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settling in: parent-adolescent family dynamics in the acculturation process

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CENTRE FOR APPLIED CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH, VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NEW ZEALAND FEDERATION OF ETHNIC COUNCILS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The process of shifting to a new culture can have major implications for the functioning of an individual. Adjusting to a new culture can be very stressful, but the negative impact of cultural transition can be reduced with appropriate support systems. The current report investigates the ways in which the family unit can act to both amplify and reduce the strains caused by acculturation. The major aims and objectives of the report are to:

- > document the experiences of migrant and refugee families in New Zealand from the points of view of both the parent and the adolescent
- > explore the areas of agreement and disagreement within the family, with a focus on issues of convergence and divergence between parents and children
- > document the variety of ways in which families from diverse cultural backgrounds understand and negotiate their acculturation experiences
- > explore the changing dynamics in newly arrived families in New Zealand.

Thirty-nine parents and children were interviewed about their experiences of adjustment to New Zealand culture. The challenges posed by familial interaction as well as the support that the family unit offered in the process of cultural transition were considered. The family was chosen as the focus of study because acculturation studies previously have almost exclusively focused on the issues of individuals rather than the adjustment of the family as a whole. This research was carried out in collaboration with the New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils (NZFEC), and they provided assistance in obtaining access to three major migrant and refugee groups: African, Middle Eastern and Asian.

The findings from the interviews were analysed and organised into themes. From this analysis, there

emerged two major topics, which are organised into several subcategories:

- > **Normative issues for parents and children**, which consists of media; manners; money; clothing; housework; and smoking, drinking and drugs.
- > **Migration and acculturation**, which consists of cultural adjustment (increased opportunities and freedom; language barriers; employment; and cultural ignorance), cultural maintenance (cultural traditions; and cultural identity), acculturation and changing family dynamics (general difficulties in parent-adolescent relationships; privacy and trust; respect; and discipline), links with extended family, relationships and education.

Parents' and adolescents' descriptions of their experiences in the acculturation process revealed that they differed in their expectations across a number of important domains (for example, privacy, trust and relationships). Also, the normal developmental process of children becoming adolescents (for example, desires for more independence and autonomy) seems to lead to intergenerational conflict, which may be worsened by the process of cultural transition.

It is hoped that the current research will point out the importance of the family unit as a fundamental component of the adjustment process. It is suggested that policy should be directed towards supporting the pre-existing strengths of immigrant and refugee families while also seeking to address problems in acculturation. Our data suggest that families coming to New Zealand usually possess a supportive and grounding foundation of their home culture's beliefs, values and language, and therefore, rather than minimise or marginalise this foundation, policy should be structured to retain this foundation while supporting acquisition of necessary New Zealand cultural beliefs, behaviours, language and practices (that is, promote integration).

1. INTRODUCTION

Recently, a variety of research efforts have been directed to the issue of how ethnic minority individuals acculturate (acquire the language of the receiving culture and adopt elements of the values and lifestyles of the mainstream in order to function effectively) to a new society (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001); however, most of the research in this area has been devoted to understanding how adults adjust to the new society, with very little attention paid to the process of acculturation for the family unit. Further, in the few studies that have specifically focused on how families acculturate (Costigan & Dokis, 2006; Falicov, 2005b; Kwak, 2003; Steinberg, 1993), the research has focused on single ethnicities within a given country and rarely solicits the voices of more than one family member at the same time. The rationale for the present study was that no one has examined the acculturation experiences of a range of different migrating families in New Zealand in a qualitative framework that allows for both parents' and adolescents' views to be considered at the same time.

Much of the research on families and acculturation centres on the conflict that occurs between adolescents and parents concerning tensions between the home and host culture. Although it has been established that parent-adolescent conflict is a common occurrence during the acculturation process (Dinh & Nguyen, 2006), there are still important gaps in our knowledge. Firstly, little is known about how parents and adolescents view this conflict: specifically, do parents and adolescents generally agree that conflict exists in particular domains and do they agree about the intensity and consequences of this conflict? Secondly, are there differences between normative intergenerational conflict (which is a consequence of normal adolescent development and autonomy seeking) and conflict that is specifically tied to the acculturation process?

A major assumption of the present research is that, although family conflict is an important dynamic to

study, the areas of agreement, co-operation and harmony that also exist in immigrant families must not be overlooked. Specifically, the current study investigates whether parents and adolescents have different expectations and behaviours with regard to the process of acculturation and how, if they are able, do they come to an understanding concerning how much of the ethnic culture is retained and how much of the host society's culture is taken on? This study contributes to the literature on family acculturation, as little research has been carried out on this topic where both adolescents and parents are allowed to express their beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. It also examines both harmony and conflict in the family, taking the view that these are natural parts of family life.

Using quotes from interviews with parents and adolescents, this report highlights findings from a research project exploring the acculturation experiences of migrant and refugee families from three different ethnic backgrounds: African, Middle Eastern and Asian. The current project is a starting point for further research concerning the experiences of acculturation in the family for a diverse range of peoples migrating to New Zealand. The research took place in the Wellington Central region from August 2007 to December 2007 and consisted of a total of 39 interviews, which lasted for approximately one hour each. These interviews included 11 African parents, eight African adolescents, three Middle Eastern parents, eight Middle Eastern adolescents, five Asian parents and four Asian adolescents.

The report begins with an introductory section that situates the research within the New Zealand socio-cultural context. This section is followed by an outline of the methodology used, which, in turn, is followed by a detailed description of the results divided into two main topics: (1) normative developmental issues for parents and children; and (2) issues related to migration and acculturation. The report concludes with a discussion of the findings and recommendations for future research.

2. BACKGROUND

We live in a world where cultural diversity is an everyday reality. Due to the large increases in intercultural contact brought about through colonisation, migration and general population movement, it is unlikely that any society in the 21st century can claim homogeneity. In recent times, the mobility of individuals and families has grown dramatically, allowing more and more people to shift from their country of birth and increasing within-society diversity. In fact, at present, there are 191 million people living outside of their home country (United Nations, 2007), a figure that, although doubling in the last 25 years, is still on the rise (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006). This trend is mirrored in the New Zealand population, in which the number of foreign-born residents is approximately one out of every four people (Ministry of Social Development, 2008). The increasing plurality within societies means that contact between different cultures is inevitable. From this premise, there has been growing interest in the social, economic and political consequences of the intercultural interaction.

2.1 Acculturation

Culturally diverse societies do not solely consist of migrants; they also include various other indigenous and non-indigenous ethnocultural groups. An important issue with such culturally diverse and complex societies is that a number of different cultural or ethnic groups must reside together within a shared social and political framework (Berry, 1997). Although pluralism now exists in nearly every place in the world, the diversity that different cultural groups bring to a given society is received with varying levels of acceptance. Cultural diversity can result in tension and conflict, both for those migrating and for those within the receiving society. The kinds of issues that arise for any particular society are dependent on a number of differing features involved in the migration process, including historical relations between host and heritage cultures, migration policies, cultural distance and attitudes of host and heritage cultures to migration (Ward et al, 2001). However, the overall consequence for a society in the face of diversity, regardless of the specific characteristics of migration, is how to manage immigration flows and the resulting cultural pluralism (Sam & Opedal, 2002).

Acculturation research seeks to explore and address some of the issues posed by cultural pluralism and the resultant diversity, in particular, the cultural adaptation and adjustment of individuals and groups within a society. The concept of acculturation refers to the changes that occur in individuals from both the host and heritage societies as a result of long-term and sustained intercultural contact between individuals and groups from differing cultural origins (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936). Acculturation research has grown exponentially in the last three decades, especially within cross-cultural psychology where there has been a resurgence of interest concerning the role of cultural change in the shaping of norms, attitudes, values and behaviour (Chun, Organista, & Marin, 2002). The central aim of cross-cultural psychology has been to demonstrate the influence that cultural factors have on human behaviour and that one of the major ways this can be achieved is through understanding the processes and implications of acculturation (Berry, 1997).

2.2 Cultural diversity in New Zealand

A wide range of practical implications exists for examining the process and outcomes of acculturation within multicultural societies. For example, in New Zealand, it is widely recognised that international migration is a major feature of the country's history as well as being an important factor influencing all aspects in social life. Migration impacts on the labour force, the demand for goods and services and the pressure placed on governmental resources (Sam & Berry, 2006). The incorporation of different cultures into New Zealand society also involves changes in the social environment, creating opportunities and challenges for social interaction between members of different cultures.

New Zealand is a country established through migration, although it was not until the changes to New Zealand immigration policy in the mid-1980s that significant numbers of migrants from diverse origins began to arrive in the country (Ward & Lin, 2005). Today, approximately one out of every four New Zealand residents is foreign-born. Between 1996 and 2001, the number of foreign-born New Zealand residents grew by 16 percent (Ward & Lin, 2005), and in the 2005/6 period, immigrants came to New Zealand from 150 countries (Ministry of Social Development,

2008). This growth in migration does not appear to be slowing, as between 40,000 and 50,000 new migrants settle in New Zealand every year (Statistics New Zealand, 2008). In the time period between 1996 and 2006, the ethnic groups with the highest rate of growth in New Zealand were African, Asian and Middle Eastern (Ministry of Social Development, 2008).

The definition of ethnicity in New Zealand, as stipulated by the Census 2006 data (Statistics New Zealand, 2008), is the ethnic group or groups that people identify with or feel they belong to. Therefore, 'ethnicity' in the New Zealand context is a self-perceived measure of cultural affiliation, as opposed to race, ancestry, nationality or citizenship. Statistics New Zealand (2008) suggests that an ethnic group is made up of "people who have some or all of the following characteristics: a common proper name, one or more elements of common culture that need not be specified (may include religion, customs, or language), unique community of interests, feelings and actions, a shared sense of common origins or ancestry, and a common geographic origin". This definition has widespread implications in New Zealand as it means that individuals are, to an extent, free to choose to ethnically categorise themselves.¹

Migration is more than just the stream of moving populations; migrants and refugees bring culture and traditions that influence the new country, and these traditions are, in turn, influenced by the culture of the host society (Liebkind, 1992). Migration poses both opportunities and challenges for migrating peoples and host national societies alike. Therefore, the problems that arise from acculturative changes are not solely the issues of the migrating peoples, but are also the issues of the receiving society. It is also the case that differing groups of people face different challenges in the process of adjustment to New Zealand; for example, the issues of migrants may not be the same as the issues of refugees.

In general, there is a growing body of research being conducted with and about groups of migrants in New Zealand society although there is considerably less research focusing on the lives of refugees. According to the Department of Labour's *Annotated Bibliography of New Zealand Literature on Migrant and Refugee Youth* (2008), refugee youth are coping with significant cultural change in the shift to New Zealand, in the same

way migrant youth are, so most of the issues facing young migrants also apply to young refugees. The same may be said to apply to the family unit as a whole, but this is a simplification of a very complex issue because refugees are also likely to be facing challenges migrants do not face, often including trauma and separation from family (Department of Labour, 2008). While this report recognises the differing experiences of these groups as well as the additional challenges refugees face in the adaptation process, this was not the focus of the current study and, therefore, these issues cannot be attended to in depth.

