status. However, I did look for the women to be able to communicate in English, which excluded possible participants who did not speak English, because this type of research is language-dependent. I needed to be able to work in the language I could understand. It is critical to understand nuances in language in order to analyse, which is central to the phenomenological approach. Therefore it was justifiable to set this limit. However, although the criterion was that the women should be able to speak English, five different mother tongues were represented among them.

Conclusion

Ethical considerations are a crucial part of research. Research must be ethical and poorly conducted research is unethical. It is crucial to safeguard participants' autonomy and for the researcher to be aware of the all various aspects of ethical research practice.

Methodology guides the researcher through the research process and is the primary tool for answering the research question. In this study, the methodology chapter has spelled out plans and strategies for developing information that is accurate, interpretable and transferable.

University of Cape Town

Chapter 4. Participants and Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the five central themes that emerged during the process of data analysis which describes the lived experience of women migrants.

The research question, "*What is the lived experience of migration of expatriate women who accompany their spouses abroad?*" accessed the memories of the experiences, and thus the stories of expatriate women. Direct quotations from the women interviewed have been included to "allow the participants' voices to be heard and to make their feelings explicit" (Sandelowski 1994, p.480).

4.2 Presentation of the participants

Six participants were interviewed. In the following section they are presented under pseudonyms and their stories are told in brief.

Lilly

Lilly is a woman in her early forties who is married to an English man. They have three sons of school-going age. She is English, but was brought up in Brazil. She is a medical doctor, but has been unable to work in this capacity due to her expatriate position. Since her marriage she has lived with her husband in Australia, South Africa, China and Holland. In Australia, South Africa and Holland she lived among locals, whereas in China she lived in a compound with expatriates only. All the migrations she has experienced were due to her husband's transfers within a multinational company. She has just moved back to England after seven years overseas.

Gemma

Gemma is a woman in her mid-forties who is married to a South African man. They have two sons of school-going age. She is a white Afrikaner and had lived all her life in an Afrikaans-speaking community in South Africa before migrating at the age of 38 for the first time. She has migrated twice to England with a short stay in South Africa in between. Currently, she and her husband have settled in a suburb of London. Her husband was transferred by his company the first time and later he wanted better working conditions for himself. She is a qualified teacher and has worked most of her adult life in South Africa in that capacity. She still has her house in South Africa.

Betty

Betty is a woman in her late thirties married to a Scottish man. They have two sons, one of school-going age and the other, an adult. She was born in England but moved to Scotland to study. Later she and her husband moved to Sweden, returned to Scotland and subsequently moved to Denmark. The migration Betty has experienced is due to her husband applying for jobs internationally within an academic environment. The family has settled in a small village in the countryside. Betty has a PhD in Science, but because of her inability to speak Danish, is unable to obtain work.

Maria

Maria is a woman in her thirties who is married to an Englishman. They have two small children. She is Spanish and moved to England in her early twenties where she met her husband. They lived in England for several years before moving to Denmark where her husband was offered a job in the academic world as an international researcher. She is a qualified teacher and had worked as a supply teacher in England before moving to Denmark. The family lives in a local community. Her qualifications have not been recognised in Denmark and, because she cannot communicate in Danish, she has not been able to obtain a job.

Uno

Uno is a woman in her thirties married to a Danish man. The couple has three small children. She is Japanese and met her husband while he was working in Japan. She has lived as an expatriate woman in Singapore, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Denmark. Uno's migration has been due to her husband's job with a multinational company. She is a qualified teacher and worked while the family lived in Singapore. The family lives among locals in a suburb of Copenhagen. After arriving in Denmark she learned the language and upgraded her qualifications by studying to become a pre-school teacher.

Anna

Anna is in her early thirties. She is originally from Slovakia and is married to an English man. They have two children under 10 years of age. She met her husband while she was studying in Slovakia and after she qualified as a dental technician, they migrated to Canada as her husband was offered a job there. They lived in Canada for six years before her husband was expatriated to Denmark due to his job. They have lived in Denmark for three years. Anna has not been able to obtain a job and she has not learned Danish. They aim to go back to Canada later this year so Anna can start studying, as her qualifications as a dental technician are not recognised outside Slovakia.

4.3 Findings

This presentation includes the results from the analysis of interviews with the six women who have all experienced expatriate migration when following their spouses.

When six different women have told their stories of how they experienced migration, it is likely that the result will be six different stories, based on the previous life experiences of the women concerned. However, as my aim was to explore the essence of the experiences of these women, I was not only interested in the particular story of each individual woman, but also in similarities

among the stories. These similarities or patterns, also called **essences** of the phenomenon of women experiencing migration.

The analysis of the transcribed data suggested five themes:

- Feeling alienated
- Coping - struggling to find my feet
- Disempowerment - pulled up by the roots
- Occupation – doing something worthwhile
- Transition – being “in between”.

I will present and elaborate these themes. I have not found one particular theme to be of greater significance than the others. There is no particular chronological sequence.

4.3.1 Feeling alienated

All the women mentioned the feeling of being alienated as a big issue in their expatriate migration experience. Participants described three different aspects of being in a strange environment which affected their lives as expatriates. The women felt themselves to be strangers in relation to the country and the culture they had moved to, they felt uncertain about their status as non-working expatriate women, and they felt unsure about their changing new roles in relation to their own husbands and their children. The uncertainty of not knowing how long they were staying in a foreign country made it difficult for the women to make lives for themselves, and they felt alienated from normal everyday life. The women felt like strangers in relation to the new people they met. They also experienced separation from the family and friends they had left behind. Within this theme of alienation sub-themes emerge which expands on the explanation of this.

The expatriate culture, which I define as a lifestyle adopted by expatriates through circumstances, had an influence on the daily lives of expatriate women and made them feel alienated. They mentioned they were feeling uncertain about their future and felt that they were not fitting into the environment. The women all spoke about how they were dealing with alienation and how they aimed to achieve a balance and become more integrated into the broader community. The expatriate women described that they struggled with the move to a new country or culture. Within this new culture (country and expatriate) they were required to fit into a social group, as well as to become part of the life within the expatriate community. The expatriate experience also depends on factors specific to the receiving country. In some countries it was easier for the women to gain access to work and therefore they would find relationships outside the expatriate community with locals. If the women did not work due to language difficulties or regulations regarding foreign labour, their potential for meeting people outside the expatriate circle was limited. They interacted within the expatriate group through tea /coffee mornings, baby groups, charity work and joining health clubs. Some of the expatriate communities even had their own traditions and ways of living.

"In China it was a culture to get together every Friday evening and drink loads and talk badly". (Lilly)

Another factor that influenced the expatriate experience and thus the feeling of alienation was the area in which the family took up residence: was it a residential area amongst local people around or was it a compound or area with a larger number of expatriate families? One of the women explained that her family had enjoyed their second expatriation, because they had chosen to live among locals in a residential area.

One of the women spoke of how she became isolated because confidentiality was an issue in the social circle where she lived. The community was small and prone to gossip and this had influenced the experiences of migrant women.

"There are women who will not get out of their apartment anymore because they feel that the community is too small and too gossiping". (Lilly)

Another woman experienced alienation as a feeling of being rejected within the expatriate community when she tried to establish a playgroup for Spanish speaking children. She found that, although the idea was well-received and well-supported, it did not turn out well in practice because of the division within the expatriate group itself. This was because the American and the Spanish expatriates did not share the same ideas and goals.

One of the women expressed her sense of alienation by describing the effect of living in a society where people do not have a tradition of being outdoors throughout the year. There was no opportunity for casual meetings, e.g. walking the dog and getting into conversation with a neighbour or fellow walker. All movement from home to places like stores was done by car and it was difficult to meet people unless it was in places like the mall. One woman described her feelings of isolation and despair over not knowing where to look for people to establish contact.

"And also in Canada you don't see outdoor living much, that is what I realised you don't have sidewalks where people can walk on regular bases. You can drive cars, but that is how I found very difficult, meeting someone, because everybody drives so you don't have that personal contact with someone, like her for example, you can go to the coffee shop and maybe you

will meet foreigners or someone you have a chat with. In Canada most of the time you go for 'drive in' coffee or 'drive-in' take-away" (Anna)

The aspect of not knowing or not being certain about the duration of the expatriation period has an impact on the way the migration process is experienced and the choices which are made in order to access the new society. An example of this is Anna not wanting to learn Danish as she knew they had not planned to stay in Denmark for more than three years. On the other hand, Uno said that she did not know how long they were going to stay, but despite this uncertainty she had decided to improve her qualifications by going back to school in order not to feel alienated in her situation, which made her unable to do the things she would have done living in Japan.

4.3.1.1 'Homemaking'

The expatriate life affected the individual women and their families. The way the family functioned in an expatriate situation changed in that the roles in the family were organised differently from how they were organised at home and this led to some changes in relational dynamics, which might have been unexpected. Lilly's husband was the breadwinner of the family and worked long hours whereas she stayed at home looking after the house and the family.

"But for me being overseas it was interesting as here my husband was always the main breadwinner, he was always the most important member of the family – all of a sudden – and we as a family would follow him and it was my role, I would say to be the homemaker". (Lilly)

Another influence on the dynamics in the home was the presence and role of a domestic helper, the employing of whom appeared to have been an expectation or obligation in many expatriate

situations. This meant that the woman would be less occupied with housework, and this, coupled with the lack of opportunities to seek employment or to be involved in other occupations, meant that she had more time to think and brood on her situation. Betty said access to socialising in the community was more difficult as a new arrival, and that she spent a lot of time on her own in the early stages of her expatriation. Similarly, when Anna first arrived in Canada she spent 17 hours every day alone in a motel with a young child, and Gemma, left on her own in England felt isolated and depressed.

"I remember the feeling of absolute desolation, loneliness. I didn't know anybody and my husband would go off to office every morning and I was at home struggling to find my feet". (Gemma)

Perception of culture is coloured by who we are and which culture we come from. All the women started the interview by telling me about their backgrounds. During the interview the women made references to the things that have made them what they are today e.g. their education, their values around how to bring up children and to their religious beliefs. They told these stories in order to contrast this with their experience as expatriates. This seemed to be a way for them to make sense of how and why they experienced migration the way they did. The women further emphasized that, because they were "aliens" in their new country, they were much more sensitive to the culture they did not yet know, for example, how to approach people in the most appropriate way or how to behave in a given situation, like at the doctor or in the hospital.

"One of the things I also found difficult was the assumptions that we don't have. Some of them are just silly little things like when to say 'thank you' for what and how to say 'thank you'". (Betty)

Another factor affecting how they experienced the adoptive country's culture was whether it was a wealthy country or a third world country. In a third world country practicalities like shopping and getting around became difficult. Lilly described how shopping in China was stressful due to the unfamiliar products and Uno described how living in Sri Lanka was different due to the vast disparity between rich and poor people.

4.3.1.2 And I didn't speak the language!

Inability to communicate adequately in the local language had a significant impact. Women were excluded from local knowledge and community activities, and it made it difficult for them to seek health care and left them feeling disempowered. Participants expressed their sense of insecurity in not being able to communicate effectively. One recalled a time when she could not tell the doctor about her child's condition: what kind of stomach-ache her son was experiencing and what the symptoms were. The doctor had been unable to communicate in her language.

"My child had a stomach ache -- how do you tell the doctor what kind of stomach ache -- if you do not have the language". (Betty)

This was supported by three of the other women who found that, because of their language difficulties, they were hesitant to talk about themselves or their children to the doctor or the hospital staff. They felt insecure and disempowered because of their inability to speak the native language and the local doctor's inability to speak English.

Two of the women stressed that they had felt they could not protect their children adequately when they were giving birth in an alien environment. Uno twice left the country she was living in as an expatriate in order to give birth in an environment in which she felt more secure. When living in Sri Lanka she went to Japan to give birth and when living in Malaysia she went to Singapore to give

birth. Both places she considered had better and safer birth facilities. She expressed her feelings of responsibility for the babies' safety. Maria experienced anxiety in connection with her pregnancy, finding that the level of information she was able to understand, was unsatisfactory and this left her very concerned and worried. She felt strongly that this experience might prevent her from having another baby in a country where she did not understand the language

Four of the participating women found that the language was a problem and this made the expatriate experience very difficult. They found that because of their inability to speak the local language they were excluded from many daily activities. Betty spoke about the basic assumptions she did not have in relation to the language. She mentioned how a word like "thank you" and how and when to say "thank you" made communication difficult and even sometimes gave people the wrong impression of her intentions. She mentioned that when she had been invited for dinner at a friends' house they would expect her to call and say "thank you" a few days after the dinner. Betty would not have done that in her own culture.

Not speaking the local language increases the sense of alienation of the woman migrant. Even though the time spent in a foreign country may be long, the impact of the feeling of not being able to communicate never leaves the woman. Alienation increases the expatriate woman's sense of insecurity and makes her more vulnerable.

"I didn't speak the language and it was like Chinese. So I had two years of 'blurring'. During this period I was totally in shock – first I couldn't believe it".

(Maria)

Another concern about the language that made the women feel alienated and disempowered was the inability to gain access to local knowledge on account of not being able to read the newspapers. An example, was, if they were looking for a job:

"...And you can not look at the adverts in the paper for jobs because they are written as short as possible and that means you are using sort of slang language that does not make sense even with a dictionary". (Betty)

Betty further emphasised that although she had a PhD she was prevented from getting a job. She could not even get a job to pack shelves in a grocery store due to her inability to speak Danish fluently.

Another issue of concern in the migrating process was the children's ability to maintain their home language. Two of the women particularly said that this was very important as expatriation must not be allowed to result in the child losing his or her ability to speak the mother tongue. The women felt very responsible for maintaining their children's language and they took seriously the task of finding ways of helping them to maintain it so they could speak with their relatives and fit in when repatriated.

4.3.1.2.1 Relationships

Responsibilities to children and family were a significant concern of the participants. The women felt responsible for keeping their family well-adjusted and particularly for helping the children to adjust to the expatriate life. Interaction with other people and the importance of this in relation to their experience of migration was something all the women frequently addressed.

Words the women mentioned in the interviews were closeness, continuity, isolation, responsibility, and being there. In particular, these references were made in relation to:

- Missing out
- Being there for each other
- Millions of miles away
- Negotiating friendships.

All of the women in the interviews expressed concerns that their migration had affected their children's lives negatively. These worries were about their children's health, their ability to settle in the new country and their schooling. They expressed concern about what the future would hold, how migration would affect the children in the long term and how the children would be able to adapt to their home country and own culture once they returned. They felt responsible for the way the children experienced expatriate life. Lilly describes her concern that although the children had lived an adventurous and exciting life, they might have missed out on something else while they were migrants along with their parents. Would the children have gaps in their education, would there be disruptions in their schooling due to the various moves, did the countries they moved to have different levels of education and different systems to the school the children had left? Education was a great concern for some of the women, as well as the children's ability to maintain their home language while moving around.

"This wonderful broad life experience that they will remember more than ever when they received some geography lessons on something or other- but I feel that sometimes they didn't get what they were entitled to if they had been back at home, that is one of my biggest worries, my biggest stresses". (Lilly)

During the interviews all the women stressed the importance of having close relationships with their husbands and being there for each other and that this significantly influenced their experience of being expatriated. They reported that the feeling of being a unit strengthened them in situations like illness within the family. This meant that the migration experience was less stressful for them than it might have been, as they had each other for support. For example, one of the women's husbands became very ill, and as they were in a foreign country and had no one else to support them, their relationship became stronger. One of the women spoke about the importance of a "close knitted marriage".

When crises happened or major decisions had to be made, like moving to another country, the agreement on the conditions of the move appeared to be very important between man and wife. The women said that sharing thoughts and information was another important issue in their experience of migration.

"I think it is a really good thing talking about our life. If I say to my husband, he should decide, he would say to me that – No this is OUR life. We have to agree otherwise it is going to give us problems in the future. So OK then we talk". (Uno)

One of the women spoke about how life had been very hectic before moving, and explained that she and her husband had made an agreement about how life was going to be during the next expatriation.

"When we came we made certain agreements; that he spends more time with family because he never did in Canada - he was a workaholic"... "Our relationship only improved here, I have to say. We really after those three years, I have to say, also discovered something we didn't know was there – and also we are a strong team and can back up each other". (Anna)

The importance of support emerged: because of not knowing people and the resulting loneliness, the early stages of the migration process were especially stressful. From the interviews it seemed that migration had brought all the couples closer to each other, though there was a stage during which the women felt lonely and not really able to understand or deal with their situation.

“My husband realised I have grown in many ways and we have some good discussions about how we have both changed and a very good thing that we have been on our own. We are much more independent of each other and have strengthened our relationship and built it up”. (Gemma)

Of great concern to the participants were their families left behind in their home country. Most of the women worried about how their families were getting on and also about what to do in case of illness when their presence might be required. They missed the support of their families as well as being unable to give appropriate support - not only during bad times, but also in everyday life.

“I still lay awake anxious at night thinking that I am far away from my family. If the phone rings now and it is bad news – oh dear – I get these feelings of anxiety as I am far away from the people that are close to me”. (Gemma)

Or, as Anna said, in relation to her first expatriation:

“You don’t have any friends, you don’t have any family and your husband will leave you in some motel and he goes and says goodbye for seventeen hours. It is shocking -- that was hard because back home your mother would come and help you”.

All the women emphasised how important their relationships with their friends were to them in the expatriate life. This included both the friends they had left behind in their home countries and the

friends they had made in previous expatriate countries before they had moved on again. They mentioned the importance of maintaining friendships and the sense of loss they felt when leaving friends and moving again. Their ability to make friendships and meet new people in the new country was of concern. It was difficult to make new friends and, because of both language and cultural problems it took them quite a while before they got to know people.

"It is hard to establish friendships. It takes time and energy. It can not be done overnight. You have to do something with that person, not just tea or coffee".

(Uno)

The expatriate families knew they would be moving every few years. This knowledge made building friendships and interacting with other people very difficult and tended to lead to superficial relationships. In the expatriate environment there was a mutual understanding about the limitations of these friendships. Lilly stressed how she would make friends much more quickly than if she had been at home. Then they had these friendships for two to three years before moving on. Lilly said that she would have found this kind of friendship superficial if it had not been in expatriate life.

"We would start telling /exchanging life stories very quickly and it is probably quite artificial in the real world – and then they became very good friends for two or three years and then we all move on". (Lilly)

Another aspect of negotiating friendships was the difficulty of meeting up with new people and making friends. Two of the women reported that it was difficult to find people to socialise with or people who would share their interests.

Maria saw it this way:

"Something I read a year ago, and I should have read it then [when arriving (researcher comment)] was that you or your identity is affected by people you interact with in the country where you are. Even in England I was myself. So here, the language, the way you looked were different, you look different. You interpret that the reflections they are giving you make you think you are stupid and I really believed it. I totally believed it for a while".

"For two years therefore I drew to me very bad companies, like I remember this time in Blangstedgaard [socially downgraded area] like bad karma (laughing)".

There seemed to be a fine balance in what the women mentioned about relationships. On the one hand there were the responsibilities which they felt for other people and that possibility that these might eventually lead to relationships; on the other hand, there was the quality of relationships. It seemed that simply having relationships outweighed the quality of friendships and this was important being in an expatriate migrant position.

Being alienated seems to be a common feeling to all the women interviewed, experienced to a greater or lesser degree. These feelings of alienation did have an impact on the view the women had on the new culture, the language and the people they met along the way as well as their own family and children.

4.3.2 Coping - struggling to find my feet

The descriptions the women gave of their experiences of migration were characterised either by referring to their awareness of their migrating experience directly or indirectly by speaking of the stresses of everyday life, being ill, experiencing anxiety or being depressed, of how they experienced their own health and how they coped.

Several ways of dealing with the migration process were mentioned and unpacked during the interviews and suggested that the theme feeling unwell or unhealthy appeared to be related to the migration experience.

All the women addressed the importance of the functioning of the health system in the country they were living in, and how big a concern it was if they did not feel comfortable in the existing health system. Concerns ranged from the insecurity of giving birth to their ability to take themselves or their families to the doctor. One of the women mentioned that the GP practices were very big and clients would not see the same doctor twice in a row. Another woman mentioned the confidentiality issue: because the community was so small and everybody knew each other it was difficult to consult the doctor on personal issues, like for a Pap smear. All these above mentioned factors lead to the women's experiencing health changes in relation to their lives as expatriates.

To a certain extent all the women identified some pressures on their psychological health. They had felt changes within themselves: feelings of being lonely, feeling panicky, crying, feeling down and depressed.

"I remember the feeling of absolute desolation, loneliness. I didn't know anybody and my husband would go off to work every morning". "I was extremely lonely and I became depressed". (Gemma)

Lilly said that, because of various things happening in her life within her own family, including her son's having major problems, her ability to cope eventually became diminished and she sought help from a psychologist. Until then, she explained, she had coped by "putting the problems into a box inside her head". Suddenly the stress of what was going on around her became so severe that she could not cope anymore. Seeing a psychologist carried a stigma in her view, and she had to cross this barrier in realising that she herself needed one.

"I could not cope anymore. And again, in my culture in England we never go and see a psychologist unless we are really quite wacky". (Lilly)

One of the major stresses of being an expatriate woman was that of not being able to pursue a career or even have a job. Having something to do not only reduced the women's stress but made them feel appreciated and happy. Although they found that the process of getting a job or finding something useful to do was a very frustrating and stressful one, it was clear that the women's families and children seemed happier once they were involved in purposeful occupation. (The theme occupation will be discussed in 4.3.4)

For one of the participants, the stress of migration may have had an influence on her health, as soon after migrating she had become quite seriously ill, and she found it had been difficult to recover. During the settling-in period she had developed migraines and was told by the doctor that these were due to stress and she would have to avoid stressful situations.

Other stressors during the initial phase of adapting to the new country included finding a place to live, suitable schools for the children, locating shops and generally becoming settled in. The stress of being an expatriate differs from the situation people generally find themselves in when moving

on account of the different culture, language and lack of support from friends and relatives. This might differ from the emigration situation where people have migrated fully anticipating that the conditions may be strenuous and difficult in the new country.

Participants described how they had found ways of coping with their lives as expatriate spouses. Lilly eventually consulted a psychologist when she realised that her normal coping mechanisms were no longer sufficient and this support enabled her to develop strategies for facilitating her move and that of her children from country to country.

“She taught me how- when the children are moving they could write a story about the move – we would invent stories about children moving from country to country. We would talk about the move well in advance – the positive and the negative we would expect. It always helped. We would make stories with our children in about travelling across oceans from country to country. Every night you tell a story. We read a book, ‘Who moved the Cheese?’”. (Lilly)

Anna started renovating houses as a means of survival as well as a coping mechanism in order to occupy herself (see 4.3.4).

Another coping mechanism the women described was the ability to speak about how they felt and to be able to cry. Four of the women emphasized how important it was to have an understanding husband who listened

“Another thing that helped me cope, was crying – letting it out”. (Lilly)

Uno expressed that being an expatriate woman her surviving strategy was, that she expected more of her husband in terms of his spending time listening to her, than she would have done if they were at home.

Being in a new and unknown environment as expatriate women challenged the participants to develop different coping mechanisms. Some of these had potentially negative consequences. One woman told how shopping had become a kind of coping mechanism as it provided a release for stress. She also revealed that drinking had become a coping mechanism and that this was a way for her to hide behind a façade.

"As a foreigner going overseas I know I change my drinking habits phenomenally". (Lilly)

Maria explained how she coped by withdrawing:

"It was a really shock and I think it lasted two or three years. I can tell from the way I looked and so, I think, you know I went inwards, I got introvert".

For another coping meant developing an outer shell to protect herself and help her deal with expatriate life.

"I have seen so much. I have heard so much. I just cope with being tough- having this outer shell. I am not consciously being tough. I just am now". (Lilly)

Lilly reported that exercise was one of the coping strategies she had used in expatriate life and it made her feel happier. All of a sudden body image became an issue possibly because as an expatriate one is constantly meeting new people and wanting to look one's best in order to boost ones self-esteem. This could be a way for the expatriate woman to control the environment in which she finds herself, but it could also overlap with the other themes of **occupation**. Although this was a survival strategy, it also had significant meaning in itself and was therefore a theme (see 4.3.4).

For another woman keeping busy with something was important and she knew from previous expatriate experience that this would help her to cope in the next expatriate environment.

Developing surviving strategies is one of the coping mechanisms in the lives of the expatriate women. It seems that when the women were forging surviving strategies necessitated by living in a foreign environment they seemed to cope better or differently with the feeling of alienation.

4.3.3 Disempowerment – pulled up by the roots

The participants expressed that they experienced disempowerment. The migration process suppressed their normal or natural ability to proceed with life and the experience changed their worlds, turning their lives upside down. Prior to their transfer into the expatriate lifestyle all the women had had an education and were employed. They had been happy working in their home countries and had looked forward to the migration as an exciting adventure and challenge for themselves and their families. They found that, with much work and will power, they forged strategies to cope with their feelings of disempowerment.

The theme of disempowerment could be discerned both externally and internally, in terms of existing family relationships and job-related occupation. Externally, it might be the laws on foreign labour that made the expatriate women feel disempowered. Internally, it might be the migration situation itself that set up the women for feelings of disempowerment.

A few of the women spoke about how they felt let down on arriving in the new country. They felt they had been made promises about getting jobs, but that these had fallen through. This was mostly

linked to the language barriers in the new country. Other jobs had fallen through due to local labour laws which made it difficult to obtain a job as a foreigner.

“For example in China, when arriving there one of the biggest issues was that I had been promised a job and that didn’t materialise. So I arrived in this foreign place – and thought I would be settled fairly quickly as I had been promised this nice GP job and then it didn’t happen. So it was like a slap in my face in a way – there was nothing to do”. (Lilly)

The realisation that the qualifications the women brought with them were not acceptable had an impact on the expatriation experience for some of the women. As Anna states:

“Slovakia was not part of the European Union when I finished fifteen years ago” ... “I realised that they (Canada) wouldn’t accept my medical license and I was not really able to work there”. (Anna)

The impact of not being able to work – either because their qualifications were not acceptable or because the laws prohibited foreigners from obtaining work - made the women feel desolate and powerless. For some of the women this meant that they had to retrain or further their studies at university. Anna, for example describes how she planned to move back to Canada to take up studies as a dental hygienist (See section 4.3.4 on occupation).

Another issue was the women’s experience of vulnerability in the future. Uno and Anna both expressed concerns about what would happen when their children grew older and they didn’t need them as much as they did then, and their husbands were busy at work, if they were still living expatriate lives. This could be seen as a comment from any mother regarding her children, but for the expatriate women who had spend numerous years overseas and perhaps in a situation where

they had not been able to work, their fears about the future had other dimensions, as they had not led 'normal' lives.

"I think it is important to think about the future. A husband is one person. I am one person. If something happens - so what? My husband has got a job and the children they grow up. What about me, if ..., should I stay here with my children, what can I be"? (Uno)

Gemma raised another aspect of the disempowerment which she experienced arriving in the new country as an expatriate woman. Her husband would go to his job and socialise through that context, whereas she would be left by herself at home with little knowledge of the country and culture they were in and unable to speak the language. Here the women all felt their situations depended heavily on the traditions and customs of the new country's culture. They felt that the matter of how a country and culture welcomed the newcomers affected how they were able to settle in their new environments. Being disempowered by not being welcomed could lead to loneliness, isolation and the feeling of alienation.

"Being in England was very difficult, because the English people do not reach out. They don't embrace you. They don't welcome you. So I would stand outside the school every morning, smiling, saying hello, and nobody would come up to me". (Gemma)

Or, as Anna experienced during her first migration to Canada

"You don't really have a chance. But it takes you a few weeks before you realise. OK who can I ask, do I go for the church, should I go for the 'Mall' and hope I meet a mother with a child I can ask".

4.3.4 Occupation – doing something worthwhile

Being occupied meant a great deal to the women participating in this study. The concept of **occupation** covers aspects of their lives including studying, part time employment, charity work, drinking tea/coffee, baby groups, and playgroups, playing tennis, going to the gym, attending book clubs, church, bible groups and choir and establishing libraries in their mother tongue.

The root issue in all this seemed to be that the women had previously been in a situation where they had been working or had the choice to decide whether to work or not. Now, suddenly they found themselves in a situation where they did not have the same choices as before, due to various circumstances such as insufficient language skills or restrictive laws.

The women interviewed all expressed concerns about what lack of occupation meant to them and how they had struggled to find their feet until they all, it seemed, found something to keep them busy. All the women described how they had been in transition since arriving in the new country. They were occupied with finding a place to live, settling the family and locating shops and finding their way around. Gradually, they found themselves ready to participate in activities like choir, play groups, book clubs and renovating houses in order to occupy themselves. This is linked to the fifth theme of transition (see section 4.3.5).

Having an identity seemed to be linked to what meaning occupation had for the expatriate women. The women described how important they felt it was to keep themselves busy and how they had experienced the lack of occupation. Another issue they brought up was the need to keep their brains going while being expatriates. They spoke of how they occupied themselves with both formal and informal activities in their daily lives. Keeping in touch with the outside world was mentioned as an

important issue and the ability to do so had an impact not only on the women themselves, but also on their families' well-being.

The meaning of the word **occupation** for the women was 'having something to do' or 'doing something'. The meaningfulness of an occupation could be interpreted as the purposefulness of that occupation. All the women interviewed mentioned the restriction of ability to work as one of the things they missed in their expatriate lives. But they also referred to other aspects of meanings of 'occupation', such as looking after children and family, doing housework and dealing with everyday contingencies. All of them clearly stated that their occupation around family and children was a first priority and then, when the family was settled, they could start thinking about their personal occupation. Having an occupation was linked to how the women experienced their identity. Being occupied was preserving the women's sanity i.e. not 'going crazy'. They stressed that preserving their sanity was an issue that they were aware of and this was helped by feeling and being occupied.

Many of the women had had a job prior to their expatriation and they expressed that working was part of their identity. The expatriate status had to a certain extent changed their identity as they were now following their husbands round the world instead of working. Gemma stressed, that her sense of worth deteriorated while she was in the expatriate situation. It was not always work in the sense of employment outside the home that the women were thinking of when referring to occupation: rather something purposeful with which to occupy themselves when their husbands went off to work and their children went to school.

One of the women spoke about how she had to defend her choice to do charity work as an attempt to keep busy, which made her feel less credible and question her identity.

I decided I had to do a course or a degree just to keep my time filled up, which was actually very satisfying. It meant that I met people who kind of had the same interests- who was not the “nu- nu” housewife just gossiping, so it really helped me – to feel a touch with reality again”.
(Lilly) ¹.

“I went for the interview and got the job. It was the best thing that could have happened to me cause all of a sudden I was a person in my own right”. (Gemma)

Anna explained how her previous experience of migration had made her aware of the need to keep busy:

“I better keep myself more occupied – so I don’t start thinking of silliness”.

The participants stressed that not working or being occupied in a purposeful way influenced them negatively. Their sense of identity was strongly linked to their professional lives. They did not want to be identified only as the wives of their husbands and mothers of their children.

¹ “Nu- Nu” house wife - slang word for a woman who does not use her brain [researcher comment]

The lack of occupation was not only an issue for the expatriate women. They spoke about the frustrations of living amongst and being identified with other unoccupied or employed people who might be local or expatriate. Maria recalled such a time. Everybody in the area seemed, like her, to be unemployed, and she found little in common with the culture of that community which was not oriented around literature and books. It became difficult to meet people who shared her interests.

"Something I read a year ago, and I should have read it then [when arriving] (researcher comment) was that you or your identity is affected by people you interact with in the country where you are. Even in England I was myself. So here, the language, the way you looked were different, you look different. You interpret that the reflections they are giving you make you think you are stupid and I really believed it. I totally believed it for a while".

"For two years therefore I drew to me very bad companies, like I remember this time in Blangstedgaard [socially downgraded area] like bad karma (laughing)".

(Maria)

Lilly explained how she had found that charity work made her life more bearable when she suddenly found that the job she had been promised did not materialise.

At some level all of the women sought work/employment in order to make their lives more meaningful. In those cases where the women did not have sufficient command of the language to obtain a job, they managed to occupy themselves with other things. Maria started a playgroup for Spanish-speaking children and later, a library with Spanish books for children. Uno decided to embark on further education and Betty kept developing her language skills through language courses.