2.3 Family dynamics and acculturation

The process of acculturation occurs within a variety of domains and across all levels of social life. While it is widely recognised that acculturation has consequences for both migrating peoples and host nationals, the minority group tends to be more affected (Berry, 1997). Minorities are more affected because acculturation involves adjustment and adaptation, and in the case of permanent migration, where an individual or group enters a country as the minority, it is often necessary to adapt to institutions and the social infrastructure that represent the cultural values of the wider society. Theoretically, the process of acculturation can be conceptualised in terms of the two major issues: the extent to which a group or individual endorses cultural maintenance and the extent to which they engage in contact and participation with the host culture (Berry, 1997). Generally, acculturation research has focused on the process and outcomes of cultural change, with particular attention paid to the adaptive and maladaptive responses towards intercultural contact. The majority of this research has shown that strategies of integration – meaning retention of traditional culture and participation in the wider society – lead to more positive outcomes overall (Berry et al, 2006; Ward, 2001).

Acculturation is usually considered at the individual or group level, referring to the changes that an individual experiences as a result of contact with another culture, or more broadly assessing the process of adjustment for the cultural or ethnic group. The impact of acculturation on the family has usually been conceptualised as crossing both the individual and

¹ Note that ethnic affiliations in this report are self-assessed category memberships.

group levels, with outcomes for the individual being closely associated with group (that is, family) outcomes. It has recently been suggested, however, that the family may be a quite distinct context for cultural change and that studies of the acculturation process for the family unit itself are a very important – albeit under-researched – domain in cross-cultural studies (Dinh & Nguyen, 2006). This realisation has led to increasing attention being paid to the process of change within the family and the impacts this has on the individual as well as the relationships between family members.

It is well known that migrating peoples experience significant changes in their lives as a result of adjusting to a new culture (Ward, 2001; Ward et al, 2001). However, the nature and extent of this adjustment varies for a number of reasons, including individual characteristics, the cultural distance between heritage and host cultures and whether there is an existing ethnic community within the culture of settlement (Ward, 2001). However, it has been found that one of the major predictors of positive outcomes in the acculturation process is good personal relationships and social support (Sam & Virta, 2003). Because the family is the main support system of the individual, it is reasonable to conclude that the relationship one has with one's family members may function to moderate the acculturation process, in that it may exacerbate or reduce these negative outcomes. For adolescents, in particular, the family provides a very important context for the development of identity and for the expression of shared values and beliefs.

Families are confronted with many difficulties in the process of migration and adaptation, including adjusting to new ways of behaving and different belief systems. They also face challenges to family functioning and patterns of interacting, including pressure on traditional gender and parent/child roles, and status changes associated with adapting to the new culture (Chung, 2001). Roles may be put under pressure to change due to practical reasons of socio-cultural adjustment (for example, in the new culture, both parents may need to work) or, because of difficulties with the language, the child may become the principal communicator for the parents (Dinh & Nguyen, 2006). Family status and structural changes can also come about through more ideological reasons, such as there being more work and socialising opportunities for women in egalitarian societies and less

emphasis on hierarchy between parents and children. When a family migrates into another culture, especially one that is significantly different in terms of language, values, beliefs and traditions, it is not solely that individual members of the family face the challenge of adjustment; the family unit itself is confronted with new ways of functioning (Dinh & Nguyen, 2006).

2.4 Intergenerational conflict

Dinh and Nguyen (2006) suggest that, with regards to the immigrant family, the parent-child relationship is the most affected by the stress associated with the acculturation experience. However, there is no consensus in the literature as to whether these relationships have a positive or negative impact on adjustment.

Although some research points to the ability of the family to act as a coping resource for acculturating individuals, acculturation research generally focuses on parent-adolescent conflict and suggests that cultural change leads to intergenerational discrepancies among parents and their children that can elevate levels of conflict within the family and threaten the wellbeing or coping abilities of its members (Phinney, Kim-Jo, Osorio, & Vilhjaldsdottir, 2005; Phinney, Ong, & Madden, 2000). The suggestion that migrant families are prone to experience conflict situations comes from the notion that acculturative stress arises both from challenges related to adjustment and from a sense of familial disconnection (Dinh & Nguyen, 2006).

The majority of acculturation research concerning parent-child relationships contends that cultural change leads to inconsistency between parents and their children, which, in turn, can elevate levels of conflict within the family and threaten the wellbeing and capacity for adjustment of its members (Jose, Huntsinger, Huntsinger, & Liaw, 2000; Kwak, 2003; Phinney et al, 2005; Phinney et al, 2000). Because adolescence is characterised by exploration and is seen as a life period when an individual establishes a significant degree of their self-concept, it has been suggested that immigrant adolescents, as part of this process of self-development or autonomy, may more easily accept new cultural values and practices than do their parents (Kwak, 2003; Rothbaum, Pott, Azuma, Miyake, & Weisz, 2000). This leads to 'dissonant acculturation' (Phinney et al, 2000), meaning that

children acculturate faster (acquiring English and adopting values and lifestyles of the mainstream more easily) than their parents. These intergenerational discrepancies in behaviour and orientations towards ethnic and heritage cultures may, in turn, lead to conflict in the family (Kwak, 2003).

Intergenerational conflict, however, is often not seen as a wholly negative outcome of parent-adolescent relationships. To the contrary, within Western cultures, conflict in the family is seen as a normal manifestation of the process of individual identity development (Kapadia & Miller, 2005). Disagreement between parents and adolescents is thought to be a common part of the process of adolescents' asserting autonomy and independence, and a normal result of children establishing their own values and systems of belief. This type of conflict does not cause any long-term negative effects on the wellbeing of the family and tends to diminish throughout the adolescent years and to vanish in most families by the time youth reach adulthood.

However, when a family migrates, parents cannot rely on the new society to assist in the transmission of their home country's cultural values to their children (Kwak, 2003). This dislocation can lead parents to adhere even more strongly to traditional values in order to bolster those values against the host country's cultural values, often creating a more harmful and longer-lasting type of family conflict (Chung, 2001). Intergenerational conflict that is the result of the process of cultural change often comes about through inconsistencies between the values espoused in the family and those taken on by the adolescent from the wider society. This mismatch can cause increased feelings of distress and lead to maladjustment for all family members (Lee, 2004; Stuart, 2008).

2.5 Social support and the family during migration

While much of the research on family dynamics in the acculturation process has focused on how negative experiences of cultural change may be exacerbated by family relationships, it has also been suggested that the way in which one relates to one's family can function to alleviate the negative outcomes of acculturation. For example, it has been found that good family relationships, especially high levels of perceived support, can reduce stress and mitigate the negative

effects of acculturation for young people (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2006). It has also been shown that family relationships can be strengthened as a result of acculturation and that they may provide a buffer to help cope with the process of change by social sharing and the collective development of solutions to problems of adjustment (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2006). However, a prerequisite for the positive effects of the family relationships on adjustment is that family members perceive their values to be congruent.

The perception that there is dissonance in behaviours and beliefs between oneself and the members of one's family has been found to predict feelings of conflict and psychological distress in situations of cultural transition (Stuart, 2008; Ying & Tracey, 2004). Research has also linked lack of family cohesion to depression, anxiety and gang involvement in adolescents, and to depression and anger in parents (Hernandez-Guzman & Sanchez-Sosa, 1996, cited in Ying, Lee, & Tsai, 2004), whereas higher levels of perceived similarity between members of the family and better cohesion leads to lower levels of conflict and confusion for young people undergoing acculturation (Lin, 2008; Stuart, 2008). There has, however, been very little research that focuses on the positive influences of the family and how feelings of closeness and connection with the family can reduce the negative outcomes of acculturation.

2.6 Responses to changes in family dynamics

In conclusion, it is widely accepted that, following migration, families undergo an extensive negotiation process in terms of their ethnic culture (Kwak, 2003). Generally, research has suggested that immigrant families will be more prone to intergenerational difficulties and disagreements than host national families. While research on the acculturation of families does indeed point to the potential for more intergenerational conflict in immigrant families, it is important to take these findings in context as, during acculturation, the family unit may also act to protect against negative outcomes. Furthermore, the feeling of similarity and congruence among members of the family has been consistently shown to ease the challenge of adjustment, meaning that the way an individual perceives themselves in relation to their family is a very important part of adaptation (Stuart, 2008).

Although the family may buffer the effects of cultural change, the process of acculturation may still adversely affect migrant families and cause discrepancies between the home and host culture (Chung, 2001). In order to address this issue, it is suggested that a broader and more inclusive understanding of processes of adjustment and cultural adaptation within the family is necessary to fully understand the impacts of acculturation. Overall, successful family adaptation and healthy adolescent development are promoted by the optimal utilisation of social support provided by family and acceptance and openness concerning ways to cope with difficulties. Research into the acculturation experiences of families should keep in mind the broad ways in which this optimal utilisation can be defined and how this includes the experiences of not just one member of the family, but the experiences of all members.

The present research suggests that, while family conflict is an important family dynamic to study, the areas of agreement, co-operation and harmony that also exist in immigrant families must not be overlooked or underestimated. Specifically, the current study seeks to investigate how families reach common understandings as to how to negotiate the acculturation process. This research will contribute to the literature on family acculturation, as little research has been carried out where both the voices of the adolescents and the voices of the parents are heard. This approach allows for an examination of the ways in which families converge and diverge, and where they agree and disagree. This study will examine both harmony and conflict in the family, taking the view that these are normal parts of life, but also looking to see the impact that cultural change has on the family dynamic.

3. METHOD

The study took place in the Wellington City region during the period August 2007 to December 2007. Over this period, six interviewers interviewed a total of 39 recently arrived migrants and refugees. Ethical approval was obtained from the School of Psychology Human Ethics Committee at Victoria University of Wellington to carry out this study. The interview schedule that was used (Appendix A) was devised through a literature review and modified in consultation with experts and members of the community. Questions were taken and adapted from existing measures of family dynamics; specifically, the issues checklist (Robin & Foster, 1989, see Appendix A) was used to elicit common areas of disagreement in the family. Due to the cultural diversity of the participants and the lack of multilingual interviewers, most of the interviews were carried out in English. This did not constitute an issue for the majority of the participants, and where language barriers did cause a problem, family members assisted in translation. The duration of interviews ranged from approximately 30 minutes, to one hour and 30 minutes each.

Three ethnic communities² were chosen to be part of this study; these were African, Middle Eastern and Asian. Families self-identified as coming from one of these three ethnic communities, meaning that, within these categories, there are individuals from a variety of nationalities and backgrounds. As was previously mentioned, in the time period between 1996 and 2006, the ethnic groups³ with the highest rate of growth in New Zealand were African, Asian and Middle Eastern (Ministry of Social Development, 2008). Therefore, these groupings were chosen because they are inclusive, and we sought to have a range of families across different nationalities and backgrounds, while still being sensitive to the composition of the migrant and refugee community in the Wellington region. It is acknowledged that this sample does not represent the ethnic profile of peoples in the Wellington region or in New Zealand as a whole; however, as this is a small, exploratory study, we attempted to obtain information from a variety of sources while keeping the sample constrained to specific communities.

3.1 Interviewer and participant recruitment

The current study employed research assistants from within the three ethnic communities involved in the research (African, Middle Eastern and Asian) to carry out interviews with individuals from their respective cultural groups. These research assistants were identified with the help of the New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils (NZFEC) and through the networks of the Centre for Applied Cross-cultural Research (CACR). One youth and one adult were chosen from each of the three ethnic communities to act as interviewers, resulting in a total of six research assistants. In most cases, the younger research assistant acted as the interviewer for the youth from their own community and the adult research assistant acted as the interviewer for the parents from within their community. The research assistants were invited to a training session in which they were given instructions on how to carry out the interviews with members of their community and were given a detailed interview schedule (Appendix A). Research assistants were also given portable electronic devices to record the interviews and instructions on how to transcribe the material. The interviewers used their existing networks to source interviewees for the study. Interviewers were informed about issues of sensitivity and bias and asked to source participants from outside of their close family and friendship networks.