Occupation was either formal, in those cases where the women could find a job as in Gemma's story, or it took the form of their choosing to do further studies to keep themselves occupied as mentioned by Uno, Lilly and Betty. Informal occupation was also mentioned frequently and this included running children's playgroups, having coffee/ tea with other women, attending a choir and church groups. A turning point in all the stories seemed to have been when the women found some purpose in their everyday lives.

"Another thing I have picked up is being in a book club which is keeping my brain going as well" (Maria).

All of the women experienced a significant shift in their lives once they were doing something purposeful for themselves and they felt that, not only did they become happier, but their families and children were happier too.

This impacted on the women's self-esteem, which influenced their children and their husbands as well.

"Last year I was super happy. I worked every day. Left at seven and enjoyed it. The children were happy. We were happy". (Maria)

Being occupied with something meaningful made a significant difference, and the women felt more confident in that their lives as expatriates had a purpose.

Expatriation did not always have a negative impact on the women. One of the women described how she and her family had pretended that this was the place where they really wanted to be and had set up a proper home. This had made their adjustment and settling in the new place so much easier. Two of the women stated that previous expatriation

experience had eased their disappointment when prevented from being occupied in a meaningful way. From the first day in their new country they had been aware of keeping themselves busy in order to avoid being bored or depressed. One of the women said that not only had she enjoyed her stay, but the whole family had a nice time.

Occupation does have an impact on the expatriate experience. When six women give six different stories on how they experience occupation or lack of occupation it is difficult to specify at what occupational level the individual woman experience satisfaction. Some women are happy with coffee mornings whereas other women aim for occupations where they can use their skills.

4.3.5 Transition – being “in-between”

All the women spoke of the transitions they had made during their years of expatriation: from their country of origin, from their previous country of expatriation and to the country they were presently living in. They spoke about what they had been through both physically and psychologically and what impact that had had on their present circumstances. Four of the women spoke about how they had learned from these moves in order to adapt more easily to the next expatriation.

“I had prepared myself inside what was going to happen”. (Anna)

or, expressed differently:

“So as soon as we know we are moving the process is to organise the packers, the animals, all the boxes, get them out on the other side, maybe have a bit of fun on the way- that is my role. It is just a process”. (Lilly)

The women spoke about the feeling of being “in-between” when expatriating. Uno and her husband had discussed their anticipation and Anna made plans about the family’s moving back

to Canada. The women spoke about how they were settling into the new country, how they had negotiated where to live and how their family's lifestyle was going to affect all of them. Here Anna explains how she and her husband had agreed that he had to work fewer hours and spend time with the family.

"you have to spend more time home --of course I am not going to jump on his neck if he couldn't spend eight hours with us a day. I understand he has his duties at work but I said, I really appreciated if he would be home more, because family is important too".

(Anna)

In the process of expatriation the women felt that their marriages had become stronger and that they as man and wife were working together as a unit. This can be linked to the section about relationships (4.3.1.2.1). The women expressed how they had slowly built up a network in the new country, were feeling more confident about the expatriate life and that they felt they had found meaning in their daily lives.

Transition is a process as well as a state of mind. Being in transition could be experienced as being 'in limbo'. The transition starts from the moment the family has been asked to take up a new position. For some of the families with several years of expatriate experience it even starts way before this question has been asked, as expatriates know that they very rarely stay in the same country for more than a maximum of three to four years. The women interviewed stressed that no one settles in a new country just within a day or two. The road towards adapting to a new environment is long and bumpy and it takes a lot of courage and strength to get there – and to achieve the sense of belonging.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the lived experiences of expatriate women have been illustrated through reflection on in-depth descriptions from the interview transcripts. The women experienced that being expatriated was a **transition**. Being in a migration process was **alienating** for the women. To feel comfortable and less alienated in the 'new' country, they had to feel comfortable with the cultural customs and the norms of this country. In order to know the culture they needed to be familiar with the language. An important issue for the women settling in the new country was the feeling of **disempowerment** and the women found that they needed to **cope**. In order to cope they had to feel comfortable with the culture and the language as well as to be able to **occupy** themselves with something that was meaningful to them.

University of Cape Town

Chapter 5. Discussion and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

For expatriate women following their spouse, their time as migrants was found to be a period of transition. They experienced this transition through feelings of alienation, coping and adaptation being disempowered in an environment they did not understand, and by being prevented or enabled to engage in meaningful occupation. This chapter begins with a discussion of the findings in relation to the literature including the effect of migration on health and well-being, followed by a summary and a discussion of the major findings of this thesis. Next, the limitations of this study are discussed and finally, recommendations based on the expressed needs of the women are presented.

5.2 Discussion of findings in relation to expanded literature review

The choice of in-depth analysis of research data before any further literature review was made in accordance with Giorgi's (1985) approach. Giorgi emphasises the importance of the interpretation by the researcher of what was expressed by the participant at the time of the interview, without recourse to follow-up interviews. Having interpreted the experiences of the expatriate women I interviewed and reached conclusions in relation to their experiences of migration, I was left with a large volume of descriptive data. This method of conducting a qualitative study pays respect to what is believed to be a major source of new insights into the researcher's field: the way the phenomenon is lived.

Findings from the analysis of data lead to a search of the literature in the following areas:

- Feeling alienated
- Coping - struggling to find my feet
- Disempowerment - pulled up by the roots
- Occupation – doing some worthwhile
- Transition – being “in between”.

I will proceed to present other relevant literature to support my findings. This part of the literature research was conducted in the same manner as that presented in chapter 2. The keywords were linked to various terms related to migration as well as “health”, “alienation”, “culture”, “coping”, “disempowerment” and “occupation”. Further terms like “expatriation” and “woman and expatriation”, “spouse and expatriation”, “health and expatriation”, “women and transition” and “transition and health” were also used.

5.2.1 Feeling alienated

When people migrate from one nation or society to another they carry their knowledge with them. On settling down in the new culture, their identity may change and that enables a degree of belonging; they may also attempt to settle down via the routes of assimilation or biculturalism (Bhugra 2004a). Bhugra (2004b) states that the migrant situation can cause the migrants to feel more alienated because they are in between cultures and yet have to find their own position in the new environment.

The frequent use of the word “alienation” as a central theme is due to the fact that it is common to all humans. Alienation is a feeling of not belonging. This feeling can be physical, mental, religious, spiritual, psychological, political, social or economic – and it often tends to be a combination of

more than one of these types. Alienation is a driving force that pushes the human consciousness to extremes. Whether it is alienation from society or alienation from socialisation dramatic changes consequently occur (The British Encyclopaedia 1999).

The women interviewed all expressed that, at some stage along the expatriate process, they had felt alienated. This could be alienation from the culture they had moved to, from their own position as expatriate women, alienation from their roles or position in and outside the family and alienation from their family and friends left behind (Bhugra 2004a; Altman & Shortland 2001; Carballo, Crocutt & Hadzihasnanovic 1996).

A feeling of alienation impacted women in various ways. I will therefore discuss some of these factors in relation to alienation in the following section.

Altman & Chelmers (1980) emphasize that culture refers to the values, beliefs, customs and behaviours that are passed on from one generation to the next by both formal and informal education. Culture affects our behaviour in a number of ways, including indicating norms for our use of time and space, influencing beliefs about the importance of different tasks and being a transmitter of attitudes and values about work and play. Culture also influences what roles we expect others to fulfil. People have a cultural orientation that influences their individual choices in what they do and how they do it (Altman & Chelmers 1980). Chu (1998) confirms this by saying that people from different cultures have different beliefs, values and practises. This also influences the way people explain something like illness and health and their expectations of the medical system within the culture in which they live. Ward & Styles (2005) states that migration and thus moving to another culture can have a long lasting impact on the migrant's identity. The adjustment to living in a new and strange place can be psychologically challenging for the individual. The person who migrates has to

come to terms with multiple losses such as those of friends, community, family, food, language and customs.

This literature supports my findings as the women interviewed spoke about the cultural changes they experienced as migrants. The women not only experienced the cultural differences of the country to which they migrated, but they also experienced a specific set of norms within the expatriate community itself.

Another issue raised by the women was that of interaction within a new culture with one's own culture as a frame of reference. This means that the way one approaches other people in a "new" country is very important on account of their beliefs, what they value and how they practise social etiquette. An invitation for dinner could have its own set of unwritten assumptions and behaviours which are invisible to an outsider. Similarly, expressions of thanks may have a number of variations which are context-specific and, if not used correctly, may cause offence. People who have been expatriated need to get accustomed to the ways of living in the new country and adjust to the local customs. Ward & Styles (2005); Bhugra (2004a) and Shaffer and Harrison (2001) all indicate that both verbal and non-verbal communication play an important role in adjustment across cultures.

Alienation was also expressed in and throughout relationships. There was a clear distinction between the responsibilities within relationships and the quality of relationships. The experience of migration is one that can lead to distress if families and households do not adjust to the new situation (Bhugra 2004a).

All the women mentioned the responsibility they had towards their children during their migration and their concern for the children's future. How would the children adapt to a life in their home

countries once repatriated? Did the children get education of the same standard as they would have received in their home countries? These findings were supported by Ali (2003) in her PhD thesis on intercultural adaptation of expatriate spouses and children. She states that many women are worried about their children's future in the expatriate environment, especially if the family faces difficult times. The issue of how the child will cope is a stressor for the woman. Ali (2003) stresses that parents should raise their level of awareness of their expatriated children and look out for signs that will show that their children are not adapting to the expatriate environment. Employers should support expatriate employees who have children, so that these are accommodated into the expatriate situation as well as possible. (Ali 2003).

All the women referred to the importance of the quality of their relationships with their husbands on both superficial and intimate levels. Schaetti (1994) confirms this by saying that communication and stability, as well as collaboration are essential when creating a healthy environment for the woman and her family in a migrant situation. Schluter and Lee (1993) support this by saying that, more than anything, relationships determine our happiness, fulfilment and our sense of life well lived. The importance of having strong bonds in the family during expatriation, especially between husband and wife, in view of the immediate lack of family is supported by literature and seen as a vital source of adjustment for the family, especially for the wife (Copeland & Norell 2002; Schaffer & Harrison 2001). An important component is being able to make the necessary adjustments.

The women spoke about relationships with other people and what implications these had for their lives both in a positive and a negative way. Their husbands would establish friendships and networks through work, but for the women left at home friendships with other women in similar situations become important sources of support. The literature states that in an expatriate situation, women may not necessarily socialise with the same category of women they would have met in

their home countries and may thus not experience the intimacy they would normally have shared (Ward & Styles 2005; Ali 2003; Copeland & Norell 2002; Lepine *et al* 2002; Schaffer & Harrison 2001).

5.2.2 Coping - struggling to find my feet

Lazarus (1981) writes that to cope is to “do” something. He emphasises that although doing something directly is most typically thought of as coping, not doing something is also a way of coping. Other ways of coping are looking for information relevant to the situation, trying to change ones way of thinking about the difficult situation or trying to make oneself better (or at least different) without changing the situation or how one thinks about it.

The findings support Antonovsky’s (1987) definition of a coping strategy as an overall plan of action for overcoming stressors. Antonovsky says that every coping strategy consists of three elements: *rationality, flexibility and farsightedness*. Rationality can be illustrated by the findings relating to Gemma, in that her feelings of self-worth were compromised due to her being in a migration situation. Flexibility, according to Antonovsky, might mean that the person considers a possible new way of organising their life as a coping strategy. This could be linked to Uno taking up studying again to increase her chances of getting a job as a teacher. Farsightedness is linked to both flexibility and rationality. Antonovsky stresses, regarding farsightedness, that a way of coping might be that the person is flexible as well as being rational in their judgements. Anna’s plan to move back to Canada to take up her studies would improve her chances of getting a job if expatriated in the future. Antonovsky speaks about coping in general, but links between the above mentioned elements of rationality, flexibility and farsightedness and the statements of the women interviewed illustrate the specific application of this theory to the present study.

Ward and Styles (2005) mention coping strategies as an important foundation for the transition phase between arriving and settling in a new country. Strategies mentioned in their article concur with the findings in this thesis. Coping helped expatriate women to move on by building a psychological bridge between the women's old identities and the new identity which enabled their settling and adaptation to their situations in the new country.

In this study the women mentioned several coping mechanisms in dealing with their expatriate experience. The women mentioned a variety of coping mechanisms like drinking alcohol, studying, buying a house and starting to restore it, going to the gym or shopping to ease the circumstances of migrant life and as a way to do something.

One of the women said her way of coping was making friends and that became her "saviour" in expatriate life. This is supported by Ali (2003) and Copeland and Norell (2002) as being an important factor when the expatriate woman is adjusting in a new country. They state that many expatriate women cope by having close friendships with other women expatriates or, to a lesser degree with locals. Anna is an example of this in that she chose to live in a residential area as opposed to being in a compound or an area with many expatriates. Some of the other women mentioned mechanisms which might be viewed as more direct strategies for coping, like seeking a job, socialising with other people, getting depressed and anxious, or isolating themselves. It was clear that the women became aware of their coping mechanisms through the interview and similarities emerged among what the women said about coping. Complaining to their husbands about their situation could be interpreted as some sort of coping mechanism that eventually lead the women to move on and start, for example looking for a job: the women could see that the complaining did not achieve anything and that made them move on and do something. Another coping strategy enjoyed by the women was their contact with their husbands. They all said that

being close was very important and that the support they found in their marriages encouraged them to move on. This is mentioned under the theme *alienation*.

5.2.3 Occupation – doing something worthwhile

Florence Nightingale observed that some women had run the risk of “...going mad for the want of something to do” (Woodham-Smith 1952, p.64). On the basis of this observation from the pioneer of nursing I will start my discussion on how expatriate women experience occupation and the concept of occupation.

Occupation has been defined as the “ordinary and familiar things that people do every day” (Christiansen, Clark, Kielhofner & Rogers, 1995, p.1015). Wilcock states that “the need to be occupied is part of our nature and each person has a unique repertoire of occupations that match abilities, needs and environmental demands” (Wilcock 1998). Occupation also has an effect on the level of a person’s adjustment to a given situation. In particular, a person’s previous occupational background has an influence on how they adjust (Bhugra 2004a). Lepine *et al* (2002) state that women who adjusted more easily in the new culture were women who had a strong educational background e.g. had done a diploma or had a university degree which had enabled them to occupy themselves prior to arrival.

All the women mentioned that occupation meant a lot to them and that part of their success in settling in a new environment was due to their ability to “do something” worthwhile. Doing something could mean anything from socialising, playing tennis, being in a choir, going to gym, or getting a job doing charity work and looking after children. According to Watson and Fourie (2004), occupations fulfil people’s needs and wants. They state that occupation has the transformational power to bring about development and maturation across multiple transitions when

the choices are personally meaningful. The nature and diversity of an individual's occupation are influenced by the social and physical environment and occupations have a direct effect on health and well-being.

Frankl (1968) says that we can discover meaning in three ways: first through creativity, accomplishment and doing, secondly, by experiencing value and lastly, through pain and suffering. The interviewed women were all creative in finding meaningful occupation, for example, through work, bible groups, establishing play groups and attending choir. All these things brought meaning into their lives and enabled them to feel empowered in their expatriate situations. Through occupation they found and experienced value in their lives. Gemma reported that her entire attitude towards her situation changed once she found meaningful occupation and this had a significant positive knock-on effect on her entire family. Other examples of finding meaningful occupation which positively impacted the whole family were enjoying studying or finding a job. The pain and suffering which Frankl (1968) mentions could be seen in the women's experiences of lack of occupation which further affected their wellbeing and their levels of stress. For example, Maria recalled that, looking back, the first two years as an expatriate woman felt like a blur to her.

5.2.4 Disempowerment – pulled up by the roots

The dictionary defines empower as “to enable” or “give power” to. In Social sciences the word empowerment or “power” may be stated like this, “Power is the probability that one actor within a relationship will be in a position to carry out his or her own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests” (Weber 1968). Having this definition of empowerment the converse would be true for disempowerment.

Moghadam and Senftova (2005) identify 44 indicators of women's empowerment. Some of the social indicators of women's empowerment are women's rights to political participation, integrity of the woman's own body and health. Seen in the light of these indicators which, for instance, state that women should have the right to a job and to be a person in their own right, migrant expatriate women will not always satisfy the requirements of these indicators and are thus left disempowered. In this study all the women complained of not being able to obtain jobs with the qualifications they had prior to their arrival. This connects with the indicator regarding the right of a woman to have a job.

In terms of the findings of this study, the women experienced disempowerment. As there are different ways of experiencing disempowerment I have divided this section into: environment, loss of support, work and language.

As expatriate women they experienced being taken out of their familiar environments and following their husband to settle in a new culture where they were not able to live the same kinds of lives as they had lived in their home countries. Hugo (2000, p.288) reported that "*... there are contexts in which migration can result in disempowerment, whereby women move into a more constrained, exploitative, or lower status situation than the one they left behind*". Examples of this could be Anna moving from Slovakia to Canada or Lilly moving to China. In these situations, neither of them was able to get a job equivalent to the qualifications, and so their occupations were more lowly.

Another issue raised in respect of disempowerment was the women's inability to work or get a job which would afford them the same kind of recognition that they would have enjoyed in their home country, which had a great impact on their daily lives and on their ability to settle in the new

country. Here Hugo (2000) discusses that migration can mean downward social mobility for women and that women who migrate may not be able to gain employment that matches their qualifications or previous work experience in the new country. This is supported by literature about spousal adjustment in the expatriation process where it is observed that women can lose their identity and sense of self-esteem through being in situations where they can not obtain satisfactory occupation (Ward & Styles 2005; Bhugra 2004b; Ali 2003; Copeland & Norell 2002; Shaffer & Harrison 2001; Hardill & MacDonald 1998).

The women being interviewed also spoke about how they had lost the support system of their families and friends and that this made them feel helpless and was a reason for concern. The findings of this study concur with Hugo who states: *“For some women migration can mean the loss of important and valued support system”*, and *“Migration can result in disempowerment of women through loss of this protection, support and help in child-minding and other household activities”* (Hugo 2000, p.302).

The statements of the women around feeling disempowered because of language are supported by Hugo (2000) where he writes that, though the aim is that men and women are treated equally in terms of job opportunities, this still seems to be a very gender-sensitive issue which leaves women disempowered, for example, due to language difficulties. This is supported by Ali (2003).

The women interviewed felt disempowered due to living in a different environment where they were out of their normal contexts. The different environment or the culture influenced the women's experience of well-being and their ability to cope. Occupation seemed to be an overriding concern for the women and they all seemed to be feeling less distressed when they were able to occupy themselves with something meaningful, so that their sense of well-being increased.

5.2.5 Transition – being “in-between”

All of the women interviewed showed a pattern of having experienced a difficult period after moving to the new country. This applied both to themselves and to their families. They all expressed that their experiences affected their sense of well being or health on different levels. Gradually, within different periods of time they all managed to change their situations by incorporating meaningful aspects into everyday lives. This I interpret as a transition.

A transition refers to a change in health status, in role relations, in expectations or in abilities. It indicates changes in the needs of all human systems. Transition requires a person to incorporate new knowledge, to alter their behaviour, and therefore, to change their definition of self in social contexts: of a healthy or ill self, or of internal and external needs, which affects their health status.

Meleis and Schumacher (1994), writing about transition, state that an important characteristic of a transition is it is essentially positive. When a transition has been completed, it implies that the person who has undergone this transition has reached a state of greater stability relative to what has gone before. An analysis of my findings revealed that all the women interviewed expressed that their experiences constituted a positive transition.

Meleis and Schumacher (1994) state that in a transition, there will be aspects of various elements e.g. expectations, level of knowledge/skills, environment, level of planning, emotional and physical well-being, subjective well-being, role-mastery and well-being of relationships. The following indicate how some of these elements are confirmed by the findings of this study.

5.2.5.1 Expectations

Meleis and Schumacher (1994) state that the transition experience is influenced by what expectations the person has prior to the transition. In this study this would refer to what expectations the women who migrated had prior to arriving in the new country. When a woman had experienced migration several times her stress levels diminished as one knew what to expect from the experience: the women who had migrated more than once found the subsequent move less stressful. Gemma discovered that after her second move, the moving boxes did not have to be unpacked on day one after the move and Lilly recorded she had come to accept that her role was to be a professional mover. Another expectation that made the time stressful for the women was that of anticipating a job which did not materialise as the woman had hoped. One could also reflect on whether some of the women might have had unrealistically positive expectations of what the move would involve: for example, Lilly, who thought that a job had been secured for her as a doctor in China or Gemma, saying that migration was not as glamorous as she had thought it would be. Anna had, from previous migration experience, learned what her life might be like and had prepared herself for the next move in ways by making agreements with her husband about the new life.

5.2.5.2 Level of knowledge/skill

It seems that a person's level of knowledge plays a large part in their being able to have a healthy transition outcome. The women in this study spoke about how uncertainty about the new country and their own situations, as well as their families, was of great concern to them. Uno mentioning her concerns about giving birth in a country with poor health services and Lilly spoke about issues surrounding her family's health whilst living in China. Furthermore, the women's level of language skills also had an impact in that, when not being able to speak or understand the language, life became stressful or difficult, e.g. Anna and Maria arriving in an area where few people spoke their

language or English. Newman emphasises that consciousness is defined as the “informational capacity of the system to interact with its environment” (Newman 1986).

5.2.5.3 Environment

Environment refers to the resources that the person in transition can count on. Environment has been discussed earlier in this chapter in relation to disempowerment. The environment is the support that a person can find outside him or herself that may facilitate the transition. Newman says that, in searching for patterns, the person will go through periods of disorganisation. Newman (1994) explained that the patterns of interaction of person-environment constitute health. The findings of this study strongly emphasize that the expatriate women found their experiences as migrants became less stressful once they had found some kind of network that could support their settling into the new country. Gemma found that by joining a Bible group she not only found a network of other women that she could trust and count on but she also found support in settling into the environment. Anna and her family decided to move into a residential area and thus aimed to integrate into the community in order to ease their expatriation experience and attain a sense of belonging.

5.2.5.4 Level of planning

Another important factor in the transition process is the level of planning that takes place before and during a transition. One of the women prepared her family by telling stories about the new country they were going to and playing “who moved the cheese” with the children. Uno and her husband planned where they would move next and in accordance with that planned for her studying and the children’s schooling as well. This could be seen as an intentionally proactive approach as opposed to a reactive approach to the migration situation.

5.2.5.5 Emotional and physical well-being

Here Meleis and Schumacher's (1994) theory supports the findings as all the women expressed levels of stress and emotional distress during the migration process. During the interview words like anxiety, insecurity, frustration, depression, ambivalence and loneliness were used and feelings of low self-esteem and about changed roles in the family were expressed. Meleis and Schumacher (1994) emphasize that emotional and physical well-being are crucial for the outcome of a migration process. They state, that when a successful transition has happened, feelings of distress may give way to a sense of well-being. This enables the person to experience an increase in their self-esteem and to enjoy a feeling of empowerment. This supports the findings where one of the women explained how she now had become "a person in her own right" and that the process of migration empowered her.

5.2.5.6 Role mastery

Another important step in the transition process is the feeling of mastery over their new role that the person experiences after the transition. The women found that, after the second expatriation, life became easier: they knew what to expect and learned and understood the social system of the new country more quickly than during their first expatriation. They found they were less disappointed in terms of their expectations and they adapted to their new roles more easily. Here the findings are supported as all the women reported that they had achieved greater self awareness regarding their expatriate experience having negotiated the transitions of migration as well as having told their stories during the interviews. After the interview, one of the participants reflected:

"I was very nervous before you came. But afterwards I really felt comfortable and special as it had been my time and my story" (Anna).

5.2.5.7 Well-being of relationships

The last component I will mention in relation to migration and transition is the well-being of relationships. A healthy transition is dependent on, or influenced by, the quality of the well-being of the whole family, and the cooperation and teamwork within the family before and during migration. Communication and trust also reflects a healthy transition. All the women interviewed spoke of the importance of a strong relationship between man and wife and how crucial communication was between them. The way the family organised their family life and the interrelated roles within the family were important, so that everybody in the family cooperated around the migration situation (Meleis & Schumacher 1994; Meleis & Chick 1986). Here there is a cross reference to the theme of alienation referring to relationships and their challenges (see 5.2.1).

Meleis and Schumacher's (1994) concept and the transition steps as well as the concepts of health support the findings of this study. Their transition theory can be used to validate the findings of this study, and Newman's (1986) theory can be used to identify patterns and reach a greater understanding of one's own situation. I interpret the interviews with the support of the theories and can find similarities between the women's statements and the theories. The women who were interviewed were experiencing or had experienced transition as well as having reached a higher level of consciousness or greater understanding of their own situation as women migrant spouses. This is supported by Schluter & Lee (1993) and has been discussed previously in relation to alienation (see 5.2.1).

The themes have been discussed in relation to the expanded literature. To a certain degree, the themes overlap one another, for example, lack of occupation does contribute to the sense of being disempowered, and the lack of language does impact the ability to adapt to a new culture.

5.3 Health and well-being

Having described the experience of migration, I now look through the lenses of health and well-being in order to describe the implications of expatriate migration for women following their spouse to another country for an indefinite period of time. While the research question relates to the lived experience of expatriate migrant women spouses, there appear to be a number of implications for health and well-being. I therefore will explore this in more detail in this section. I will firstly define what is meant by health.

The World Health Organisation (n.d) defines health as follows: “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity”.

This is expanded further by the University of Cape Town, Department of Nursing’s, definition which states:

“Health is a state of physical, mental, social, emotional and spiritual soundness in a person. Health is a dynamic state, which is relative rather than absolute and is achieved when there is integration and balance of a person’s internal and external environments”

(University of Cape Town, Department of Nursing 1990)

Benner and Wrubel’s (1989) description of the evolution of the understanding of health as a theoretical concept is a helpful framework in which to discuss the concept of health. They state that the conceptualisation of health started with the belief that health was “soundness of mind, body and spirit”. The focus then shifted to that of the “medicalization of health”.

Benner and Wrubel (1989) present “five main types of health promoting” theories. These are:

- Health as an ideal state
- Health as the ability to fulfil social roles
- Health as a commodity that can be bought or given
- Health as a human potential
- Health as a sense of coherence.

5.3.1 Health as an ideal state

The point is that no one will ever “get there”: we are always – and only – moving towards health. So health becomes “the definition of the notion of the good life” (Benner and Wrubel 1989), but life in the here and now is never completely good or healthy - we can only move toward this goal. This can be linked to Newman’s (1994) statement that health is a process of developing the awareness of self and environment together with an increasing ability to perceive alternatives and respond in a variety of ways. In the findings of this study the women interviewed moved towards a better or healthier state as they adapted to the migration situation. It seemed that, initially, their health status was compromised in early stages of the expatriation process and later, as time passed and they adapted to their new role, it improved especially as they became aware of their ability to change their situations.

5.3.2 Health as the ability to fulfil roles

Parsons (1981) defines health as the state of optimum capacity of an individual for the effective role and tasks to which he has been socialized. This sociological view of health is appealing, but also describes an ideal situation, for which the individual can strive. A critical point is that this definition of health assumes that “society is healthy” as well as that the roles of individuals are healthy (Benner & Wrubel 1989). This definition can be linked to the expatriate women, who although they

were functioning very well health-wise in their own home country environments, were less able to cope having settled in a migration situation. For example, Gemma experienced anxiety and loneliness, but once she got a job she became more positive and this had positive spin-offs for her family. Other examples are those of Betty not being able to fulfil her role as a scientist and Anna's qualifications not being recognised in Canada.

5.3.3 Health as commodity

Foucault (1973) writes about the "medical view of health", meaning that body and mind can be "shaped and controlled". The concept of normality is the focus in this approach and becomes the point of entry for professional medical intervention, as opposed to health in a more encompassing sense of the word. A person can buy better health, and health therefore exists outside the person and may be "purchased" as a consumer product. Personal involvement in the process towards better health is not mandatory. One should do as prescribed, i.e. take the medicine and /or agree to surgery, and health will follow. The commodities are "replacements for identified deficits" and not "positive strengths" (Benner & Wrubel 1989, p 153). The consumption of health, can however degenerate into the search for a quick repair. An illustration of this is the increasing demand for plastic surgery where people can buy themselves a facelift or a slimmer figure by liposuction. The increasing substitution of leisure as a means of achieving health can be seen as fraught with problems because leisure loses its inherent meanings when it is subordinated to the pursuit of health. Even the more psychological and social aspects of life are translated into technical terms and "prescribing" takes place here, e.g. "seeing other people is good for you". The women migrants in this study had experiences which could not easily be 'cured' by medication, for example, taking drugs and drinking alcohol, but needed to be addressed at a deeper level: occupying themselves with something meaningful to them. Lilly's response to dealing with the stressors she endured while living in a closed compound in China was to drink too much alcohol.

5.3.4 Health as a human potential

The view is “based on the premise that all people, whatever their degree of health or illness and whatever their circumstances, have the potential for health” (Benner & Wrubel 1989, p.156). Dubos (1959) and Illich (1977) state that health can be seen as a view that escapes the “ideal way of defining health”. Rather, it focuses on people’s existing capacity to grow and also to adapt to present situations. Closely related to this concept of health are the many “non-traditional” approaches to getting better, alternative treatments and personal development endeavours of different kinds (Levin & Coreil 1986). Benner and Wrubel (1989, p.157) emphasise that, according to this understanding of health, people are in a state of never getting there, and it seems as if “the only way of being healthy is by becoming healthy”. Another important aspect is that “health viewed as an individual potential and an individual’s responsibility weakens our possibilities for community action in the development of health policy” (Benner & Wrubel 1989, p 158). Here the findings show that the women’s capacities developed during their migration process. They gained new insights about themselves and their situation. Of relevance here are the community initiatives that were undertaken, e.g. Maria starting a Spanish language library.

5.3.5 Health as a sense of coherence

The sense of coherence concept is described by Antonovsky (1987, p. xii) as a “global orientation” encompassing a “feeling of confidence” that things work out as well as can reasonably be expected”. In the findings all the women concluded that things had worked out for them. They had moved forward, found meaningful occupations and had found a way to make life liveable in the expatriate situation: Anna became an entrepreneur, Maria made a library for Spanish speaking children, Lilly did charity work in China, Gemma found a job as a teaching assistant, Betty joined a choir and Uno started studying.

As can be seen from this discussion, health can be viewed from many perspectives. It seems from the findings that the migrant women in this study all had experienced lack of health and well-being during their expatriation, but were on their way to re-establishing an acceptable state of well-being.

5.4 Limitations of the study

My curiosity caused me to explore the world of migration theory. Although there was limited literature in relation to this particular group of migrant women, this gap justified the study.

My choice of research method was phenomenology and this implied a small number of participants. The findings cannot be regarded as representative of all migrant women; however, this is not the purpose of phenomenology. I think I would have liked to have had more diversity among my participants in terms of demographic characteristics and experiences. However, I did not get any responses for participation from women with a diplomatic background.

Another limitation was time. In order to get a broader picture of the phenomenon I could have expanded my research. A longitudinal study would be of value; however this would have been a different kind of study.

A major challenge in using phenomenology is that of language proficiency. This relates to both the participants and the interviewer. Due to the fact that not all participants were native English speakers many expressions were used that are not standard English. Given that Giorgi does not support member checking, this avenue of verification was not open to me. However, as indicated in chapter 3, an English language translator was employed to assist in checking the tapes and transcripts for accuracy.

According to my exclusion criteria I chose to interview women who could express themselves in English which limited my sample choice. By doing this I precluded myself from hearing the voices of all non-English speaking women which could have presented me with another picture of the phenomenon.

In conducting a phenomenological analysis another limitation occurs. In the descriptive phase of the analysis where language competency becomes an issue in terms of expressing the fullness and the nuances of the phenomenon, it did have an impact that some of the participants were communicating in languages other than their mother tongues. Further, it had an impact that I, as an interviewer, did not have English as a mother tongue, particularly in terms of my employment of written methodology that is dependent on language.

In addition to the spoken language, written proficiency is a skill required by the researcher in order to fully express and interpret the data. In this regard my supervisor and a language editor read through the whole dissertation.