At least one parent and one adolescent (aged between 12 and 18 years) were interviewed per family. Only families who had immigrated to New Zealand recently (who had resided in New Zealand between 0 and seven years) and who were from either an African, Middle Eastern or Asian background were interviewed. Each participant was given an acknowledgement of a \$10 petrol, grocery or movie voucher for their involvement.

3.2 Participants

In total, 11 African parents, eight African adolescents, three Middle Eastern parents, eight Middle Eastern adolescents, five Asian parents and four Asian adolescents were interviewed (Table 1). Of the African

² Note that the term 'ethnic community' is used in this sense to refer to a group of people with similar cultural backgrounds rather than peoples from a distinct geographic area.

³ Defined by Statistics New Zealand as the ethnic group(s) that people identify with or feel they belong to. Therefore, ethnicity in this regard is a measure of cultural affiliation, as opposed to race, ancestry, nationality or citizenship. Ethnicity is self-perceived, and people can belong to more than one ethnic group.

participants, in two families, both the mother and the father and one child were interviewed, and in six families, either the mother or the father and one child were interviewed. One African father was interviewed although none of his children took part in the study. Of the Middle Eastern participants, in three families, either the mother or the father and one child were interviewed, and five adolescents were interviewed without their parents taking part. Of the Asian participants, in four families, either the father or the mother and one child were interviewed, and one Asian mother took part in the study without any of her children being involved.

A number of relevant demographic variables were not gathered within the interviews, specifically, age and socio-economic status. Also, while a number of the interviewees alluded to their status as refugees, whether or not they came from a refugee background was not specifically asked; therefore, this information is unavailable. Table 1 illustrates the demographic information that was obtained through the interviews. It must be noted that there were more African participants than any other group due to differential rates of participation. A comparison between these groups is not intended or possible given the small sample size and difference in numbers of participants.

3.3 Data collection

Data collection involved conducting 39 interviews – 19 interviews with parents and 20 interviews with adolescents. Due to difficulties with English, two of the parental interviews were translated by their children into their respective languages and then translated back into English for the interviewer. Participants were asked to sign a consent form for their participation in this study. Where adolescents were younger than 16 years, the adolescent signed an assent form, and their parent was required to complete a form indicating their consent for their child to participate in the study. A schedule of both closed and open-ended questions (Appendix A) guided the discussions to generate qualitative data concerning the experiences of the family across three broad areas: (1) how the family had changed or stayed the same during the process of cultural transition; (2) areas of agreement and disagreement between parents and children; and (3) aspirations for the future and current feelings concerning the family unit. After a general discussion concerning areas of agreement and disagreement, the participants were presented with an abridged version of the issues checklist (Robin & Foster, 1989), which acted as a prompt for some common areas of disagreement in the family. On completion of the interview, participants were thanked, debriefed with a written statement (available on request) and given the contact details of the principal researchers.

TABLE 1: Interviewee list

| Interviewee | Ethnic group/nationality | Family role | Gender | Years in NZ |
|-------------|--------------------------|-------------|--------|-------------|
| 1 | Zimbabwe | Adolescent | Female | 6 |
| 2 | Zimbabwe | Adolescent | Female | |
| 3 | Zimbabwe | Adolescent | Male | 4 |
| 4 | Zimbabwe | Adolescent | Male | 3 |
| 5 | Zimbabwe | Adolescent | Male | 3 |
| 6 | Zimbabwe | Adolescent | Female | 4 |
| 7 | Zimbabwe | Adolescent | Male | 4 |
| 8 | Zimbabwe | Adolescent | Female | 4 |
| 9 | Zimbabwe | Parent | Male | 5 |
| 10 | Zimbabwe | Parent | Female | 4 |
| 11 | Zimbabwe | Parent | Female | 6 |
| 12 | Zimbabwe | Parent | Female | 5 |

| | | | | |
|----|-------------|-----------------|--------|---|
| 13 | Africa | Parent | Female | 5 |
| 14 | Africa | Parent | Male | 5 |
| 15 | Uganda | Parent | Male | |
| 16 | Zimbabwe | Parent | Female | 4 |
| 17 | Zimbabwe | Parent | Male | 4 |
| 18 | Zimbabwe | Parent | Female | 3 |
| 19 | Zimbabwe | Parent | Male | 4 |
| 20 | Iraq | Adolescent | Female | 2 |
| 21 | Iraq | Adolescent | | 4 |
| 22 | Iraq | Adolescent | Female | 4 |
| 23 | Iraq | Adolescent | Female | 5 |
| 24 | Egypt | Adolescent | Female | 5 |
| 25 | Jordan | Adolescent | Male | 7 |
| 26 | Morocco | Adolescent | | 4 |
| 27 | Morocco | Adolescent | | 1 |
| 28 | Iraq | Parent | Male | 2 |
| 29 | Iraq | Parent | Female | |
| 30 | Iraq | Parent | Female | 5 |
| 31 | Burma | Adolescent (13) | Male | 1 |
| 32 | Burma | Adolescent | Male | 1 |
| 33 | Burma | Adolescent | | 1 |
| 34 | Philippines | Adolescent | Female | 4 |
| 35 | Burma | Parent | Male | 1 |
| 36 | Burma | Parent | | 1 |
| 37 | Burma | Parent | | 1 |
| 38 | Philippines | Parent | Female | 4 |
| 39 | Philippines | Parent | Female | 2 |

Table 1 reflects information gathered during interviews. Where information is missing, participants were not directly asked/did not offer this information to interviewers.

3.4 Data analysis

The interviews were recorded and transcribed by the research assistants from the ethnic communities who carried out the interviews. This process was undertaken in order to retain accuracy in the transcribed data. The analysis of the data was conducted through a variation of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Data from the interviews were entered into an NVivo database by a research assistant with knowledge of qualitative data analysis, and the data were then analysed using content analysis techniques (see Parker, 1992). Themes were identified from the interview data initially and then these

were refined in conjunction with themes taken from the literature review and researcher interpretations. More specifically, an independent researcher coded the data, which was then checked for accuracy and representativeness by one of the principal investigators. These codes were then clustered together into preliminary themes based on similarity and grouped into low-level categories and high-level domains. The three primary researchers then reviewed and revised this coding structure with attention to the instances of divergence and convergence between parents and adolescents and across cultural groups.⁴

⁴ A detailed outline of the coding system is available on request.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research findings can be divided into two major domains. The first domain refers to the agreements and disagreements between parents and adolescents that occur as a result of normal elements of parent-adolescent interactions; for example, manners, media, allowance and cleanliness. The second domain, however, relates directly to the issues for minority families that are embedded in the experience of cultural transition. The former domain is entitled 'normative issues for parents and children', while the latter domain is broadly entitled 'migration and acculturation'. This domain is further divided into five themes related to the process of acculturation: cultural adjustment; cultural maintenance; family; relationships; and education. These topics were derived from the analysis of the interview data, in which the most important themes arising across all of the interviews were extracted and assessed. These themes were used to construct a series of interlinked issues that were generally significant across all of the interviews.

4.1 Normative issues for parents and children

Disagreements among parents and adolescents are common in all families. These disagreements, or intergenerational conflicts, are attributed to an assertion of autonomy and independence that is driven by the adolescent's desire to establish his or her own identity, values and systems of belief (Phinney et al, 2005). Normative intergenerational conflict is consistently found to increase during adolescence and decline through adulthood without any long-term harmful effects on the family (Fuligni, 1998). Therefore, some of the disagreements between parents and adolescents may be a normal part of the process of development for the young person (Kapadia & Miller, 2005). It is necessary to distinguish these conflicts from issues that are specifically related to the process of migration because normative intergenerational conflict is more likely to stabilise over time and cause no significant distress to the family, whereas this may not be the case with conflict that results from the process of migration (Kwak, 2003).

The results of this study revealed that all of the families studied talked about issues related to normative

intergenerational conflict. It must, however, be noted that, while these issues are related to commonplace conflicts in the family, the problems arising due to cultural adaptation cannot be fully separated from the issues related to 'normal' family interactions. This mixture occurs because the development of the young person and the functioning of the family take place within a particular context where cultural transition is very salient. Therefore, we wish to assert in the current section that normative issues are at the core of the disagreements discussed in the subsequent section, but the ways in which these problems are manifested are inextricably associated with adjustment to New Zealand society.

4.1.1 General areas of intergenerational conflict

The following section outlines five general areas that caused normative intergenerational conflict in migrant families: media; manners; money; clothing; and housework.

4.1.1.1 Media

Media usage was mentioned by parents as a source of disagreements with adolescents, specifically, playing video games, watching TV and using the internet were areas of concern. Parents experienced a lack of ability to moderate the amount of media their children were exposed to and expressed disdain at being unable to monitor their usage. In contrast, young people indicated that they felt as though their parents did not trust them sufficiently with their use of media and desired to have more freedom in this area. One parent understood her children's use of media as stemming from boredom and lack of engaging social activities that were previously available to her children in their home country.

They are always watching TV, computer simply because they are used to doing outdoor activities. Lots of interaction with the neighbours, friends or other family members. But now, because they don't have that, they tend to spend more time on the internet, TV, yeah, just too much time at home. They never did that, simply because they had so many things to do. (African mother)

While media usage can be seen as a commonplace area of conflict for parents and adolescents in general, for the families in this study, the overuse of media was seen as a product of cultural transition. Extended family

and friendship networks that were available to families in their home country no longer existed. This lack exacerbated a feeling of cultural disconnection for both young people and their parents.

4.1.1.2 Manners

Parents also indicated that manners were an important issue that they disagreed about with their children. A number of African parents specifically mentioned that, following the move to New Zealand, their children were quickly 'forgetting' socially acceptable ways of behaving that were taken for granted as necessary in their home country. Rather than this solely reflecting a normative stage of adolescence, these parents believed that their children's lack of manners revealed a disjuncture between their values and the values of the New Zealand society.

Manners – they are completely lost, our kids don't have the African manners we were brought up on. It's difficult to force them. Well, the rest of the world out there believes in other cultural systems. Respect for elders in Zimbabwe, you respect anyone who is older than you even if you meet them on the street. Here it's different, and our kids might have problems when they go back to Zimbabwe.
 (African father)

Because of the importance of manners in reflecting respect for others in the African culture, young people who were not well mannered were seen as deviating from traditional ethnic values. This illustrates how normative issues such as the display of manners can be closely related to the process of cultural transition. Possibly due to the relationship between manners and maintenance of ethnic cultural values, this issue was discussed as an important area of disagreement by a number of parents, but not by the adolescents.

4.1.1.3 Money

In contrast to the issue of manners, a number of adolescents indicated that they had major disagreements about money with their parents, while parents generally did not see this as an area of conflict. The young people who mentioned money issues talked about feeling as though they were doing a lot of work around the house that was not rewarded and about the frustration they experienced because of this. These adolescents also indicated that they felt as though their parents did not trust them and, therefore, did not

give them independence in managing their money. An exception to this was a mother who was bringing up a teenage son on her own. This mother specifically talked about the support she was giving her son so that he could be financially independent, even though her family disapproved of him working outside of the home.