Another limitation could be the venues chosen. All but one of the women chose to have the interview at their own houses. I realised afterwards that there had been many interruptions during the interviews, e.g. babies crying and telephones ringing. However, the women seemed to prefer to be interviewed in their own environments and were relaxed. I did not have any problems refocusing the women on the interview when interrupted.

Access to the participants was a limitation as a criterion was that the women would have to be located in Denmark, England or South Africa. This limitation was intentional and appropriate in containing the scope for a mini dissertation.

5.5 Recommendations

In the introduction to this study I stated that there had been very little focus on how women experienced expatriation and health issues related to their migration. The recommendations in this chapter have arisen from the study and comprise the expressed needs of the participants.

Recommendations for the future, both within the nursing field and in research, but also for the broader audience who in some way or another deal with migration, would be around increasing awareness of women's particular roles in the migration process. This study has highlighted the need for more work to be done to address the challenges and needs of those women who migrate with special focus on the women. This is of particular relevance to organisations which have a highly mobile international workforce.

5.5.1 Recommendations for practice

It is my hope that the findings of this study can contribute to drawing attention to how migrant women experience health and well-being. This is particularly relevant to nurses, health promoters, doctors (particularly family practitioners), health visitors and other people who deal with migrant /expatriate women.

In the nursing and medical professions, information on how expatriate women experience migration and how it influences their health could be useful for people who meet these women in their daily working lives. The health visitor who meets women with children of all ages should have an increased awareness of women who are expatriates. There needs to be a specific focus on what they should look for. What do they express about their situation and are they well? Do the women have any symptoms, like complaining of being unwell, depression or inappropriate behaviours? Further support groups e.g. including other expatriate women in similar situations could be established to help these women adjust to their new environments. Another recommendation could be the

implementation of an assessment which is holistic and context-sensitive in order to make expatriate women feel comfortable and understood.

5.5.2. Recommendations for further research

In reading around the topic raised in my study, a number of related areas where research was required came to my attention (Oxford Research 1998; Adler 2001). I see a great need to start to recognise the expatriate woman as a person in her own right, in order to improve her health and well-being during expatriation, as well as the well-being of her whole family as a unit. This acknowledges the link between the well-being of the mother and the whole family's well-being.

Changes over time are probably of crucial importance, if a real understanding of the lived experience of these women is to be attained. Accordingly, if I had interviewed a smaller number of participants several times, their experience would probably have been revealed to a deeper degree than was possible during one single interview.

In this study, experiencing migration through expatriation as a woman has been characterized as more or less an existential experience which is likely to have long-term effects: the woman may experience difficulties when repatriated. A large number of women find that life after expatriation may feel as stressful as being expatriated, as the society in their home country has changed as well (Ali 2003).

More research is needed, as this study only focuses on a specific group of migrants - those who are expatriated for a certain period of their lives following their husbands. Further research could pay attention to the effect of expatriation on specific relationships:

- The relationships within the migrant family or between the migrant family and others
- The women's relationship with her husband and her children
- The expatriate children's experience
- The experience of repatriation.

5.5.3 Recommendation for multinational /international organisations

Prior to expatriation, companies sending their employees out as workforce should have **information and courses** for both the employee and the spouse. This could prepare the husband and spouse for some of the surprises expatriation may involve.

A **settlement programme** for the whole family, consisting of recommendations around how and where to do things in the new country, could be implemented. For example, how to rent or buy a house, information about the local authorities, services and regulations and obtaining social and financial insurance, how to obtain driving licenses, suggestions around language education as well as cultural training. It could also include a **contact person** for the family for the first couple of months and if possible a link could be made with a local family to help the expatriates to settle in more easily.

6. Conclusion

The experience of expatriate migrant women involves both an adventure and challenge.

Expatriation is a personal as well as a cross-cultural **transition** from the familiar to the unfamiliar.

In the transition process the women feel **alienated and** they experience **disempowerment** in the expatriate circumstances, but gradually they develop **coping** strategies in the alien environment and find **occupation** that is meaningful to them as individuals.

My aim for this study - to obtain a deeper understanding of the experience of migrating women using a phenomenological research method – has, to a certain degree, been realised. Six women with experience of migrating were interviewed and five themes were generated from the data.

My analysed data and the literature findings conclude that expatriate women's health and well-being are affected by migration. The study also concludes that if a successful transition takes place the women will find themselves empowered as women and expatriates to face the challenges of their situations and eventually those of subsequent transfers.

Globalisation and the world trade are expanding day by day and the realisation that “we've been transferred” has become a reality more and more women and their families around the world. The health of the migrant employees and their families should not be seen as a minority issue, but as something that will become increasingly common; therefore we in the health service, as well as the multinational /international companies relocating their employees, need to understand the health effects in order to respond appropriately.

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Appendix 1. Ethical approval

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN



Research Ethics Committee
E53 Room 44J, Old Main Building
Groota Schuur Hospital, Observatory,
7925
Queries : Xolile Nula
Tel : (021) 406-6492 Fax: 406-6411
E-mail : Xfula@curie.uct.ac.za

13 December 2004

REC REF: 451/2004

Mrs C Lindhardt
c/o A/Prof S Clow
Nursing & Midwifery

Dear Mrs Lindhardt

NURSING PROPOSAL: HOW DO MIGRATING WOMEN EXPERIENCE HEALTH? A
PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH STUDY

*Thank you for submitting your study to the Research Ethics Committee for
review.*

*It is a pleasure to inform you that the Ethics Committee has formally approved
the above-mentioned study on the 13 December 2004.*

Please quote the REC. REF in all your correspondence

Yours sincerely

PROF. T. ZABOW
CHAIRPERSON

Appendix 2. Information sheet

I am a Master's Student in the Division Nursing and Midwifery at University of Cape Town, South Africa.

My research is focussing on the experience of women who have accompanied their spouse in migrating to another country in an expatriate capacity. The aim of the study is to develop a better understanding of the experience of migrating women and the effects of migration on their wellbeing. The questions asked during the interview will be around this subject.

The interviews will take place in the participants own home if it is acceptable to them, alternatively at a convenient and acceptable venue. Travel expenses will be refunded. The interview will take approximately 1-1½ hours and there will be time before and after the interview for questions. This will take no more than 2 hours in all.

Participation will be entirely voluntary and a participant may terminate the interview or withdraw from the study at any time. The interview will be conducted in English as the researcher will do the interviews herself and in order to minimize translation errors. The interview will be audiotape recorded and the tape kept in a secure place while being transcribed. The transcription and the process of the analysis will be conducted by the researcher only and no other person will have access to the information about the identity of the participant. Afterwards the tape will be destroyed. The participants will not be referred by name nor will identifiers be recorded in the final dissertation.

Should the interview in any way cause emotional distress as a result of what is discussed arrangements will be made for debriefing or counselling at no cost to the participant. The findings of the research will be submitted to a Health Visitors Journal and Journal of Registered Nurses for publication, and given as a lecture will be held at the Faculty of Nursing, Odense, Denmark where the audience will be Nursing Lecturers and others interested. If possible the researcher will present the findings on a conference on women/gender and migration.

If you are a woman who has migrated to follow your husband, and are currently based away from your home country, have been away for between 1-3 years and are interested in sharing your experiences for this research, please will you indicate on the attached form your willingness for your name and contact details to be given to me. If you would like to contact me directly, or discuss any aspect of this study further, you can contact me at

Christina Louise Lindhardt

Email: lindhardt_christina@hotmail.com

Phone: +4566125222 / cell phone +4520231212

Appendix 3. Consent for access to an individual

I have read the information letter describing a study on the experience of migrating women as part of a Master's degree in the Division of Nursing and Midwifery at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. In signing this document, I voluntarily give consent to have my name and contact details forwarded to the researcher.

Name:

Address:

Telephone number:

Email address:

Participant's signature: Date:

University of Cape Town

Appendix 4. Consent form for participation in the study

I have read the information letter. I have had the opportunity to have my questions /concerns answered. I understand the implications of participating. In signing this document, I voluntarily give consent to participate in this study and to have my information used in the way the information sheet described, as part of a Masters study in the Division of Nursing and Midwifery at the University of Cape Town, South Africa.

Participant's name: Date:

I have explained this study to the above participant.

Researcher's signature: Date:

University of Cape Town

Appendix 5. Field notes and personal notes

Field notes.

Lilly lives far out in the countryside in England and I thought I would never get there. After being stuck on a train for hours Lilly picked me up from the station as she has requested the interview to take place at her house. In the car we 'small talked' and when we came to her house – it seemed natural to start the interview. We sat in a conservatory with the most beautiful garden outside. Lilly sat on a very small African chair and had to move position all the time in order to find balance. Lilly was very engaged in the interview and used her body language and tonality a lot. It was a disturbance when the phone rang, but it was her choice that we did the interview at her place and I had to comply with her wishes. Lilly was soon back on track though and was focussed on what she had to speak about.

After the interview we sat and spoke for a few minutes. Lilly had to pick up her children from school on the way to the station with me and we spoke as we were sitting in the car. Here she said that her husband had suggested that she had a gin and tonic before the interview as she then became more talkative!!!!

I emailed Lily a few weeks after the interview as I could not get hold of her by phone. She replied a few days later and said that she hoped her information had been helpful and she had enjoyed participation.

Personal notes:

Sitting in the train I thought I would never get there but once I was there I felt welcome and my visit appreciated by Lilly. Several times during the interview I was amazed that Lilly spoke to me

about the things she did. Her alcohol intake and all her frustrations, which were very personal. At one point I felt that now she has crossed a boundary and is regretting that she has told me anything – but she just went on speaking. In the car when she mentioned that her husband encouraged her to drink before speaking to me I wondered how a woman can be released of her drinking problem if her husband encourages it.

University of Cape Town

Appendix 6. Declaration by translator of transcript

I, _____

To whom it may concern

I, Helle Foldager Jensen, confirm having listened to the five tapes presented to me by Cristina Louise Lindhardt, as well as having read through the transcripts of the same tapes. Furthermore, I acknowledge that the contents of the transcriptions correspond to that of the tapes.

Reading the transcripts I have made minor corrections.

I will treat both tapes and transcribed documents with confidentiality.

Yours Sincerely



Helle Foldager Jensen

Appendix 7. Transcript of interview

Interviewer : Can you tell me how you experienced migration? I will let you speak and only interrupt if there is something I do not understand.

I consider myself quite a lucky person because I was originally born in Brazil so I've always had a love for foreign places and adventures and when I got married to my husband he works for BP and his first posting was Australia, then we came back to England and then we went to South Africa for three years then following that China, and then a short spell in Holland and now we are back in England.

We have three children, one of them was born in Australia and the other two were born in England and now the eldest is 13, the second is 10, he has got special needs, he has Down's syndrome and the youngest is 8. They are all boys.

Ok, I think it is quite interesting for me personally because I'm a doctor and one of the reasons I chose that profession at the beginning, I thought that maybe this was a nice thing to do, it paid a lot of money, but also it had the vague possibility if I ever needed to travel, I could maybe travel with it. So I always had that in the back of my mind- but in Australia I've always been very lucky as was able to do some work in the countries I've lived, - but the problem was there that they were not quite the jobs I was trained for. So let's say, when we went to South Africa I had just finished my GP training in England and I was ready to start or become a partner in a GP practice in England but I went to South Africa and then I didn't do any GP work at all there. And then went to China and did some GP work, so I really feel that my career probably has not gone how it should.

Having said that I think it has developed in a different or -as I would say - in a special way. Some thing I have never imagined I would do. I am very scared that I have arrived back in England now and I would have to start thinking of work – to be honest it is going to be very daunting and I'm nervous to even send a CV to anybody- I think they will just laugh at me – I having not properly worked in a busy general practice in England for over 7 years, they will just look at me and say look at me and say,"– not interested" (participant laughing).

Having to go back to the Royal College and ask about retraining ad some things like that – which is good for me. I like studying but it is probably a step back in some ways.

But for me being overseas was interesting as here my husband was always the main breadwinner, he was always the most important member of the family all of a sudden – and we as a family would follow him ...and it was my role , I would say, to be the homemaker ,the first thing was always to find a house, find the schools , find, get everybody happy, I think the children, particularly, if they were happy , I would feel happy, then I would have to make my own friends, and that would make me a bit more happy and confident, and then maybe I would look for a job, so I would have to go through that whole sequence of stages before I would even feel ready to go looking for a job because I feel my family has to be happy before I can even consider myself (laughing)

I don't know if many women would feel like that but that's how I particularly felt. It was not about not working but the whole process about moving for me and my family even though we went to the most wonderful and exotic places and we were looking forward to go to most

of them except China, it was an adventure we were relishing – it was always a hard time at the beginning especially with making new friendships, feeling organised, and in the communities we found friends very quickly – it always made a massive difference and it made us more settled. Particularly women friends.

It was not work that I felt unhappy about. But I knew that once the kids were back at school – and if I hadn't not been doing something I would really have gone completely crazy. And so I was very lucky to be able to do something.

For example in China – when I arrived there one of the biggest things were that I have been promised a job when we got there and that didn't materialise – so I arrived in this very foreign place – I thought I would be settled fairly quickly because I had been promised this nice GP job and then it didn't happen, so it was like a slap in the face in a way- there was nothing to do so I embarked on all this charity work just to keep myself busy.

And I think people from the outside especially, my friends in other countries and my family as well they saw me doing “charity work” and thought, “What is going on” – they couldn't imagine me making marmalade and all that stuff-

I just felt my credibility was going down and I had to keep justifying (laughing) myself to anybody that this was serious charity work that I was going out to the projects. I was seeing for people with leprosy and I had to justify myself all the time. Which I found quite hard...like in China, you know, there were many things happening all the time and it was highly stressful – but I don't think people ever really appreciated the stresses that you go through with moving – Especially your family back home like with my in-laws I didn't write them a letter for 6 months and they were really pissed off with me – they stopped writing – and when I went back to see them I just had to say, “I'm really sorry – I have been so stressed just settling in this new place I could even not write you a letter” and to this day I don't think they really really believed that I was so stressed (laughing).

Interviewer: “stressed - you refer to that word - what does that word mean to you?”

Ok, that is an interesting question for me like probably behaving badly and then, particularly for me means drinking a lot.

As a foreigner going overseas I know I have changed my drinking habits phenomenally – as a doctor I always used to have like a gin & tonic in the evening. But now as going into foreign countries, especially in China and maybe in South Africa it was very common place to have a drink and I became much more of a drinker – lets say.

So now it became part of my routine in the evenings – that I would regularly have a drink. Which I don't think is particularly healthy at all – and I don't like that in some places where I was very stressed like in China it was the culture to get together Friday night and drink loads and behave badly – and it was really not good at all. With behaving bad I mean not behaving badly badly – badly by my... (phone rings, tape recorder is switched off).

I'm probably a bit prim and proper and for me behaving badly means being too naughty – you know what I mean, and chatting too much and laughing and falling over (embarrassed laugh), doing

anything that I would absolutely regret. I just feel I was not myself at all and I was hiding behind this other façade ...

Let's say the other thing about the stress for me would be distance from the family. I used to be in a very very close family – and when my father got sick and I just felt so many millions of miles away- and even though my husband was wonderful – and always just told me to get on a plane anytime it just changed. People would not call me unless it was really serious – the communication falls down and I found that's very stressful (pause). You don't have to speak to your friends so it is easy to let them slide away year after year. I found our first posting in Australia was easy - we went and came back and could catch up very easy. But this time we have been away 7 years and you only really keep in touch with your really really good friends. But having said that, I made so many more when I was away.

Like I went to the school the other day with one of my children and the lady said to me, oh have you got a telephone number you can use as a second call if we can't get hold of you. And I said, "No I haven't got any friends here yet". (laughing) and she looked at me as if I was a – as if something terrible had been said. But it wasn't that it is more that I genuinely haven't. I just have to start again. I said to her, I don't feel sorry for myself that I haven't got any friends to put there yet" – which in a way is a very sad thing – but genuinely meant right there in this area I haven't any friends. I think most of it is migration have made it worse because I could have put down somebody from London.

I'm not used to have names of people to put down. I think it is very sad and with the migration situation I found that I was making friends with people really quickly – after one cup of coffee with them I could instantly make an assessment whether I would like this person or not.

We would start telling/exchanging life stories very quickly and it is probably quite artificial in the real world – and then they became very good friends for 2 or three years and then we all move on. So we would all make friends would make friends very very quickly which was a good thing and a bad thing, I think.