At first I didn't want him to work. He used to be dependent on me and the family back home in terms of financial support. When Mum learned he was working, she got mad at me because he's only 16 ... they were afraid that he would neglect his studies. But for me, I agreed that he should be financially independent – that he knows how hard it is to work, so he'll know the value of money.
 (Asian mother)

4.1.1.4 Clothing

Another common area of disagreement between parents and adolescents was what clothes to wear and style of dress. Yet, while the results of this study did not reveal that clothing was an important issue for families overall, a number of parents mentioned their concern with regards to their children dressing inappropriately, and two young women made particular reference to their disagreements with regards to their parents' conservative views of clothing. Parents seemed concerned with the function that clothing was serving in terms of making their children feel as if they were more a member of New Zealand society. This is illustrated by the statement of one mother.

They tend to do things that they wouldn't normally do, and trying to fit in. Trying to wear the same clothes that other people are wearing, which did not matter in Zimbabwe anywhere, they would just move around and see around in Zimbabwe and see black people, but here, they want to fit in and they try to look and see what everyone else is doing. They try too hard to fit in. (African mother)

The young women who commented about their disagreements over clothing with their parents, however, indicated that they experienced frustration over the inconsistency in what was deemed an appropriate manner of dress, which varied depending on the cultural context. One of these girls mentioned that she was allowed to wear revealing, Western clothing when she was in a predominantly New Zealand setting, although she was not permitted to wear this style of dress in a context in which there were

many members of the opposite sex from the ethnic community present.

We disagree on things [like] clothes and music. They don't like us wearing mini skirts at Zimbabwean parties because they believe all the guys will be looking at us. They don't mind us going to an English party wearing them because it's what they do. (African female adolescent)

Conversely, the other young woman indicated that her parents had become more conservative in New Zealand than they were in her home country and no longer allowed her the same freedoms with her clothing.

Clothes. Arabic culture is really conservative, and sometimes my Mum overdoes it. Like, it would be summer and she would get really angry if I just wore a tank top, but when we are in Egypt, which is really hot, she's fine with it. I think it has something to do with the being around Kiwis. (Middle Eastern female adolescent)

While clothing style can be seen as a normative area of conflict for parents and adolescents, for the families in this study, clothing can be seen to serve as a symbol of cultural beliefs and values. Adolescents who dressed very 'Western' were seen as attempting to pass for members of the host culture by their parents, thus disassociating from their native ethnic culture. The young people in this study, however, discussed clothing as a symbol of their individuality and felt as though clothing could be used as a means of feeling more similar to their host national peers. Issues around clothing were particularly relevant for two of the young women in this study who felt confused and frustrated about being unable to express themselves because of the negative associations their parents held with regard to particular styles of dress.

4.1.1.5 Housework

Another important area of disagreement for both parents and adolescents was the issue of cleanliness and housework. Parents expressed discontent about the respect for shared spaces that their children had within the home. Conversely, adolescents indicated that they felt the responsibilities of housework were too much for them and that they were not rewarded for helping around the house. For some families, it was recognised that the increased housework and issues of cleanliness were directly related to the lack of

affordable home help in New Zealand and that these issues created pressure for all members of the family.

Things have changed in terms of the son is now cooking and does the housework. There is a lot of stress and pressure, unlike at home, there was the use of maids who would help with the housework. There is more pressure here. At home, one just had to focus on the job you did and studies, not including working when you go home as well to cook and other duties. (African mother)

While housework can be seen as a commonplace area of conflict for parents and adolescents, this conflict was exacerbated by the changes that these families underwent during the process of cultural transition. Specifically, the workload around the house was dramatically increased due to the inability to access home help. For many families, this additional level of pressure led to much less time spent as a family unit and heightened levels of stress for both parents and adolescents.

4.1.1.6 Smoking, drinking and drugs

Alcohol consumption, smoking and the use of illicit drugs are often seen as a risky, albeit common, part of the experience of young adults. While this is a widespread issue of contention between parents and adolescents across all cultural backgrounds, it is often suggested that the prevalence of young migrants' engagement in alcohol and drug-taking behaviours is much higher than their peers from non-migrant backgrounds (Greenfield, Keller, Fuligni, & Maynard, 2003). The results of this study found, in contrast to previous research, that the majority of interviewed adolescents did not engage in these behaviours, and nearly all of the young people studied indicated that they agreed with their parents that smoking, drinking and taking drugs were detrimental to their health and the health of their families. Some participants even went so far as to express that this was the most important area upon which they agreed.

[My parents and I] are against drugs, smoking and drinking, because it is stupid and it ruins lives and it's unnecessary. (Middle Eastern female adolescent)

Only one of the participants indicated that there were serious disagreements in the family concerning alcohol consumption, and this disagreement was centred on

what can be considered an issue of trust rather than a disagreement about the negative impact of alcohol.

We disagree about the effects of alcohol, and my Dad thinks you go crazy when you drink, but he does... I would like him to give in and trust me to drink once in a while. (African male adolescent)

Parents who discussed their attitudes towards drinking, smoking and taking drugs expressed their inflexibility concerning the restrictions they imposed on their children in this regard. These parents indicated that they saw themselves as role models for their children and felt as though it was necessary to keep strict boundaries on what was acceptable in the household and to show their children through their own behaviour what was deemed appropriate. These parents also recognised that common behaviour concerning drinking and drug taking in New Zealand may be unhealthy for children, which could undermine the values expressed within the family. One mother specifically expressed concern that it was easier to access alcohol and drugs in New Zealand than in their home country and that their children experienced pressure by their peers and the media. However, in general, most parents understood that their children agreed with them on these matters and did not see this as a major area of conflict.

4.1.2 Summary

The families in this study talked about many issues related to normative intergenerational conflict; however, these were often portrayed as occurring within the process of cultural transition. Therefore, while the problems that were discussed in this section relate to what may be considered 'normal' family interactions, these must be understood in context. The functioning of the family undergoing the process of cultural change is complex and multifaceted. Core family issues, such as those outlined above, may be normative, but the ways in which they are manifested in New Zealand society can be diverse and difficult to comprehend. Care needs to be taken when discussing the differences between what is normal in the family and what is a result of cultural transition, as these processes are often very much intertwined.

4.2 Migration and acculturation

When one emigrates to a new country, the process of change is widespread and occurs across all areas

of life, at the level of the individual, the family level and for the ethnic group as a whole. These changes are facilitated through exposure to and contact with a variety of different cultural groups, namely intercultural contact. In general, most of the cultural changes resulting from intercultural interaction are geared towards adaptation (Sam & Oppedal, 2002). This means that many of the changes that occur following immigration are the product of the individual attempting to meet the challenges arising from negotiating their exposure to different cultures. Acculturation research seeks to explore and address some of the issues posed by intercultural contact, in particular, the cultural adaptation and adjustment of individuals and groups within a society. Acculturation research has grown exponentially in the last three decades, especially within cross-cultural psychology where there has been a resurgence of interest concerning the role of cultural change in the shaping of norms, attitudes, values and behaviour.

Participants in this study were confronted with a number of changes to their way of life as individuals and as members of their family unit, and these were discussed in a number of different ways: as positive (increased opportunities); negative (missing home country); internal (changes in identity); and external (experiences of discrimination). The next section discusses these changes across five domains: adaptation; cultural maintenance and identity; acculturation and changing family dynamics; relationships; and education.

4.2.1 Cultural adjustment

Adaptation, as an outcome of acculturation, can be broadly understood as the process of adjustment to a new cultural setting. The majority of participants in this study were acutely aware of this process and the impact it had on their lives and on their families. The following statement illustrates just how profound an effect cultural transition had on many of the interviewees.

Everything has changed, and nothing is the same. (Middle Eastern mother)

Change was a very central part of migration for most of the participants, although the process of adjustment to New Zealand culture was experienced in a variety of ways. Many participants, especially young people, seemed to be in the process of understanding what the

transition to New Zealand meant for them, and most were very reflective on their attempts to negotiate their experiences.

I am trying to fit in with the New Zealand culture, language and roles. Trying hard to understand what the culture is all about. (Middle Eastern male adolescent)

For some, this meant recognising the differences between themselves and New Zealanders.

I am trying hard to learn the language, and it is very strange in this new society. The people here are very different. (African female adolescent)

It was widely recognised by all participants that a variety of tangible parts of life changed when they shifted to New Zealand – these included language, weather, housing and food. However, it was also acknowledged that intangible parts of life had changed as well, including familial roles, communication, identity and relationships. In the following statement, a father talks about how he perceives his family has experienced the shift to New Zealand.

They have changed a lot. There is definitely a difference, I've noticed, in the general ideas and mentality of our society compared to this one. Some of the things we were used to and some ideas that we were raised with over there are contradicted by the ideas that people over here are raised with. (African father)

4.2.1.1 Increased opportunities and freedom

For a number of the participants, the outcomes of cultural change were seen in a very positive light. In particular, parents indicated that the experience of migration was beneficial to their personal wellbeing and the happiness of their families. This idea was particularly prevalent in the discussion concerning the increased opportunities that were offered in New Zealand and the better quality of life.

The one thing that I feel good about being here in New Zealand is I can see that there are so many opportunities for my kids out there. It makes me feel better. I don't have to worry about their future too much ... there are so many opportunities for the children. I guess then, as a parent, it makes you feel better. (Middle Eastern mother)

I think, in my case, it's all changed for the best. I find more liberty in things. I find better opportunities, hard work is more appreciated. I think for my kids it was great because they just integrated into this culture and belonged to it. (African mother)

The issue of increased freedom and improved opportunities has had a great impact on many of the parents in this study. For migrant families who had made the shift to New Zealand, most had high expectations, and positive changes were important because they were striving to create a better life for themselves and their children. For one participant, this experience was quite different, and he experienced a sense of confusion and loss following the shift to New Zealand. The following statement illustrates the experience of bewilderment at the new-found freedoms that New Zealand offered.

A lot has changed for me. That was the first time I was on an airplane, and when I came here, it was to a new environment, which was really a big shock, because we have lots of similarities and differences with them here. The extent of the difference was very hard. During the war, we got used to staying inside, so when we came here, it was all freedom, and we could go out, but I never did, because I was too intimidated by the place. (Middle Eastern father)

For the majority of participants, the experience of migration was generally positive; however, a wide range of negative experiences also featured in the discussions of both parents and adolescents. These are presented in the following section.

4.2.1.2 Language barriers

One of the most commonly mentioned areas of difficulty in adjusting to New Zealand society was understanding and speaking the language. Both parents and adolescents found this to be a major challenge. As one young african woman said in reply to a question about what was the most difficult part of the move to New Zealand:

Speaking and understanding the language. When I first came here, I thought that Kiwis spoke too fast. That was the first thing; talking and interacting with them. (African mother)

Some of the participants also mentioned the consequences of not speaking the language very well and how this impacted negatively upon their lives.

My mother's English is not good – neither is mine – so she can't work, even though she has a science degree. (African female adolescent)

Other participants spoke about their experiences of discrimination because of their accent and the knowledge of 'standing out' because they sounded different. As one young man said:

People gave [my parents] shit about their accents. They live in an all white part of town, so they were like the darkest people there, and people made them feel different. Not always on purpose, but they would ask really stupid questions without knowing that they were offensive. (Middle Eastern male adolescent)

Another issue that was apparent in terms of language was that many young people found themselves acting as translators for their parents; in fact, three young people interpreted the interview for their parents in this study. These young people were in a particularly difficult situation because, while they were able to recognise the challenges their parents were facing, at the same time, they were being positioned in a more authoritative role than their parents. One young person translated for his parents:

They're happy overall, but can't speak and can't communicate. It's really hard for them. They want to be like other people, but it's hard. (Asian male adolescent)

However, when discussing his feelings about New Zealand society and the challenges he faced with his parents, the young man said:

Because we don't know anything here, and first we need to improve our language. Our family can't help us. We need to get an education... [My parents need] to have more of an understanding. Also, they know more than us, but not everything! And if they don't understand [because of language difficulties] and say we shouldn't do something, it's because they don't know why we're doing it. (Asian male adolescent)

This quote illustrates the frustration over the shift in family dynamics. The adolescent had become the

principal communicator for the family, and while he perceived his parents to be more knowledgeable than him in some areas, the fact that his parents couldn't speak the language meant that he was also aware that, in some cases, he was repositioned as the authority on New Zealand society within his family. The change in his role within the family seemed to cause both frustration and increased independence.

4.2.1.3 Employment

Another major negative effect of cultural change that was widely discussed by parents was employment. Many of the participants indicated that they were struggling to find work or were underemployed and, therefore, were not utilising their skills or were not earning sufficient incomes to support their families. The fact that qualifications were often not recognised caused distress and unhappiness for many of the parents interviewed in this study.

I came here thinking that my life would change for the better, I will get a job but this hasn't happened. I'm stressed because I couldn't get a job that I wanted to do, that I'm qualified to do. It's difficult here because if you did not qualify here in New Zealand, they don't recognise your qualifications. It's all rubbish, you have to suffer. With my age, it's quite difficult to start again. I feel I'm strong, I can work in my area of specialisation but that's not the case here. (African father)

One woman indicated that underemployment was negatively impacting on her relationship with her husband, because she was working now rather than staying at home to care for the children.

The problem is that it is hard to get well-paid jobs for people who are educated. My husband is educated but he can't get a well-paid job. We earn almost the same money, and this causes stress in the marriage and the gender roles have changed. I used to be home and look after the children whilst my husband goes to work. (Middle Eastern mother)

For many of the families, employment status also related to changes in the amount of time parents spent with their children. One mother talked about the lack of time she had with her children because of working shifts and how this affected their relationship.

I now don't have time to spend with my children. I work and study at the same time. Sometimes when

I have to work, my younger son says to me, 'Mum, not again.' I go to work feeling guilty that my son wanted me to stay, so when I get paid, I buy him stuff to make up for the time I don't spend with him. I go to work because I have to go since bills need to be paid. This is affecting my children, especially the young one, who does not go to sleep before I come home. (African mother)

4.2.1.4 Cultural ignorance

Two of the Muslim youth who participated in this study made particular reference to their experiences of intolerance and lack of acceptance. One young woman recognised this as stemming from the fact that she was visibly different from her peers and that people, in general, were uninformed of her culture.

I found that people here were slightly more ignorant about the culture, and I did have some strange looks about my veil. It is unfortunate, but this ignorance is a big reason that I cannot yet feel like a Kiwi or that I am fully accepted, even though I have improved a lot in my English. (Middle Eastern female adolescent)

A young Muslim man talked about his family's experience of being treated 'like terrorists' in their own neighbourhood.

We have not been accepted by the people here so I have nothing else but to stay the same, and I don't want to be like them here, because if the way they talk and treat us is the New Zealand way, then I don't want to be part of it... I know that what I said today sounds like I hate Kiwis, but I don't. What I hate is the reaction to our being here, and I know that this is a probability thing, and that this doesn't happen to all Arabs, but if people here decide that they want to worry about terrorists and the like, which is understandable, then they should at least open their eyes and do it, because right now, they are screaming loudly with open mouths but tightly shut eyes. (Middle Eastern male adolescent)

Discrimination and lack of acceptance are major barriers for integration into New Zealand society. Lack of cultural understanding can cause a variety of negative consequences for both young people and their parents, causing psychological symptoms such as depression and anxiety as well as poor academic and job performance (Roberts, Roberts, & Chen,

1997; Salant & Lauderdale, 2003; Sam & Virta, 2003). Because discrimination and ignorance were not discussed by a majority of the participants, and this was not a specific area of focus in this research, there is not enough information to give a broad picture of this issue for the participants in this study. It must, however, be noted that this is an incredibly important area within the study of migrant and refugee adaptation to New Zealand society that requires acknowledgement and future consideration.

4.2.2 Cultural maintenance

Adjustment to New Zealand society involves making decisions about how much of the host culture to take on and how much of one's home culture to retain. While many participants saw themselves as actively changing to fit in with New Zealand culture, maintenance of ethnic traditions, language and religion were also seen as an integral part of family life following migration. Both parents and adolescents agreed that retaining their culture was important so that they could remain distinctive and create solidarity in the family as well as in their ethnic community.

[My parents and I] are very similar. I have a much bigger appreciation of our heritage through the obstacles I've encountered here, so I try my hardest to keep in touch with home in terms of language and culture and customs. (Asian female adolescent)

Sometimes they don't understand that we are different. We have a different way of perspective, and sometimes Western society looks at it like we are forced to think this way, but really it is our choice, as it is theirs to think this. The girls are very 'Western', which comes from living here for so long and in this part of their life, especially the youngest, and this is very natural, but what I don't like is that they forget that they are Iraqis and that is what is in their blood and that I am from a very different society and I grew up differently, and they cannot expect me to suddenly let them forget themselves and the conservative natures of our culture. (Middle Eastern mother)

4.2.2.1 Cultural traditions

Some of the young people in this study recognised their parents' desire for them to participate in ethnic traditions and to maintain their cultural values. For these young people, cultural maintenance (especially

with regards to religion and ethnic traditions) was an area of absolute agreement between themselves and their parents. In terms of retaining the ethnic culture, parents were particularly adamant about the importance of language in transmitting culture to their children. This was generally because parents desired their children to return to their home country in the future and, therefore, to be connected with their roots.

Nothing has stayed the same except for maintaining our mother language. I even teach my son to read and write [in this language]. It's better if they can at least speak the language at home. Language helps them get back into our culture. (African father)

One mother expressed her sense of anxiety over her children losing their ethnic language and how this would impact upon them when and if she sent them back to her home country.

We are now in this country, he is growing here, he has to pick up this culture at the same time he has to keep our own, which is the most important one. This is difficult because with the culture you have the language which my son is losing. The biggest problem I'm facing, even if I sent them home, they won't be able to speak their own language, they will become foreigners in their own country. (African mother)

In many families, religious values and cultural maintenance were seen to be inextricably linked. Parents were resolute about their children's adherence to religious traditions in order to preserve the culture of the family.

Religion – we are Christians and we expect our kids to be Christians, too. We bring them up on Christian values. Going to church is not negotiable. Our teenager just has to go to church. (African mother)

For the most part, the young people who discussed church and religious values agreed with their parents on the importance of religion. In the following quote, a young woman alludes to the perception that young people attend church because they are coerced by their parents, when, in fact, this is often not the case.

Areas of agreements include going to church. I do this because I want to, not because I am forced by Mum. (African female adolescent)

Generally, church was seen as a positive factor in the lives of family members. It was seen as a place in which

values could be maintained and fostered as well as a safe venue for young people to form friendships.

She is now becoming more mature though, and she is changing slowly. I don't allow her to go anywhere now on her own. I think she is changing because she has started to go to church and that could be the positive influence. (African mother)

4.2.2.2 Cultural identity

When an individual shifts permanently to New Zealand, they must make particular decisions about the extent to which they participate in the wider society and the amount of New Zealand cultural values and beliefs that they take on. Cultural maintenance can take many forms; one of the less tangible but still very important aspects of retaining culture is the acknowledgement of one's ethnic identity. There are many different definitions of ethnic identity, but one of the more widely used is that it is that part of social identity that is derived from knowledge of one's membership to an ethnic group (Phinney, 1992). It is generally through exposure to other cultures that the knowledge of this membership becomes salient, as one realises that one is either different from or the same as those within the society in which one resides.

When asked how they defined their ethnicity, most of the participants had very secure ideas about their ethnic identity, although there was a lot of variability in terms of the culture with which they identified. Some individuals were strongly associated with their ethnicity, as the following four quotes demonstrate.

I consider myself as Zimbabwean. I never think of myself as anything but Zimbabwean. (African father)

Iraqi. Not Kiwi, because I think that New Zealand is my home but your home is different from your ethnicity. (Middle Eastern male adolescent)

I am from Zimbabwe and I have been here for four years. I still see my ethnicity as Zimbabwean. You take into account the Kiwi views because you are living here but you see yourself as Zimbabwean still. (African mother)

What's that saying? You can take me out of Iraq but you can't take Iraq out of me. (Middle Eastern mother)

However, illustrating that ethnic identity is dynamic and changes over time and in response to contextual factors, a number of participants indicated that, whilst they had a secure sense of ethnic identity, they also

identified as New Zealanders.

Right now, I am an Iraqi, but if you were to ask me again in another year or so, I would probably say, 'Iraqi first, then a Kiwi'. (Middle Eastern female adolescent)

I consider my ethnicity to be Zimbabwean and Kiwi. (African male adolescent)

It must be noted that, while it is a common theme within the literature that parents tend to endorse cultural maintenance more than their children, whereas adolescents endorse more contact and participation with the new culture (Costigan & Dokis, 2006; Fuligni, Tseng, & La, 1999), both young people and their parents indicated that they identified with both their ethnic culture and New Zealand culture.

Overall, cultural maintenance and identity were seen as very important parts of life in New Zealand for the families in this study. The retention of cultural values and religious beliefs was the area in which there was the highest level of agreement among parents and their adolescents. However, the maintenance of one's culture was not rigid or fixed, as nearly all of the participants expressed the desire to be a member of New Zealand culture whilst continuing to endorse their ethnic values and practise their cultural traditions.

4.2.3 Acculturation and changing family dynamics

Families face a variety of challenges in the process of adjustment to a new culture. For immigrants, the culture of the family is usually different, and in many cases very distant, from the culture of the wider society. This can mean that different things are valued in the wider society that may not be valued in the family, and vice versa (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2006), resulting in discontinuity between the family and the host culture. Furthermore, the experiences of cultural change are different for each member of the family. Members differ in terms of both their personal adjustment to the new culture and also their exposure to different socialising agents (such as work and school). A number of studies (Kwak, 2003; Lee, Choe, Kim, & Ngo, 2000; Rothbaum et al, 2000) have suggested that this division leads to different ways of coping with the process of cultural transition. Farver, Narang, and Bhadha (2002) found that, when both parents and adolescents chose to integrate into the

new culture, there was less family conflict, and adolescents had higher academic achievement, self-esteem, stronger ethnic identity and better psychological adjustment than in families where parents and adolescents differed in the ways they dealt with the new culture. This inconsistency across the family can prove problematic for cultural maintenance and transmission as well as exacerbate experiences of conflict in the family.

For the participants in this study, the experience of cultural change across various family members was incredibly diverse. While the majority of participants understood that there was conflict in their family across a variety of domains, overall, participants were positive about family life. For the most part, the individuals who took part in this study expressed their love and happiness for their family and remarked that these feelings were strengthened and reaffirmed by the transition to New Zealand society.

They're one of the most important things to me, and I love them very much. (African mother)

I feel happy that they are well and that we are together. I am happy that they are widening their views of the world now that they have seen more of it and they are learning another language. This will be good for them. (Asian mother)

Only one young woman expressed her unhappiness with her family life, discussing how the lack of time her family spent together in New Zealand had driven them apart, until she felt as though they no longer had anything in common.