The bad thing is saying goodbye – it's terrible – then you just know in your heart that maybe you won't see them again or the distance is phenomenal even in these days with emails and planes. It is still very difficult to see people. I find that quite stressful especially when – I'm a very positive person but I know I miss my friends. Especially the close friends – that you build up over these years. Especially when you have shared something, mementos – when you move to a new country. I think you become very close to somebody – you have lots of things in common and I find that when you leave them it is a big hole, you just can't share those issues anymore. People are just not interested. Those really good friends are really gone. Unless you're really good at your email – and I'm not. (Embarrassed laughter).

Being an expatriate I realised that one of my coping strategies for stress was spending money- because now I was loaded as my husband working overseas and was provided with a good package – I found that spending money was a wonderful release for stress and I would go off with a friend and we would go and spend money and that was good kind of stress reliever.

As I said earlier, talking to friends was very helpful as a stress reliever – they respond very quickly and they share and for me that was very supportive. Every time a new person approached me I would sort of latch on to them and (phone rings). Pause

Ok, one of the other things I realised being a migrating woman is that I think I became much more of a feminist and because of all this sudden dependence on other woman friends I particularly found other women helpful because they seem to share the same experience as me and I became much more – what is the word aware of the plight of women and I found that became pervading not only in my own personal life but in my work that women's issues just became very very important. And my friends I particularly chose them who where into something like humanity or women in general.

It sounds quite weird but – and then one of the influencing people – was this psychologist I had to go and see because when you talk about coping mechanisms at one stage it was all falling apart.

Originally whenever I had a problem I put it into a box in my brain, I have got this special needs child, I have got another child who has got ADHD and I have got my father in hospital and I've got all sort of issues going on – I can't remember what they all were at the time. I put all the problems in their boxes but all of a sudden as well as my friend committing suicide all the boxes started collapsing and mismatching and I could not cope anymore.

Which again in my culture in England we never go and see a psychologist unless we are really quite wacky, oh yes that's right? My son was behaving very badly (changed tonality) that's why I also went, and she was quite an influencing person as well –

I went to see to cope better with all the stressors, this happened while we were in South Africa. She was very influencing, she basically seemed to somehow understand this situation from my perspective, and sort of made me feel more confident as a person, as a woman I am not doing anything wrong and that this chaos that seems to be happening in your life is ok – you are not doing anything wrong and she really helped me – and I think that has helped me ever since again we have moved. That we just have done the best out of the situation. For me that psychologist really helped me, I don't know maybe I just needed that time not just myself but also for my children. I have never seen a psychologist before.

24. It is the lack of family. They are not there, not in touch with what is happening where you can sit and talk for an hour about the issues and situation, they can't see it happening. The psychologist can see your child playing up in front of you – the mess of that moment of time. Your family is so far away. So that family counselling that happens when you're at home does not happen.

And for me I always needed an independent person when things really got completely, as they can do- when things got totally out of hand, I needed an independent person that was not going to gossip about me. There is a slight fear that what you say to one person might go round to the whole community. And that people are judging you left, right and centre and you know that you are doing the best according to your ability. One of the things I found in these artificial communities lets say where everybody knew each other that your big fear was that nothing was confidential that is why I had to cope sometimes with the psychologist. And as I said she was wonderful.

I first came to the psychologist as I said as one of my children was diagnosed with ADHD and it was suggested though; the professional help I was getting there, that I for the sake of the family

approached a psychologist. Ok, I was going for my child and I was suddenly realising that she was helping me as well. In fact that by helping me – she helped the whole situation because I think as a mother –

I had a child with ADHD who was becoming quite violent so I was looking for strategies to sort him out, but by going to her and listening to her intelligent sensible suggestions I thought maybe I should be talking to her as well. She really did help. The whole family felt strength and felt more secure. And the stresses diminished enormously.

The woman taught me all the wonderful strategies. For example she taught me how when the children are moving they could write a story about the move and we have done it every single time-- we would invent stories about children moving from country to country. We would talk about the move well in advance – the things, positives and the negatives we would expect on the way, the problems. It always helped these moves. Her strategies were fantastic. She was a very special lady, that's right. We would exotic stories about travelling across oceans and from country to country. Every night you tell a story. We read a book "who moved the cheese" which was very helpful as well. Even just because we were sitting together talking about it together and planning it for the move.

I don't know about you I like to be in control of my destiny in a way and I like to know what is happening so I find when things are not quite as I expected them the stress is even worse than I imagined.

I would say, for example when we moved to Holland, I didn't want to go there and I didn't really believe that it was the right place for my children to go to school – my husband knew that. We all talked about it and it turned out that it was not the right place in the end – but that thing of going into a place you don't want to be in, in the first place is one of the most terrible things that ever happened to me (laughter).

And thank God I have an understanding husband who just listens – I wonder how he coped with his job with me crying every night. I am a very strong person but this moving was very stressful time I think and I don't think people realise – it is not just packing a house. The packing up a house is the easy part and the unpacking is easy. It is the - what happens when you get there and then there is the schools and all the things.

I found that what helped me coping was crying – letting it out. I think, as I said that my husband is wonderful, I'm very lucky to have him – I don't know how women cope if they haven't anyone to talk to. That must be absolutely terrible. I don't know how he takes all this stress not only his own burdens but also mine as well – it is really incredible. I'm very lucky. And the fact I have someone who listens.

Having experienced hard times it makes any marriage stronger.

I think our marriage has become very much stronger being in a migration situation than if we had stayed at home. I was going to say something else but I can't remember what it was. Finding our way in these foreign places, having adventures, setting up a new life.

I would say that the whole overall experience has been wonderful and I would never say I would not do it again. But there are stressors and it depends very much on the strategy you chose.

It also depends much on the location, like in South Africa there is a wonderful medical system, there is anything you might wish for, probably better than your home country. But in China there is really nothing there apart from basic GP service and I find that quite stressful – for example I haven't had a pap smear for 4-5 years. That is really terrible and you don't go to the doctor either because you know the doctor or see them socially so you wouldn't go unless you have tonsillitis.

If you have a psychological illness you have to be really ill to go because you know them so well. Or you have to have something major happening or you would go with a physical illness – and even my poor husband he went to the doctor in China and then somebody told me that somebody have told him about my husband's complaints, and I said "excuse me".

It is like all confidentiality breaks down in these communities. I find this one of the most difficult parts of foreign life.

You talk about coping strategies and in the end I made a strategy- never say a bad thing unless you know what you are saying, never gossip because it just backfires – you might as well be nice to everybody you end up getting a superficial charming surface – of course you have your good friends and with them you can gossip – I find, I don't know, I had to be well behaved within the communities because you just don't know what is there. --

I actually found it comfortable to be at this surface level- I found it a good thing to be in the end – because you are not seen as the malicious one they gossip about– I also find that when you are on these trips for 3 or 4 years one of the wonderful things is that you see everyone has these good times and everybody these bad times. We all have our ups and downs we really start to experience life and once you start gossiping about everybody one minute and it is your turn to have your problem they just won't be there they're not interested. It just good to be as neutral as possible, of course there are fights and whatever.

Even with your closest friends you experience fights – we were getting too close and were busy doing this fundraising and suddenly we started fighting over rubbish. In a family you can forget the fighting but with friends it is much harder- you have just not got to the level where you are connected for life – you know what I mean. You are almost there but if you make one false or wrong move, bang that could be it. It is a very vulnerable life, that's exactly right. You have to give a lot to get to that level. You have to give a lot to yourself so the people trust you and feel you are sharing in them. They give to you – if you make the wrong move bang, you never know what is going to happen. On the whole it is ok but there are people that can't stop saying nasty things. There are women that will not go out of their apartment anymore because they feel that the community is too small and too gossiping. I'm lucky I didn't really feel that. All live in a compound, 300 children all going to the same school it is a very small community...

I think I have toughened up a lot – I am very tough now – it takes a big – it really takes a lot to hurt me or anything. I have seen so much, I have heard so much – people life stories. I'm very tough. I don't really like that. I can take an example now my father is in a nursing home and it does not affect me the way it would have done. I just cope with being tough – having this outer shell. I'm not consciously being tough I just am now. When you asked how I have changed I was much more gentle and careful and scared. Now I just go into it. They say that moving house is the most stressful life event, for me not anymore. I'm tough – I've done it before, it's ok – I'd almost rather

do that than changing trains in London as you never know the times and which platform to catch. Now I know how to deal with the packing and off I go.

This is more the outside experience. I don't like the tough experience – the inside is ok – I think I just get on with it now – it is a job like a machine – so I in a way seeing migrating as a job. It is part of my function – my role is to move – and making it as smooth as possible. So as soon as we know we are moving the process is to organise the packers, the animals, all the boxes, get them out on the other side, maybe have a bit of fun on the way- that is my role. It is just a process. I think a lot of women just get professional in these things now, I'm the wife – that is what we do – (laughing).

Participant needs to use the bathroom and there is a 5 minute break.

I think it is very important as a woman to feel good about yourself. If you don't feel good about yourself how are you going to appear before anybody else – when I was not working I decided I had to do a course or a degree just to keep my time filled up.

Which was actually very satisfying? It meant that I met people who was kind of had the same interests – who was not the “nu” “nu” housewife just gossiping so it really helped me – to feel a touch with reality again. I did the master of public health – I m doing it still that I really found helpful because I really had to use a different part of my brain that hadn't be used before. So it was challenging – I was a bit challenged it felt very worth while to do it.

I suppose, it was important going to the gym and actually a body image became important whereas it probably never occurred to me before. Suddenly as a migrating woman meeting new people all the time, my body image suddenly took on a differently level. I felt I should be looking after myself better and because now I had the time to do it (laughter) I should be going to the gym, there was a whole lot of guilt attached not going to the gym – and that going to the gym actually also make you feel a lot better about yourself.

When I got into a cycle and did go to the gym – I know many women in the expatriate community that would go to the gym every day or at least three times a week and I think that was one of their coping mechanisms.

Of course there were also other things as ladies nights out and as mentioned before shopping which was particularly a very important part of the social scene living as an expatriate in china. China is China there is a lot of shopping to be done. It used to drive me crazy but at the time I suppose it was quite fun.

I think I was looking for people who I felt I could share things with but I wouldn't say that I always was conscious by doing that because I'm always looking for different things in people. Like my children. I'm always looking for friends with whom I can share my experiences with children. I find that one of the most important parts of my role in live is to nurture them, so it might be people who are not particularly intellectual- looking for people who share fun stories about children and their experiences and things like that, so I'm not looking.....

When you talk about health what I am most worried about it is my children's health and well - being. It is very well to talk about my health but I am actually more worried about what's happen to then since they have moved. I am worried about young people that move and their friendships they

also have this superficial friendship experience as well – they are much better obviously at making friends and they do have this superficial level where people are coming and going all the time. And they have very big gaps in their education. Not a very jointed continuity – like my son used to be in the swimming team in the hockey team since he was 9 years old and suddenly that just fell away and now it is very hard for him to come back to a society where everybody are focused around sport. This is one of my biggest worries.

Actually my children, how they missed out especially my son who is a special needs child – even though my husband’s company was very supportive and always gave us financial assistance the actual support network wasn’t always there – it has always been like that, what did we do wrong – and what did we miss out on – my child didn’t really get what he was entitled to – and nothing is the same with all the children.

This wonderful broad life experience that they will remember more than ever when they received some geography lesson in something or other – but I feel that maybe sometimes they didn’t get what they were entitled to if they had been back at home, that is one of my biggest worries, by biggest stresses, to be back home again.

That I can actually re-enter a normal society – get back into the groove – which is more normal and heading in a direction that is not..... (phone rings again)

Participant indicates that she wants to end the interview

Appendix 8.

Step 1 of Analysis

Sense of the whole

The interview gives a picture of a woman, Lilly who has experienced migration due to her husband being transferred by his company to Australia, South Africa, China and Holland. Lilly expresses that in the migration situation, concern for settling the family and children's well-being comes before addressing her own concerns. Lilly says that the roles have changed and her "job" is to be the home maker and to find a house and schools whereas her husband is the breadwinner. Lilly has had difficulties using her career as a doctor due to restrictions on foreigners' working and has kept herself busy, has done charity work and has been studying to keep herself busy by doing.

Lilly finds it stressful to move living in a different environment and that her habits change e.g. the culture in the expatriate community is that there is more drinking and people socialise in a different way than at home.

Lilly experiences that it is a stressor for her not having family around especially when one has problems with the children or there is illness within the family. It is difficult to keep in touch. She emphasises that making friends has been a very important thing in order to settle in a new place. But she further says that the expatriate life is difficult as people are living in a close-knit community and confidentiality becomes an issue one has to be aware of.

At one point Lilly sees a psychologist as personal problems become prominent in her life. This meeting is a changing point, as the psychologist teaches her new strategies of coping with her family and with herself personally.

One of Lilly's concerns is how she and her children are going to cope settling back in their home country. Have the children been affected by years of expatriation and can she as a doctor get a job and step back into her career?

Step 2

Step 3

Natural Meaning Unit	Discrimination of meaning units	Transformation of meaning units (Themes not related directly to the research question are in brackets)
<p>Can you tell me how you experienced migration? I will let you speak and only interrupt if there is something I do not understand.</p> <p>1. I consider myself quite a lucky person because I was originally born in Brazil so I've always had a love for foreign places and adventures and when I got married to my husband he works for BP and his first posting was Australia, then we came back to England and then we went to South Africa for three years then following that China, and then a short spell in Holland and now we are back in England.</p> <p>2. We have three children, one of them was born in Australia and the other two were born in England and now the eldest is 13, the second is 10, he has got special needs, he has Down's syndrome and the youngest is 8. They are all boys.</p> <p>3. Ok, I think it is quite interesting for me personally because I'm a doctor and one of the reasons I chose that profession at the beginning, I thought that maybe this was a nice thing to do, it paid a lot of money, but also it had the vague possibility if I ever needed to travel, I could maybe travel with it. So I always had that in the back of my mind- but in Australia I've always been very lucky as was able to do some work in the countries I've lived, - but the problem was there that they were not quite the jobs I was trained for. So let's say, when we went to South Africa I had just finished my GP training in England and I was ready to start or become a partner in a GP practice in England but I went to South Africa and then I didn't do any GP work at all there. And then went to China and did some GP work, so I really feel that my career probably has not gone how it should.</p>	<p>1. L tells about her own personal experience and how many countries she and her family have lived in.</p> <p>2. L describes the number of her children and where they were born.</p> <p>3. L expresses how she has personal gained from training as a doctor and how her experience had been of working life during expatriation.</p>	<p>.L speaks about her experience of migration and how her life has been influenced by her birth in Brazil. She speaks about her and husbands first postings as expatriates, the love for foreign places and the adventure of being an expatriate.</p> <p>2. (L speaks about her children).</p> <p>3. L speaks about what her training has benefited her as a doctor as well as what it has enriched her life of new experiences during expatriation. She further states that her career has not developed as anticipated. She speaks about her expectations of travelling.</p>