Compared to [my home country] we don't talk much as a family. We have all grown into different people, and there is nothing we want to do together – people want to do their own thing. We don't spend a lot of time as a family. (Female adolescent)⁵

4.2.3.1 General difficulties in parent-adolescent relationships

While there was a high level of positive feelings expressed about the family in general, this was not the case for parent-adolescent relationships specifically. Parents and adolescents acknowledged that they experienced the process of migration in very different ways. As one parent said:

⁵ Participant quotes relating to the research themes are presented in the findings sections. In most cases these quotes are labelled with the gender, ethnicity, and family position of the participant. To further protect the anonymity of participants, some quotes have had ethnicity details removed.

I had to adjust to Kiwi culture, and for me, it was hard since I am grown up. It is easy for children to adjust. I used to keep to myself without going out to meet Kiwis because it was a challenge to speak English. (Middle Eastern father)

Young people often have a lot more exposure to the culture of the wider society than their parents because of interactions at school and in peer groups. Such environments foster learning the language and social norms of New Zealand society. Often parents find that integration into the society is more difficult because they must actively engage with New Zealand culture, a process that can be hampered by their inability to find employment (and therefore build social networks) or language barriers.

While young people may find it easier to adjust to New Zealand society in some ways, it must be noted that, because identity and values are much more open to change for young people than they are for older migrants, the challenge of negotiating and consolidating the dissonance between the values and behaviours prescribed by their ethnic group with those prescribed by the host culture is much more salient for adolescents (Farver, et al, 2002). This process can be especially difficult when the values and beliefs of the ethnic culture differ significantly from those of the host society. The incongruence between the values of the family and the values of the wider society were expressed in a number of areas in the current study, with both parents and adolescents experiencing difficulties in coming to terms with divergent expectations.

4.2.3.2 Privacy and trust

One of the major issues of contention and frustration mentioned by both parents and adolescents was trust and privacy. Many young people felt as though their parents intruded on their personal space and did not allow them any privacy. For young people, this tendency indicated a lack of trust and made them feel as though their parents did not have enough confidence in them to make good decisions. For the majority of young people who experienced issues of privacy, the lack of trust their parents had in them led them to feel unconfident in making good decisions.

The issue of privacy – they do this to protect me but the ideal solution is for them to trust me so that I can do what I want to do without them thinking I am going to do something wrong. They need to

learn to trust me, not for them to call around and ask people what I was up to when I was with them. I would like them to give me that freedom to prove myself first before making assumptions. (African male adolescent)

The issue of trust was also related to independence. Young people expressed their desire for more independence and openness because they felt as though the over protectiveness and lack of confidence their parents expressed led them to keep things to themselves.

I wish that I had some more independence from my parents and that they trust me more, because I don't like doing things behind their backs, because what if something bad happened? They wouldn't know where I am. (Asian adolescent)

While young people linked the issue of privacy to trust, parents did not make the same connections. Many parents saw privacy as a cultural artefact; something that was condoned in New Zealand culture, but that was incongruent with the home culture of the family. While parents did not explicitly say that they did not trust their children, they often alluded to the enforcement of openness and the fear that their children would hide important information from them.

Privacy – there is a level of privacy we expect. I mean, we don't bash into toilets when she is bathing. We don't expect people to walk naked – that's the level of privacy. Otherwise, anything else we have to really know what's going on unless it's those areas I have mentioned. Our child will remain our kid until they get married or when they become independent. That's the way we were brought up. If she is sick, the mother has to go in the doctor's room to hear what's wrong. (African mother)

Privacy – what privacy can a teenager have? It's a non-starter. The privacy that she can have is little things like where she keeps her panties etc. We have the right to monitor even cell phones. It's for her own good. (African mother)

4.2.3.3 Respect

Another area of contention specifically discussed by parents was respect. Many parents experienced being treated disrespectfully by their children, especially in relation to the ways their children talked to them and the tone of voice they used in conflict situations.

Behaviours that were disrespectful were predominantly seen to be a product of cultural transition. This is because the ways of showing respect and the styles of parent-adolescent interaction that were valued in the ethnic culture were not seen to be of importance in New Zealand society.

My children used to respect me and call me 'Mother', which means a lot, and they would answer respectfully in the cultural way but now, when I call my children, they say, 'What did you say?' or they can tell me that 'You are a liar', and in our culture, this is not heard of. No matter how much I lie in my culture, a parent is never told how much of a liar they are. (Middle Eastern mother)

4.2.3.4 Discipline

A major issue of both frustration and change in the families studied was discipline and the rights of children. Most of the families came from a culture where physical discipline was the norm. Many of the parents mentioned that they found the New Zealand law concerning the rights of children difficult to understand and to follow. The corporal punishment of children was still seen as a viable method of reprimand by some parents, although they knew that this was against the law.

I do carry disciplinary action out immediately if they misbehave – I tell them to go and report it to anyone. I don't have a problem ... as long as they live here and we [are] still doing something for them, like sending them to school, paying their fees and we are doing everything for them. We should show them the way. (African father)

Other parents talked about new ways that they were learning to discipline their children and the process of finding alternatives to physical discipline.

It is hard to discipline them now because you can't beat them when they misbehave. I threaten them sometimes, but they know that I can't beat them so they get away with a lot. This makes my life as a parent hard, and this is a learning experience because I have to learn new ways to discipline my children without beating them up. (African mother)

The amount of discipline – it's unfortunate that we are not allowed to smack but it's [the] most effective way of doing it; however, she is now a teenager.

She understands us talking to her – we use verbal discipline. The type of discipline we enforce are losing privileges, time out. (African mother)

Both parents and adolescents talked about how the New Zealand environment had created a need to search for alternative ways of solving problems and that this had changed the relationship in their families for the better, especially in terms of fostering openness and active communication among parents and adolescents.

For my family, what has changed is the way my Mum approaches me. She is now more respectful towards me than she was in Zimbabwe. She doesn't call me names but uses my real name. This is being influenced by how they relate to their friends and how their friends tell them as well the rights of children. (African female adolescent)

All this has affected us, and you end up adjusting to all this. I now see my child as a friend, unlike at home, I used to see them as just my children. There were so many boundaries at home, and we would not discuss all the issues, but now we are closer and we discuss openly. I never used to listen to my children at home but I have learnt to listen here. (Asian mother)

While the family was often seen as a source of support for young people, often the relationships between parents and adolescents were strained by issues of trust. The major areas of disagreement in the families involved in this study centred around the intertwined areas of openness, independence and privacy. The findings from this section of the study revealed that there are high levels of misunderstanding and miscommunication occurring within the family unit; however, many families were working together towards mutual understanding and compromise.

4.2.4 Links with extended family

One of the major changes arising from migration to New Zealand was the geographical disconnection from the homeland and from support networks. The shift from one's country of birth and place of cultural origin created a feeling of separation that was exacerbated by the change in family structure and the inability to access extended family networks.

Of course, I'm not happy because I'm missing my family and all their extended family. The most important thing that I'm not happy about is not

being able to bring my extended family. My children have to know their relatives. (African father)

[In a] collectivist society, we raise our kids collectively. Here, it is different. It would be good to have our family around; otherwise, our children will miss out. We don't know how to solve these problems. We aren't allowed to bring our families over to live in New Zealand. (African mother)

A number of parents expressed the desire for a change in immigration policy that would allow their extended family members to come to New Zealand. They suggested that this would be beneficial to them in terms of creating more support for the family unit and assisting the transmission of culture to the younger generation. While it was acknowledged that New Zealand created many opportunities, especially economic and social, the lack of cultural continuity created a feeling of loss in both the older generation of migrants as well as their children.

We miss our parents physically but New Zealand gives us an opportunity to support them. Our kids miss those learning lessons they could have got from their grandparents, aunts, uncles. New Zealand meets our economical need but we miss our culture. (Asian mother)

4.2.5 Relationships

One common area of intergenerational conflict that can be exacerbated by the process of acculturation is the set of disagreements among parents and adolescents concerning peers and dating. Some studies have shown that migrant parents often refuse to allow their children to date and mix freely with peers who are not from their own ethnic group – a restriction that is more often pronounced for females than males (Dasgupta, 1998). In contrast to this proposition, the current study did not find any disagreements between parents and adolescents regarding their friends, whether these were from their ethnic group or otherwise. In fact, in some instances, parents praised their children's host national friends, saying that they were helping them adjust to New Zealand culture and learn the language. However, following previous literature, the current study found that there were many conflicts between parents and adolescents regarding dating and intimate relationships.

Beliefs regarding dating practices can be one of the most significant points of contrast between the ethnic and host culture's norms. In a number of non-Western

cultures, marriage is the first point of intimacy with a member of the opposite sex. The practice of dating is not only foreign but also threatening, as it undermines religious and moral values. Many parents in this study expressed their fear and abhorrence to their children about dating and discussed their concerns that their children were too immature for intimacy and physical relationships. These concerns often pointed to parental expectations regarding cultural values and marriage.

Relationships – that's a no, no, no, no, never.

Our kids are treated as kids until they are mature enough. In our culture, a boyfriend is meant for marriage [and] vice versa. No sleep over, no dates, no kissing, nothing, until people are aware of what it means to have a boyfriend or girlfriend. That's our expectations. That's the difference here in New Zealand where these issues appear on TV or in any form. (Middle Eastern mother)

They also pointed to the fear of their children engaging in risky sexual behaviours.

The issue of boyfriends is the biggest issue we argue about. I would never give in to her demands to resolve the issue. I will not say 'yes' because I don't want to encourage her. Here, someone can live with a partner at 16, and I am fearful of that. I would rather she uses a condom but I would never say so because I think it would be encouraging the behaviour. I told my family back home about the issue of contraceptives, and my sisters said I should send her back home and deal with the issue. (African mother)

One parent discussed her strained acceptance of the fact that her son had a girlfriend and acknowledged that, while she felt uncomfortable with her son dating, she was adapting in order to foster an open relationship.

My 16-year-old now has dates. This never used to happen in our culture. He was once invited to his girlfriend's house, and they had prepared dinner for him. At that age, it is unheard of in my culture. I have to go with this to protect my relationship with my son. (Middle Eastern mother)

The parents in this study were generally against the practice of dating, although some parents made concessions for their children (as the quote above illustrates) and attempted to bridge the gap between the values of their ethnic culture and New Zealand

culture. The adolescents, however, were much more variable in their responses to the issue of intimacy and dating. Some of the young people endorsed their parents' advice and saw their stance on dating as a protective measure. When asked about dating, one young woman said that she totally agreed with her parents.

When you are young [you shouldn't have a boyfriend] because you won't concentrate on your schoolwork. You are too young to understand what it means ... think it's good for me not to have a boyfriend at this stage. (Middle Eastern female adolescent)

This, however, was not the norm. Most of the young people who discussed relationships were unhappy with the way their parents treated the issue of dating. One of the major problems that these young people discussed was privacy and trust.

My parents just come in the room to check on us all the time, and they suspect we will bring guys in the room. They do not trust us. (Female adolescent)

For a number of young people, the fact that their parents did not trust them led to a lack of openness and feelings of resentment. One young woman talked about how she had kept a relationship secret from her parents, knowing that they felt she should not have intimate contact with men before she was married.

The thing is, we come from a much more conservative culture, so there isn't this much openness about boyfriends and girlfriends. I had a boyfriend, but it wasn't in any way open to my parents. As far as they were concerned, I went to school and came straight home like a good girl. I don't think that there is anything wrong with it, and it is my choice, but they think it is wrong. (Female adolescent)

Another young woman expressed her intense frustration at her parents not allowing her to date. This led her to feel disempowered and isolated from her peers.