Natural Meaning Unit	Discrimination of meaning units	Transformation of meaning units
<p>4. Having said that I think it has developed in a different or -as I would say - in a special way. Some thing I have never imagined I would do. I am very scared that I have arrived back in England now and I would have to start thinking of work -- to be honest it is going to be very daunting and I'm nervous to even send a CV to anybody-- I think they will just laugh at me -- I having not properly worked in a busy general practice in England for over 7 years, they will just look at me and say look at me and say,"-- not interested" (participant laughing). Having to go back to the Royal College and ask about retraining ad some things like that -- which is good for me. I like studying but it is probably a step back in some ways.</p>	<p>4. L says how the years of expatriating have developed her in different ways as a person. Further what consequences expatriating has meant for L's career and her having to re train as a doctor being repatriated.</p>	<p>4. L's awareness how the years of expatriation has influenced her career as a doctor as her career has been interrupted and is a step backward. She is scared being back in England and having to think about re-entering general practice work.</p>
<p>5. But for me being overseas it was interesting as here my husband was always the main breadwinner, he was always the most important member of the family all of a sudden -- and we as a family would follow him</p>	<p>5. Husband main breadwinner and all of a sudden the most important member of the family when being overseas.</p>	<p>5. L finds that being overseas changes the roles between spouses. Her husband is now the breadwinner and the most important member of the family and the roles has changed.</p>
<p>6. and it was my role , I would say, to be the homemaker ,the first thing was always to find a house, find the schools , find, get everybody happy, I think the children, particularly, if they were happy , I would feel happy, then I would have to make my own friends, and that would make me a bit more happy and confident, and then maybe I would look for a job, so I would have to go through that whole sequence of stages before I would even feel ready to go looking for a job because I feel my family has to be happy before I can even consider myself (laughing)</p>	<p>6. L. the homemaker and sorting out houses and schools L. feels happy when children happy and she prefers family needs before own needs. L. makes her own friends making her happy and confident.</p>	<p>6. L. regards her role to be the homemaker and sort out school, houses and making the family happy. She wants the security that her family is happy and aim for the family's needs before her own. When the family is happy L can make friends and start look for a job.</p>
<p>7. I don't know if many women would feel like that but that's how I particularly felt. It was not about not working but the whole process about moving for me and my family even though we went to the most wonderful and exotic places and we were looking forward to go to most of them except China,</p>	<p>7. An adventure. Hard at beginning but better when making friends. More settled when having friends. Making a massive difference with friends.</p>	<p>7. L explains that life was as an adventure. It was hard times at the beginning but became better when making friends and that making friends made a massive difference as it easier to adapt to the new environment- especially female friends.</p>

Natural Meaning Unit	Discrimination of meaning units	Transformation of meaning units
<p>It was an adventure we were relishing – it was always a hard time at the beginning especially with making new friendships, feeling organised, and in the communities we found friends very quickly – it always made a massive difference and it made us more settled. Particularly women friends.</p>		
<p>8. It was not work that I felt unhappy about. But I knew that once the kids were back at school – and if I hadn't not been doing something I would really have gone completely crazy. And so I was very lucky to be able to do something.</p>	<p>8. L. says she was going completely crazy if not doing something.</p>	<p>8. L. says that it was not the lack of occupation that she felt unhappy about. But the need of being meaningfully occupied. She says without it she felt she would go crazy.</p>
<p>9. For example in China – when I arrived there one of the biggest things were that I have been promised a job when we got there and that didn't materialise – so I arrived in this very foreign place – I thought I would be settled fairly quickly because I had been promised this nice GP job and then it didn't happen, so it was like a slap in the face in a way- there was nothing to do so I embarked on all this charity work just to keep myself busy.</p>	<p>9. Been promised a job that did not materialise. Slap in face. Doing charity work to make her self busy.</p>	<p>9. How a promised job did not materialise and the disappointment L. felt as her expectations were not realised. L. says that she embarked in doing charity work as she needed to keep her self busy.</p>
<p>10. And I think people from the outside especially, my friends in other countries and my family as well they saw me doing “charity work” and thought, “What is going on” – they couldn't imagine me making marmalade and all that stuff-</p>	<p>10. People from the outside seeing L. doing charity work thinking what is going on.</p>	<p>10. How people look upon you from the outside, the image of self by others was changed. What is happening to her self image?</p>
<p>11. I just felt my credibility was going down and I had to keep justifying (laughing) myself to anybody that this was serious charity work that I was going out to the projects. I was seeing for people with leprosy and I had to justify myself all the time. Which I found quite hard...</p>	<p>11. L. feels she is losing credibility. She has to justify herself all the time.</p>	<p>11. L. justifies her self to anybody – feels how credibility is going down. L. was doing meaningful work even if it was charitable.</p>

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<p>12. like in China, you know, there were many things happening all the time and it was highly stressful -- but I don't think people ever really appreciated the stresses that you go through with moving -- Especially your family back home like with my in-laws I didn't write them a letter for 6 months and they were really pissed off with me -- they stopped writing -- and when I went back to see them I just had to say, "I'm really sorry -- I have been so stressed just settling in this new place I could even not write you a letter" and to this day I don't think they really really believed that I was so stressed (laughing).</p>	<p>12. L. feels many things happening, L says that people don't appreciate the stresses around moving. She does not feel people understand her.</p>	<p>12. Many things are taking place all the time and makes things highly stressful. L feels that people do not believe how stressed she is. L withdraws from communicating with family and how that affects relationships.</p>
<p>Interviewer: "stressed - you refer to that word -what does that word mean to you?"</p>	<p>13. Behaving badly and drinking a lot. Changing drinking habits being overseas. Routine with drinking living in foreign countries. Became much more of a drinker.</p>	<p>13. L. refers to how she changes her behaviour. She is in an environment where drinking is accepted. She relates drinking with being stressed and acknowledges that that is not healthy</p>
<p>13. OK. that is an interesting question for me like probably behaving badly and then, particularly for me means drinking a lot. As a foreigner going overseas I know I have changed my drinking habits phenomenally -- as a doctor I always used to have like a gin & tonic in the evening. But now as going into foreign countries, especially in China and maybe in South Africa it was very common place to have a drink and I became much more of a drinker -- lets say. So now it became part of my routine in the evenings -- that I would regularly have a drink. Which I don't think is particularly healthy at all -- and I don't like that in some places where I was very stressed like in China it was the culture to get together Friday night and drink loads and behave badly -- and it was really not good at all. With behaving bad I mean not behaving badly hadly -- badly by my... (phone rings, tape recorder is switched off).</p>		

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<p>14. I'm probably a bit prim and proper and for me behaving badly means being too naughty – you know what I mean, and chatting too much and laughing and falling over (embarrassed laugh), doing anything that I would absolutely regret. I just feel I was not myself at all and I was hiding behind this other façade ...</p> <p>15. Let's say the other thing about the stress for me would be distance from the family. I used to be in a very very close family – and when my father got sick and I just felt so many millions of miles away- and even though my husband was wonderful – and always just told me to get on a plane anytime it just changed. People would not call me unless it was really serious – the communication falls down and I found that's very stressful (pause). You don't have to speak to your friends so it is easy to let them slide away year after year. I found our first posting in Australia was easy - we went and came back and could catch up very easy. But this time we have been away 7 years and you only really keep in touch with your really really good friends. But having said that I made so many more when I was away.</p> <p>16. Like I went to the school the other day with one of my children and the lady said to me, oh have you got a telephone number you can use as a second call if we can't get hold of you. And I said, "No I haven't got any friends here yet". (laughing) and she looked at me as if I was a – as if something terrible had been said. But it wasn't that it is more that I genuinely haven't. I just have to start again. I said to her, I don't feel sorry for myself that I haven't got any friends to put there yet" – which in a way is a very sad thing – but genuinely meant right there in this area I haven't any friends. I think most of it is migration have made it worse because I could have put down somebody from London.</p>	<p>14. L says behaving badly means being too naughty. Doing things she regrets. Not feeling she is herself. Hiding behind a façade.</p> <p>15. L says that being away from her family makes her stressed. Communication falls down and is another stressor. Not keeping in touch with friends is another stressor.</p> <p>16. L says she has yet no close friends being back in England. As an expatriate L would make friends with people quickly L knew if the person was a person she could befriend.</p>	<p>14. How L is changing her behaviour when drinking and doing things she regrets afterwards. She has a sense of hiding behind a façade and not showing her true self.</p> <p>15. How a stress factor is distance to family and the feeling of not being able to do something when crises occur. Keeping in touch is stressful and takes energy because of the distance and the duration of the overseas assignment.</p> <p>16. When repatriated realising that there is no close friends by and that that is sad. In migration situation making friends very quickly. L would know if the friendship was right for her. L realises that expatriate friendships may be artificial and the time period for a friendship limited.</p>

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<p>I'm not used to have names of people to put down. I think it is very sad and with the migration situation I found that I was making friends with people really quickly -- after one cup of coffee with them I could instantly make an assessment whether I would like this person or not. We would start telling/exchanging life stories very quickly and it is probably quite artificial in the real world -- and then they became very good friends for 2 or three years and then we all move on.</p> <p>So we would all make friends would make friends very very quickly which was a good thing and a bad thing, I think.</p> <p>17. The bad thing is saying goodbye -- it's terrible -- then you just know in your heart that maybe you won't see them again or the distance is phenomenal even in these days with emails and planes. It is still very difficult to see people. I find that quite stressful especially when -- I'm a very positive person but I know I miss my friends. Especially the close friends -- that you build up over these years. Especially when you have shared something, mementos -- when you move to a new country. I think you become very close to somebody -- you have lots of things in common and I find that when you leave them it is a big hole, you just can't share those issues anymore. People are just not interested. Those really good friends are really gone. Unless you're really good at your email - and I'm not. (Embarrassed laughter).</p> <p>18. Being an expatriate I realised that one of my coping strategies for stress was spending money- because now I was loaded as my husband working overseas and was provided with a good package -- I found that spending money was a wonderful release for stress and I would go off with a friend and we would go and spend money and that was good kind of stress reliever.</p>	<p>17. L. says it is terrible to say goodbye and she misses her friends. Finds she has lots in common with friends- when they are leaving a big hole remains. L. says that she build up close friendships over the years as expatriate.</p> <p>18. L. says coping strategy is spending money. A release for stress.</p>	<p>17. How saying goodbye is painful for L. When leaving friends L. experiences that there is emptiness and it may be difficult to share things with other people. L. states that sharing things with friends is important.</p> <p>18. When in the expatriating environment there is a need to find a way of expressing stress and relieving</p>

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<p>19. As I said earlier, talking to friends was very helpful as a stress reliever – they respond very quickly and they share and for me that was very supportive. Every time a new person approached me I would sort of latch on to them and (phone rings). Pause</p>	<p>19. L. tells how she felt talking to friends was a helpful stress reliever. Friends respond and they share. L. says they were very supportive.</p>	<p>19. There was a need to feel supported and share everyday things with people who understood her.</p>
<p>20. Ok, one of the other things I realised being a migrating woman is that I think I became much more of a feminist and because of all this sudden dependence on other woman friends I particularly found other women helpful because they seem to share the same experience as me and I became much more – what is the word aware of the plight of women and I found that became pervading not only in my own personal life but in my work that women's issues just became very very important. And my friends I particularly chose them who where into something like humanity or women in general.</p>	<p>20. L. says that migrating has made her a feminist because the dependence of female friends. Found women helpful as sharing same experience. Women issues became important.</p>	<p>20. L. says how gender issues became important and the realisation of other women in the same situation as herself made an impact in her life. How friendships with other women changed her view on women and migration.</p>
<p>21. It sounds quite weird but – and then one of the influencing people – was this psychologist I had to go and see because when you talk about coping mechanisms at one stage it was all falling apart. Originally whenever I had a problem I put it into a box in my brain, I have got this special needs child, I have got another child who has got ADHD and I have got my father in hospital and I've got all sort of issues going on – I can't remember what they all were at the time. I put all the problems in their boxes but all of a sudden as well as my friend committing suicide all the boxes started collapsing and mismatching and I could not cope anymore.</p>	<p>21. L. says things were falling apart at one stage. Seeing psychologist. Use to cope with putting problems in boxes in brain.</p>	<p>21. L. could see life and coping mechanism falling apart and went to see psychologist – boxes in head started collapsing and mismatching and she could not cope anymore.</p>
<p>22. Which again in my culture in England we never go and see a psychologist unless we are really quite wacky, oh yes that's right? My son was behaving very badly (changed tonality) that's why I also went, and she was quite an influencing person as well –</p>	<p>22. L. says that it is not part of her culture seeing a psychologist unless you are very wacky. Her son was behaving very badly.</p>	<p>22. Seeking help from a psychologist is culture related. The situation has to be serious before help is sought out and action taken.</p>

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<p>I went to see to cope better with all the stressors, this happened while we were in South Africa.</p> <p>23. She was very influencing, she basically seemed to somehow understand this situation from my perspective, and sort of made me feel more confident as a person, as a woman I am not doing anything wrong and that this chaos that seems to be happening in your life is ok – you are not doing anything wrong and she really helped me – and I think that has helped me ever since again we have moved. That we just have done the best out of the situation. For me that psychologist really helped me, I don't know maybe I just needed that time not just myself but also for my children. I have never seen a psychologist before.</p> <p>24. It is the lack of family. They are not there, not in touch with what is happening where you can sit and talk for an hour about the issues and situation, they can't see it happening. The psychologist can see your child playing up in front of you – the mess of that moment of time. Your family is so far away. So that family counselling that happens when you're at home does not happen.</p> <p>25. And for me I always needed an independent person when things really got completely, as they can do-when things got totally out of hand, I needed an independent person that was not going to gossip about me. There is a slight fear that what you say to one person might go round to the whole community. And that people are judging you left, right and centre and you know that you are doing the best according to your ability. One of the things I found in these artificial communities lets say where everybody knew each other that your big fear was that nothing was confidential that is why I had to cope sometimes with the psychologist. And as I said she was wonderful.</p>	<p>23. Psychologist understood L. situation, L. felt more confident and chaos around the family accepted.</p> <p>24. L. says that due to the lack of family and the support and counselling that this would bring it was good to have a psychologist who could give support in place of family.</p> <p>25. L. says that she had always needed an independent person when things go wrong. L. says there is a fear of gossiping around you in an artificial community. People judge you and nothing is confidential.</p>	<p>23. L. accepted the help and felt her problems were seen and dealt with. She felt she was growing as a person and as a woman.</p> <p>24. L. says that it was lack of support and counselling that she might have got from family if she had been at home and what happened was that the psychologist stands in in place of family and listens to L.</p> <p>25. How the confidentiality and the way people look at you is an issue in an expatriate environment. The need of having a person to trust and confine in as a way of getting through difficult times.</p>

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<p>26. I first came to the psychologist as I said as one of my children was diagnosed with ADHD and it was suggested though; the professional help I was getting there, that I for the sake of the family approached a psychologist. Ok, I was going for my child and I was suddenly realising that she was helping me as well. In fact that by helping me – she helped the whole situation because I think as a mother</p> <p>I had a child with ADHD who was becoming quite violent so I was looking for strategies to sort him out, but by going to her and listening to her intelligent sensible suggestions I thought maybe I should be talking to her as well. She really did help. The whole family felt strength and felt more secure. And the stresses diminished enormously.</p> <p>27. The woman taught me all the wonderful strategies. For example she taught me how when the children are moving they could write a story about the move and we have done it every single time– we would invent stories about children moving from country to country. We would talk about the move well in advance – the things, positives and the negatives we would expect on the way, the problems. It always helped these moves. Her strategies were fantastic. She was a very special lady, that's right. We would exotic stories about travelling across oceans and from country to country. Every night you tell a story. We read a book "who moved the cheese" which was very helpful as well. Even just because we were sitting together talking about it together and planning it for the move.</p> <p>28. I don't know about you I like to be in control of my destiny in a way and I like to know what is happening so I find when things are not quite as I expected them the stress is even worse than I imagined.</p>	<p>26. L says that she was seeing psychologist as she needed help for her child. She realises she was helped as well and got strategies to cope with family.</p> <p>27. L tells how the psychologist gave her strategies how to deal with children when moving</p> <p>28. L says that she likes to be in control of what is happening and it is a stressor when things are not as expected.</p>	<p>26. (Child diagnosed with ADHD). L found that the outside person could help her as well. By changing the way L experienced the situation the whole family felt the change.</p> <p>27. The change it made when L and her family realised they had a tool to use when they were taking up another expatriate posting.</p> <p>28. L likes to be in control of her destiny but says that things were not quite the way and the stressors worse than imagined. L say that moving to a place you don't want to go to has been the most terrible thing that ever happened to her.</p>