Because it's not fair that my friends can do it [have relationships] and I can't, and sometimes I feel like it's the only difference between us, so it's not fair of my parents telling me all this shit about what I can and can't do when it's none of their business, and they're such control freaks compared to all my friends' parents. (Female adolescent)

While there were many disagreements between parents and adolescents on the issue of dating, ways in which these issues were resolved were also discussed. In particular, a mother and daughter discussed how they managed the process of dealing with these issues through open communication. In the following quote, the mother discusses the situation and its resolution.

Relationships – we haven't been there, apart from one daughter had a crush, and that was okay, I liked the way she handled it, so I definitely have no problems with that so far. The girls are brought up in a similar way as what I was brought up with, so I do trust that they're going to choose in the right time the right people, or they do their best in the right circumstances in the right age. Therefore, it's not a problem. (African mother)

While the mother and daughter have slightly different views on the issue, the daughter also recognised the value in talking to her mother about her feelings and being open about what was happening in her life.

About relationships, I had a boyfriend, and I told Mum about it and she was okay with it, but probably not comfortable. Actually, she was happy with how I told her and she said it was fine as long as I didn't hug, kiss or anything like that. She said she was really happy with how I handled it as in telling her, but I think that that comes from her wanting me to tell her everything. (African female adolescent)

Relationships are an incredibly important area for both parents and adolescents. Parents were concerned for their children's wellbeing and the consequences of intimacy. They were also protective of their cultural beliefs and, for the most part, unwilling to allow their children the independence to make their own decisions about relationships. For parents, there was a lot of fear for their children in regards to sexual intimacy: firstly, because they were concerned that their children were too immature to comprehend the consequences of their actions, and secondly, because premarital sex or intimate contact was often prohibited due to cultural and religious values. Young people, on the other hand, felt as though contact with members of the opposite sex was a natural part of their development and often felt as though they had to keep this hidden from their parents for fear of being chastised.

4.2.6 Education

Parents often emigrate in order to give their children opportunities for a better life than is offered in their home country (Ward et al, 2001). This can mean that parents put a lot of emphasis on academic achievements, as they want to see their children attain success in New Zealand. Success is an outcome that is often measured in ethnic minority families by how well one does at school, as academic achievement subsequently leads to career opportunities.

As I said before, education, I think to them, they have seen what happened in Zimbabwe – if you have no education, you are no one, so one has to have some education for them to get jobs, whatever they want to do in life. (African male adolescent)

I like them to do well in school because this is how their futures will be made, but they are good in this. (Asian parent)

Schooling was seen as a major area of agreement between young people and their parents, as a number of young people discussed how important their education is for their parents, as well as for themselves as individuals.

School, we agree. For them, it's very important that I learn, so that later on in life I will be independent. It's important for me as well. (African female adolescent)

Socially, my Dad is now more focused on my education because there are more opportunities here than in Zimbabwe. (African male adolescent)

The most important topic I agree with my parents I guess is school. They tell us that we should get good grades at school, and they always go on and on about how they have got degrees and they worked really hard for them. (Middle Eastern female adolescent)

We agree more on the issue of school. My father tells me that, if I pass, he buys me what I want, and this keeps me motivated to do well. I also want good grades for a good future and better life. (Asian male adolescent)

Participants were variable in their assessment of whether the schooling system in New Zealand was good or bad. A number of parents were happy with the way the schools were run, although it was acknowledged

that there is an emphasis on independence and personal achievement rather than ranking.

School grades – I think my children have improved quite a lot compared with what they used to do in Zimbabwe. I think it's because of good methods of teaching or maybe there are better schools. All of them have improved. The three of them have improved. (African mother)

There is a lot of difference from the school system here in New Zealand and Zimbabwe. Basically, you will monitor your child's progress, eg, at the end of the term in Zimbabwe, your child was number 1 out of 30 students or 30 out of 30 students, and as a parent, you would end up seeing where your child stands. The system is much better than what we had at home. The system does not outcast children who don't perform. While this is a good thing for kids, it's also difficult for us to be able to monitor how our kid is performing in comparison with the other kids in the class, which would have been very good indicators. (African father)

And with school as well. I agree that it's quite different back home. The teachers think the students should be independent, and I agree with that. (Asian mother)

However, not all of the participants felt that they were being advantaged by the New Zealand schooling system. In fact, both parents and young people discussed the unmotivating effects of NCEA on student learning.

Schooling doesn't promote being good at what you do. This is just what I feel. [My children] will say, 'I will just pass anyway, so who cares'... Here, they know that they can pull through school. It's just the way it is. We try to make them do homework so we tell them to do it, but at school, if they tell a teacher that they don't want to do it, the teacher doesn't do anything, they can't force them. There is no choice here. We make them do it. (African father)

Many of the young people also discussed how easy school was in New Zealand in comparison to their home countries.

The school content here is easy as well, unlike in Zimbabwe, where school subjects were difficult. (African male adolescent)

When discussing schooling, one particular subject came up as causing disagreement between parents and adolescents – tertiary and career expectations. As the following quote illustrates, parents desired for their children to be as qualified as possible in order to create opportunities.

That's not what we expect from our kids, we want them to be professional – to be more articulate in this world as global citizens, so they can get qualifications which cannot limit them. We want them to move to any place, not to be like us who are limited. (Middle Eastern mother)

Young people, however, did not always feel that what their parents wanted for them matched their own desires.

I always tell them that I want to work for a non-profit organisation helping people, so I don't need a degree, but they insist that I should get a degree. They want me to be a doctor or something. We don't agree on my career choice. It is important to agree about school because, if you choose a career and need the support of your parents, you need them to start you off. (African female adolescent)

I'm doing an apprenticeship in automotive engineering, but they want something like an astronaut. (Middle Eastern male adolescent)

Education was a very important area for both parents and adolescents, and one that the majority of families agreed upon. Success at school was seen to lead to better opportunities and, in turn, allow young people to realise their potential.

4.2.7 Summary

The families in this study talked about many issues related to the process of cultural transition. These topics included many areas of agreement, such as cultural maintenance, practice of ethnic traditions and adherence to religious beliefs, as well as areas of disagreement and strain, including issues related to privacy, trust and intimate relationships. While a variety of areas of conflict in the family were identified, the results of this study show that the relationships between parents and their adolescents were generally healthy and that family members felt well adjusted and supported. Many young people indicated that they drew strength from the values of their parents and the ethnic community, and most felt generally happy with their family life. It was often the case, however, that young people did not feel trusted

by their parents and expressed a desire to be more independent in their decision making, whereas parents harboured a number of concerns around privacy and discipline.

By and large, both parents and adolescents expressed a lot of sympathy and understanding for each other, although this was not often communicated directly between family members. The majority of young people in this study expressed respect for their parents' opinions and beliefs, but many parents felt as though their children did not respect or listen to them as much as they would like. Also, while most parents were very willing to make changes to adapt to the new socio-cultural setting and to allow more freedom for their children, young people felt as though their parents were very rigid about their ways. Miscommunication and misunderstanding seemed to be quite prevalent, although these families were working hard to grasp each other's feelings.

I think it's the very common relationship between the kid and their parent. It's like, 'I know more than you know', and they don't think that I know as much as them or understand where they are coming from. It's a big problem. You try to explain to them that I've been down this road before when I was a kid, and they can't believe you would know how they feel. They probably think you've been an adult all your life. Sometimes, you can communicate with them, but other times you have to know that they are going to find out their own way, over time, like I did. So I think that this is very common, every disagreement or agreement goes down this path – I just try to make sure to give reasons every time I try to say yes or no – and get them to give reasons as well when they want to do it their way. This helps us to really understand each other. (African father)

4.3 Comments about the research enterprise

Many of the participants made comments with regard to the nature of the research and the need for future investigations into the wide range of issues for families during the process of cultural transition. Both parents and adolescents felt that it was very important to obtain both parents' and adolescents' points of view, and this was particularly true for parents who often felt as though they no longer knew what was going on for their children.

The research is a good idea because you get an overview from sides – Mum, Dad and teenagers – at the end of the day, we can come to a conclusion on what we want. It's easier to help people if you know the issues. It's a good research maybe if it can be repeated after five or six months and see whether there are any improvements. (African mother)

The research is good because we need to see the teenager's side, like the privacy – maybe our teenagers are keeping some things from us – so through research like this, we may know the issues, like abuses in New Zealand are bad, so if we control our children too much, we put them in a corner and they won't tell us anything. We also need to see how they respond, what they want us to do. In terms of living together in harmony, we have had changes in culture so, from their side, we don't know, we cannot go into their brains, we don't know how they think about this, but the way we were raised is the same way we are raising our kids. The Kiwi culture of no smacking does not help us at all – it's difficult to follow. (African mother)

One parent just wanted the young people to know that the parents had their best interests at heart and hoped that the research could communicate this.

It's a good research ... our teenagers will know how hard we are trying. We want them to go to school. They want to leave school early and work. If you could organise seminars for them, then they will learn. (Middle Eastern parent)

Another parent saw the research as a personal learning experience and something that could be used to facilitate healthy communication within the family.

The research is good even when I read the topics, I got ideas about the issues and how I can help as a

parent and correct my ways. I will be learning. It's not that I will be harassing the teenager or bullying her. Even when the teenager is being interviewed, she will also learn and know about some issues and won't think that I'm harassing her. (African mother)

Some participants saw the value of the research on a much broader scale. The following quote expresses the need for research to be applied and to make a difference:

If the research can be used to influence immigration, it can be good. We don't want people to do research on us and do nothing about it. (African father)

One participant discussed the importance of research in disseminating knowledge in order to facilitate understanding among cultural groups and to make integration into New Zealand society easier.

I suppose thank you and of course, if it has any contribution, that there is a lot of misunderstanding between the East and West at the moment and this is of course understandable, but people need to have more understanding of what it is like to leave your country for the unknown and try to fit in as an alien, and it is very hard but people will never appreciate that until they get an idea of it. When they do this, the community will be an easier place to live, and I totally understand how hard it is to see so many new and strange people in your country and it can be hard, but we can either do this or admit that there is no such thing as world peace. (Middle Eastern mother)

In general, the participants were very positive about their experiences with the research project and hoped that their contribution could go on to help other families understand one another better.

5. DISCUSSION

The research findings section described the key findings from 39 interviews carried out with parents and adolescents across migrant and refugee families from three ethnic backgrounds: African, Middle Eastern and Asian. It was evident that the families involved in this study faced a variety of challenges in the process of adapting to New Zealand culture although, in general, most families were engaged in the process of change in a positive way. It is clear that many of the participants understood the need for adjustment and were coming to terms with the wideranging outcomes of shifting to a new culture.

The current study revealed that migrating families bring a range of strengths to the acculturation process. We emphasise these resources in contrast to most studies that assume a deficit perspective and highlight the conflicts experienced by immigrant families. Further, we would like to emphasise that many of the issues discussed between parents and adolescents in these interviews have their origins in the typical conflicts that occur in families because of normative adolescent development. Nevertheless, it is clear that acculturation creates a variety of novel, and sometimes problematic, situations for the family unit. Often the issues voiced between parents and adolescents derive from the discrepancy between the values of the family and the values of the host society, and this dynamic was prominent for the majority of participants. This section discusses the findings in relation to wider research and their implications not only for immigrant families but also for New Zealand policies and practices.