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<p>I would say, for example when we moved to Holland, I didn't want to go there and I didn't really believe that it was the right place for my children to go to school – my husband knew that. We all talked about it and it turned out that it was not the right place in the end – but that thing of going into a place you don't want to be in, in the first place is one of the most terrible things that ever happened to me (laughter).</p> <p>29. And thank God I have an understanding husband who just listens – I wonder how he coped with his job with me crying every night. I am a very strong person but this moving was very stressful time I think and I don't think people realise – it is not just packing a house. The packing up a house is the easy part and the unpacking is easy. It is the – what happens when you get there and then there is the schools and all the things.</p> <p>30. I found that what helped me coping was crying – letting it out. I think, as I said that my husband is wonderful, I'm very lucky to have him – I don't know how women cope if they haven't anyone to talk to. That must be absolutely terrible. I don't know how he takes all this stress not only his own burdens but also mine as well – it is really incredible. I'm very lucky. And the fact I have someone who listens.</p> <p>31. Having experienced hard times it makes any marriage stronger. I think our marriage has become very much stronger being in a migration situation than if we had stayed at home. I was going to say something else but I can't remember what it was. Finding our way in these foreign places, having adventures, settling up a new life.</p>	<p>29. L. says it is important to have an understanding husband who listens. She states moving is very stressful.</p> <p>30. L. states that one of the things that helped her cope in stressful situations was crying. She states that it is important to have a husband who listens.</p> <p>31. L. experiences that hard times she has experienced during migration makes the marriage stronger.</p>	<p>29. How moving is more than packing and unpacking. It is the time afterwards that makes expatriate life stressful. L. emphasises that being heard and understood is important.</p> <p>30. L. realises that a coping strategy was crying, letting it out. That having someone who listens is good.</p> <p>31. L. recalls that there is a difference in the relationship between husband and wife whilst being expatriates than they would have had at home.</p>

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<p>32. I would say that the whole overall experience has been wonderful and I would never say I would not do it again. But there are stressors and it depends very much on the strategy you chose.</p> <p>33. It also depends much on the location, like in South Africa there is a wonderful medical system, there is anything you might wish for, probably better than your home country. But in China there is really nothing there apart from basic GP service and I find that quite stressful - for example I haven't had a pap smear for 4-5 years. That is really terrible and you don't go to the doctor either because you know the doctor or see them socially so you wouldn't go unless you have tonsillitis.</p> <p>34. If you have a psychological illness you have to be really ill to go because you know them so well. Or you have to have something major happening or you would go with a physical illness -- and even my poor husband he went to the doctor in China and then somebody told me that somebody have told him about my husband's complaints, and I said "excuse me". It is like all confidentiality breaks down in these communities. I find this one of the most difficult parts of foreign life.</p> <p>35. You talk about coping strategies and in the end I made a strategy- never say a bad thing unless you know what you are saying, never gossip because it just backfires -- you might as well be nice to everybody you end up getting a superficial charming surface -- of course you have your good friends and with them you can gossip -- I find, I don't know, I had to be well behaved within the communities because you just don't know what is there. --</p>	<p>32. I emphasises that migrating has been a wonderful experience. She says there are stressors within this kind of life and it depends on the strategy you chose.</p> <p>33. L states that the location of the expatriation as well as the quality of the medical system is important. Due to lack of proper medical service L have not had a par smear for years.</p> <p>34. L speaks about the issue of confidentiality. The local medical doctor knowing everybody and how seeing the doctor is avoided unless you are seriously ill.</p> <p>35. Making strategies to cope in the expatriate environment. Keep to your self and behave to avoid conflicts.</p>	<p>32. How the experience of migration has been very good but the outcome depends on the strategy you chose when coping with stressors.</p> <p>33. How the location and a adequate health system influences the experience of expatriation and health seeking behaviours.</p> <p>34. How the choices about disclosure influence L's life and how she separate her private and public persona.</p> <p>35. How strategies are made about behaviour in the expatriate community and how L experience becoming more discreet.</p>

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<p>36. I actually found it comfortable to be at this surface level- I found it a good thing to be in the end – because you are not seen as the malicious one they gossip about– I also find that when you are on these trips for 3 or 4 years one of the wonderful things is that you see everyone has these good times and everybody these bad times. We all have our ups and downs we really start to experience life and once you start gossiping about everybody one minute and it is your turn to have your problem they just won't be there they're not interested. It just good to be as neutral as possible, of course there are fights and whatever.</p> <p>37. Even with your closest friends you experience fights - we were getting too close and were busy doing this fundraising and suddenly we started fighting over rubbish. In a family you can forget the fighting but with friends it is much harder- you have just not got to the level where you are connected for life – you know what I mean. You are almost there but if you make one false or wrong move, bang that could be it. It is a very vulnerable life, that's exactly right. You have to give a lot to get to that level. You have to give a lot to yourself so the people trust you and feel you are sharing in them. They give to you – if you make the wrong move bang, you never know what is going to happen. On the whole it is ok but there are people that can't stop saying nasty things. There are women that will not go out of their apartment anymore because they feel that the community is too small and too gossiping. I'm lucky I didn't really feel that. All live in a compound, 300 children all going to the same school it is a very small community...</p>	<p>36. L. states that the position of being neutral and live at a surface level in the expatriate environment makes her more comfortable.</p> <p>37. L. says she experiences 'fights' with close friends and that expatriate life is vulnerable as the expatriate environment is much closed.</p>	<p>36. How expatriate life has a sense of alienation where L. suppress her true feelings.</p> <p>37. How the expatriate environment creates a stressed atmosphere where tension among friend are high.</p>

Natural Meaning Unit	Discrimination of meaning units	Transformation of meaning units
<p>38. I think I have toughened up a lot - I am very tough now - it takes a big - it really takes a lot to hurt me or anything. I have seen so much, I have heard so much - people life stories. I'm very tough. I don't really like that. I can take an example now my father is in a nursing home and it does not affect me the way it would have done. I just cope with being tough - having this outer shell. I'm not consciously being tough I just am now. When you asked how I have changed I was much more gentle and careful and scared. Now I just go into it. They say that moving house is the most stressful life event, for me not anymore. I'm tough - I've done it before, it's ok - I'd almost rather do that than changing trains in London as you never know the times and which platform to catch. Now I know how to deal with the packing and off I go.</p> <p>39. This is more the outside experience. I don't like the tough experience - the inside is ok - I think I just get on with it now - it is a job like a machine - so I in a way seeing migrating as a job. It is part of my function - my role is to move - and making it as smooth as possible. So as soon as we know we are moving the process is to organise the packers, the animals, all the boxes, get them out on the other side, maybe have a bit of fun on the way- that is my role. It is just a process. I think a lot of women just get professional in these things now, I'm the wife - that is what we do - (laughing).</p>	<p>38. L. says that she has toughened up by being an expatriate. This has changed her as a person. She finds that moving is not the most stressful situation anymore.</p> <p>39. L. speaks about having an outside as well as an inside experience of her role in expatriate life. She tells about her role to move -and the move as a process in which one gets professional.</p>	<p>38. The migrating has made L. more familiar with being an expatriate and she has found a level of mastery in moving.</p> <p>39. How expatriate life has different meanings and leaves L. in a position where roles have changed and she is the professional who is an expert in moving from country to country.</p>
<p>Participant needs to use the bathroom and there is a 5 minute break.</p>		

Natural Meaning Unit	Discrimination of meaning units	Transformation of meaning units
<p>40. I think it is very important as a woman to feel good about yourself. If you don't feel good about yourself how are you going to appear before anybody else -- when I was not working I decided I had to do a course or a degree just to keep my time filled up. Which was actually very satisfying? It meant that I met people who was kind of had the same interests - who was not the "nu" "nu" housewife just gossiping so it really helped me -- to feel a touch with reality again. I did the master of public health -- I m doing it still that I really found helpful because I really had to use a different part of my brain that hadn't be used before. So it was challenging - I was a bit challenged it felt very worth while to do it.</p>	<p>40. L. states that a woman must feel good about her self .On the outside and on the inside. I. took up studies to keep her 'brain going'- to challenge her self.</p>	<p>40. How appearance becomes an issue but still left L. moving on in her life by taking up studies. L. distances her self from being an inconsequential expatriate 'housewife'.</p>
<p>41. I suppose, it was important going to the gym and actually a body image became important whereas it probably never occurred to me before. Suddenly as a migrating woman meeting new people all the time, my body image suddenly took on a differently level. I felt I should be looking after myself better and because now I had the time to do it (laughter) I should be going to the gym, there was a whole lot of guilt attached not going to the gym -- and that going to the gym actually also make you feel a lot better about yourself.</p> <p>When I got into a cycle and did go to the gym -- I know many women in the expatriate community that would go to the gym every day or at least three times a week and I think that was one of their coping mechanisms.</p>	<p>41. L. says how body image becomes important as she as a migrating woman get into contact with new people.</p>	<p>41. How 'having more time' makes a pressure on L so the expectations of her body image changes. How the impact of expatriate life meeting new people influences the way L look at herself.</p>
<p>42. Of course there were also other things as ladies nights out and as mentioned before shopping which was particularly a very important part of the social scene living as an expatriate in china. China is China there is a lot of shopping to be done. It used to drive me crazy but at the time I suppose it was quite fun.</p>	<p>42. L. says that the social scene was important living as expatriates. Socialising with other women and shopping</p>	<p>42. The need to make connections and being social. How smoothing social relationships as well as negotiating friendships became an issue.</p>

Natural Meaning Unit	Discrimination of meaning units	Transformation of meaning units
<p>43. I think I was looking for people who I felt I could share things with but I wouldn't say that I always was conscious by doing that because I'm always looking for different things in people. Like my children. I'm always looking for friends with whom I can share my experiences with children. I find that one of the most important parts of my role in live is to nurture them, so it might be people who are not particularly intellectual- looking for people who share fun stories about children and their experiences and things like that, so I'm not looking.....</p> <p>44. When you talk about health what I am most worried about it is my children's health and well-being. It is very well to talk about my health but I am actually more worried about what's happen to then since they have moved. I am worried about young people that move and their friendships they also have this superficial friendship experience as well -- they are much better obviously at making friends and they do have this superficial level where people are coming and going all the time. And they have very big gaps in their education. Not a very jointed continuity - like my son used to be in the swimming team in the hockey team since he was 9 years old and suddenly that just fell away and now it is very hard for him to come back to a society where everybody are focused around sport. This is one of my biggest worries. Actually my children, how they missed out especially my son who is a special needs child -- even though my husband's company was very supportive and always gave us financial assistance the actual support network wasn't always there -- it has always been like that. what did we do wrong -- and what did we miss out on -- my child didn't really get what he was entitled to -- and nothing is the same with all the children.</p>	<p>43. L. says she looks for people or friends with children with whom she can share things and experiences.</p> <p>44. L. expresses her concern for her children's health and well-being and how the concern for the children has priority before her own well-being. L. speaks about how friendships are made at a superficial level. (Lilly speak about her children's education and repatriation and the company in relation to the children's well-being)</p>	<p>43. How relationships with other people influence the expatriate life. L. expresses the importance of sharing experiences around children with people.</p> <p>44. L. expresses how the children's well-being comes before her own needs. She discusses the level of friendships in the expatriate environment and what impact this might or might not have on the expatriation.</p>

Natural Meaning Unit	Discrimination of meaning units	Transformation of meaning units
<p>This wonderful broad life experience that they will remember more than ever when they received some geography lesson in something or other - but I feel that maybe sometimes they didn't get what they were entitled to if they had been back at home, that is one of my biggest worries, by biggest stresses, to be back home again.</p> <p>45. That I can actually re-enter a normal society – get back into the groove - which is more normal and heading in a direction that is not..... (phone rings again)</p>	<p>45. L. expresses concern for re-entering society after years of expatriation.</p>	<p>45. The effect of years of migration makes L reflect on what impact repatriation might have.</p>

University of Cape Town

Step 4

Step 5

Specific description of the phenomenon	General description of the phenomenon
<p>Having been through the experience of migration L has specifically experienced that she has become tougher as a person and that her job has been to be the homemaker in the family where her husband has been the breadwinner. She further states that the relationship between the husband and her has become stronger being in foreign countries. She mentions there is an outside as well as an inside role when moving. The outside role which includes the actual move, finding houses and schools is tough the inside role is finding her own identity as an expatriate woman.</p> <p>During the migration situation there are several stressors. L expresses that she is concerned for her children's health and well being overseas. The children's well-being becomes a stressor as well as the concern for family and friends left behind.</p> <p>Keeping herself busy is mentioned as being of significance to Lilly. As L job opportunity falls through, she does charity work. L mentions that keeping time filled up e.g. with a masters course makes her feel good about herself. Body image is also mentioned as an issue.</p> <p>L expresses that there has been a change in her behaviour being in foreign places and her drinking habits has changed which influences her socialising with other people.</p> <p>Friends are necessary when living in foreign places and L emphasises the importance of meeting and making friends who share the same experience. Talking to friends becomes a stress reliever as they respond, and are supportive.</p> <p>A specific issue of being a migrant for L was that of confidentiality. That there was a lot of gossip especially in a small community.</p> <p>A great concern for L is her children and how they have missed out in life living an expatriate life. A psychologist helps her with strategies with the children.</p>	<p>Migration is an experience that has a great impact on L and her family's life. L has become tougher. There is an inside and an outside role. The roles in the family have changed. Her husband being the breadwinner and L being the homemaker. Migration has made the relationship between L and her husband stronger.</p> <p>There are stressors when being in a migrating situation. Concern for the children's welfare as well as concern for family and friends overseas. L emphasise that keeping busy and occupying oneself during expatriation is very important as well as feeling good about one self. Foreign life can change ones habit e.g. drinking habits. In a migrating situation socialising and making friends, especially female friends makes the experience of expatriation easier and is a stress reliever. Though friendships can also be difficult due to confidentiality. A great concern is the children's well fare and how they will get on with life.</p>

Appendix 9. Analysis Audit Trail

Diagrammatic illustration of how the analysis was done with interview 1 and how analysis 1 was fitted in with the themes from the other interviews to form the final combined themes and the contribution to the overall analysis audit trail.

Interview 1 with Lilly's statements	Interview 1- statements incorporated into preliminary themes	Summary of Themes reworded and interacting with other interviews	Final Themes from all six interviews
Not keeping in touch with friends and family	Concern for and missing family	Change in family pattern	Feeling alienated
Lack of support from environment and with in the family	Missing support	Support	
Looks for people to share things with	Relationships	Relations	
Relation with husband			
Artificial friendships	Establishing friendships	Negotiating friendships	
Creating friendships			
Shopping difficult in China	Language – alien products	Cultural differences	
Concern for children's future	Concern about family	Missing out	
A very foreign place	In an foreign environment		
Fear of gossip in community	Isolation	Expatriate culture	
Location and medical support system	Unfamiliar environment	Local society	
Culture to drink a lot	Different environment	Environment	
No support when problems take over	Alone- no friends and family around		
Got strategies to cope	Need to be in control	Survival strategies	Coping
Hiding behind a facade	Not showing her real self	Struggling to find her feet	
Behaving badly	Negative way of dealing with migration	Responses to migration	
Drinking	Way of dealing with life		
Every move makes me tougher	Adapt to moving		
Need to justify herself	A person in her own right	Identity	
Hiding problems in a box	Unable to deal with problems	Mental well-being	
Being stressed	Difficult to cope		
Seeing psychologist	Aware of need of help		

Interview 1 with Lilly's statements	Interview 1-statements incorporated into preliminary themes	Summary of Themes reworded and interacting with other interviews	Final Themes from all six interviews
Can not use qualifications as a doctor	Qualifications not acceptable	Not accepted	Disempowerment
Credibility going down	Not being recognised as the person she is	Identity problems	
Slap in face when job didn't materialise Does not feel people believe her	Feeling let down Aware of people not believing her	Who am I?	
In a foreign country	Things are different	Pulled up by the roots	
The family needs before own needs	What about me		
Meeting other women	Networking	Occupied with friends	
Depressed if not occupying her self	Impact on not being occupied	Lack of occupation	
Role to move- homemaking	Being occupied with the moving	Doing something	
Going to the gym	Occupied with own appearance		
Studying	Keeping her brain going	Importance of doing something	
Doing charity work to keep busy	Doing something	Meaning of worthwhile occupation	
Role to move	The progress of moving forwards	Being in-between	Transition
The whole process about moving	A process	Moving toward	
Arrived in a very foreign place	On her way to get to know new country	A process to adapt	
Each move becomes easier	Higher level of experience		
Going through hard times makes marriage stronger It was an adventure	Improve strategies along the way Expatriation also positive	A process moving forward	

Description of Process:

Column 1: The essence from interview 1 were listed, described and reflected on then collapsed into statements

Column 2: The statements from interview 1 were compared and incorporated into combined themes formed out of interview 1

Column 3: The list of themes from the interview were reworded and certain themes combined with interviews 2-6

Column 4: Final themes from all six interviews

The statement and themes in blue are specific for Lilly and not necessarily shared by the other women interviewed.