5.1 The family unit

Members of non-Western cultures hold stronger values relating to family interdependence than do people of Northern and Western European origins (Georgas, Berry, van de Vijver, Kagitcibasi, & Poortinga, 2006). In many collectivist cultures, including those from Africa, Asia and the Middle East, the family, rather than the individual, is seen as the core social unit, and the health and wellbeing of its members are embedded in intra-familial relationships. The family embodies many strengths and manifests considerable resilience during the acculturation process. Research with 'astronaut families' and 'parachute kids' (families who immigrate to a new country, while one or both parents return to

the country of origin, leaving the children in the new country) has shown that adolescents who migrate without their parents experience more behavioural problems (Hom, 2002) and identity conflict (Lin, 2008). Within immigrant families, good parent-adolescent relations have also been shown to impact positively on adolescents' wellbeing (Stuart, 2008).

Parents and adolescents undergo many changes as a result of the process of acculturation. The major issues identified in this study converge with international research where five factors have been identified as particularly salient for immigrant families: (1) loosening of familial boundaries and generational hierarchies; (2) lessening of parental authority over children; (3) fear of losing the children to the host culture; (4) unpreparedness for change and conflict as part of the immigration experience; and (5) extended family enmeshment-disengagement problems (Baptiste, 1993).

5.1.1 Parents in the acculturation process

Parents in this study were largely concerned about issues such as language, employment and fitting into the new society. All of these are realistic concerns. Almost half (46.5 percent) of migrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds (NESB) in the longitudinal study of immigration in New Zealand pilot study rated their English abilities as poor to moderate (New Zealand Immigration Service, 2004a). English language skills are critical for facilitating social contacts, increasing opportunities for employment and becoming involved in the economic and cultural life of New Zealand. Not only is language proficiency a strong predictor of psychological and socio-cultural adaptation, it is also a key factor affecting employment opportunities (Podsiadlowski, 2007; Ward, 2007a; White, Watts, & Trlin, 2002). Migrants' language proficiency and their accents have also been implicated in discrimination (Dion, 2001).

Employment is a pressing issue for new settlers, and it received marked attention by the parents in this research. International studies have shown that the majority of immigrants resettle for economic reasons but that, despite their aspirations for financial security, they encounter more obstacles to economic success than their native peers. Studies have also shown that economic security and success are related to psychological wellbeing and social adaptation

(Ward et al, 2001). This has been recognised by the New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils in their 2001 conference declaration that “employment is the key to successful integration into, and participation in, all aspects of New Zealand life” (Pio, 2005 pp 58-75).

The desire to ‘fit in’ was highlighted by parents, and although most new settlers achieve this, challenges accompany the successes. One in five new migrants in the 2004 pilot LisNz survey acknowledged that they experienced discrimination. However, the Centre for Applied Cross-cultural Research’s report by Mason and Lamain (2007) on the information needs of immigrants found that many of these individuals agreed that they had adapted to life in their local communities and were accepted by others as being part of those communities (64 percent and 59 percent, respectively).

Parents were also concerned with making a good home and ensuring a positive future for their children. A strong sense of family obligations is found in immigrant families (Berry et al, 2006) and anecdotal evidence has suggested that children’s futures are often a major motivation for migration. Parents in this study seemed to be more optimistic about the benefits of moving to New Zealand than their children, but they were also concerned about how their children were faring. In particular, parents expressed a desire for their children to become part of the new culture in which they live while retaining core elements of their heritage culture.

5.1.2 Young people in the acculturation process

Many of the young people did not indicate an awareness that the process of shifting resulted in a large impact on their family; however, they did often remark on the process of integrating into the new culture, and this was most salient with regard to fitting in with their peers. One barrier cited was cultural ignorance and discrimination, although this did not merit widespread discussion by youth in this study. More commonly, parental influence over peer relations, particularly relationships with members of the opposite sex, was cited as a source of unhappiness by migrant and refugee youth.

‘Fitting in’ issues were also linked to identity and cultural maintenance. Many commented on the feeling of living in two worlds, in that they wished to hold onto values and customs of their home culture while at the same time adopting new ways of the host culture. In short, migrant and refugee youth aspired to integration.

They clearly respected and valued their parents’ perspective about retaining the home culture and sought avenues to combine these with the new culture in a way that would work for all involved. However, in many instances, youth also took on the norms and behaviours characteristic of New Zealand culture more rapidly than their parents, and this was a source of conflict.

5.2 Areas of agreement

Three major areas of agreement between parents and adolescents emerged from the interviews: ethnic maintenance; antisocial behaviours (such as smoking, drinking and drugs); and education.

The strong desire for ethnic maintenance, as expressed by parents and adolescents, has been previously documented in both adolescent and adult immigrants in New Zealand (Ward, 2007a, b). There is also evidence that this desire remains strong, even in second generation immigrant youth (Ward, 2008) and that maintenance of traditional language and culture is associated with a range of positive outcomes, including greater psychological wellbeing and social adaptation (Berry et al, 2006). This is particularly the case when cultural maintenance is combined with participation in the wider society, which appears as a common goal amongst refugee and immigrant youth in general.

The youth in this study also agreed with their parents about the importance of education. High educational aspirations are common amongst new migrants, and it is often the case that migrant youth academically excel when compared to their native peers (Kao & Tienda, 1995). The high value placed on education is reflected in Ward’s (2007a) research that found better school adjustment in migrant youth compared to their Māori and European/Pākehā classmates. Additionally, migrant youth reported fewer behavioural problems, consistent with our findings that adolescents’ views converge with their parents’ anti-drinking, drugs and smoking attitudes.

5.3 Areas of disagreement

Three major areas of disagreement between parents and adolescents emerged from the interviews: privacy; trust; and relationships.

Previous research has shown that, in the context of such radical change that is involved in the early

adjustment period following migration, parental anxieties and fears regarding loss of their children to the host culture may be heightened as they see their children acculturate rapidly (Lee, Su, & Yoshida, 2005). Many immigrant parents respond to these fears by becoming more rigid and trying to adhere more strongly to traditional values at a time when those very values are being undermined by cultural values of the host culture, particularly regarding matters of individuality and personal freedom. This problem was illustrated in the results that showed that trust and privacy were major areas of disagreement between parents and adolescents. The fear associated with their children's loss of cultural values, or adoption of New Zealand cultural values, may lead parents to force openness on their children, resulting in the adolescent not feeling trusted.

Conflicts concerning openness are exacerbated by the cultural distance between the ethnic culture and the host culture, as migrants often come from backgrounds where adolescents are expected to be passive and obedient, whereas New Zealand culture encourages adolescents to be independent and self-sufficient (Yau & Smetana, 1996). Intergenerational conflict has been shown to provide a context in which adolescents' desires for greater independence and autonomy may be expressed (Lee et al, 2005). The needs for privacy and trust, and the desire to engage in relationships with members of the opposite sex, reflect the emergence of individuality and independence from parental control.

According to Lee (2004), two of the most common complaints of migrant adolescents concern parents restricting their freedom and being too strict, whereas the common complaints for parents are children not showing respect and talking back. These complaints are very similar to the areas of disagreement found in this study. Lee (2004) suggests that these problems can be understood by parents' desire for cultural transmission coupled with the feeling of inability to provide their children with the guidance and help that is necessary in order to adjust to the mainstream society. The families in this study illustrated the diverse ways in which these fears and desires lead to disagreements and misunderstanding in the family.

5.4 Implications for family dynamics

We would like to list a number of important issues that families and communities must consider for managing the process of cultural adjustment for immigrant and refugee families. In many non-Western cultures, the family is the core social unit. Families are structured in such a way to encourage conformity, dependence and obedience to parental figures, and adolescents who show loyalty to the family by maintaining good relationships with family members and fulfilling family responsibilities are perceived as ideal children. Familial values and obligations remain strong after migration and over generations (Liu, Ng, Weatherall, & Loong, 2000). Under these conditions, adolescent autonomy would be expected to occur at a much later age, with parents remaining an important influence for a longer period of time.

This contrasts with developmental processes in Western countries like New Zealand where adolescence is considered to be a time of individuation and independence seeking. The normative behavioural outcomes for individuation in this country include greater involvement with the peer group with age, a desire to be alone more of the time, an inclination to make decisions about one's future and a preference for being the primary decision maker for choice of clothes, friends and leisure time activities. Tension and conflict between parents and adolescents of immigrating families are common around these issues.

A large percentage of parents expressed a fear of cultural loss, namely losing the critical aspects of their home culture (ie: language, customs, behaviours and so on) in the process of adapting to their new culture. Families usually find constructive ways to retain important aspects of their home culture; often, the parents take the lead in this by speaking the home language at home, making sure that cultural ceremonies and holidays are observed and affiliating with other families from the home country. Concerns about changing family roles were voiced; mothers may be more often employed than fathers due to qualifications from the home country not being accepted in New Zealand. For families that hold traditional gender role values, this type of contact with the new culture may be disappointing and confusing.

Also, adolescents may be thrust into more responsible roles (eg: translating for the family) than is typically due them by age alone, and this may cause difficulties for families with traditional values.

Adolescents reported that they would prefer to be trusted more than they are, whereas parents sometimes commented that they felt the need to supervise and monitor their children because of the perceived risks of New Zealand society (eg: drugs, alcohol, sexuality, media and so on). Again, this normative concern between parents and adolescents is probably exacerbated by the cultural distance between the home and host cultures.

Ample evidence that the family is a significant support system for both parents and youth was obtained in the present interviews. The collective unit provides emotional and instrumental support for its members, and most families voiced an optimism that they would be able to work through their difficulties and misunderstandings because of the love and respect that members feel for each other. The high value placed on family unity provides a stable and secure environment and enables family members to move forward in a positive fashion and to engage with each other and members of the host country in a more effective manner.

6. LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

A number of limitations need to be identified in order to point future work towards more useful avenues. Our present sample was a small group of adolescents and parents; a larger number of informants would be advantageous so that we can have more confidence in the obtained results.

The sample was not representative of the ethnic makeup of New Zealand; this can be improved by including more cultures into the study or, alternatively, focusing on one specific ethnic or national group. Also, while we attempted to include both migrant and refugee families in the present work, we did not have the specific information about migrant/refugee status or enough individuals from either group to make reliable generalisations; future work should obtain sufficient numbers of both groups and study this distinction.

Obtaining greater numbers of children and adolescents across the developmental age span would permit examination of whether children and adolescents voice different concerns as a consequence of their age.

We were not able to specifically study generational status – would one find major differences between adolescents born here as compared to adolescents born abroad? Future work should study how long the family has resided in New Zealand to determine if this factor predicts either parent or adolescent adjustment or both.

Although qualitative methods used here significantly illuminated the phenomena under investigation, future work would benefit from adding quantitative approaches to measurement. In particular, quantitative data would permit researchers to obtain longitudinal data and track over time how adolescent states affect parent states and vice versa.

7. IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY, SERVICE PROVISION AND FAMILIES

7.1 Family resiliency

The migrant families in this study were shown to possess significant psychological resources and resilience despite some tensions and sensitivities. This is illustrated in the many ways individuals expressed how they attempt to compromise with family members and how they were willing to change in order to adjust to the demands of the new situation. The migration experience can disrupt family stability and, in turn, create circumstances in which family continuity is put at risk. In the midst of these situations arise both challenges and opportunities for families, as can be seen within many of the interviews in this study. Falicov (2005a) suggests that, during crucial family transitions, the family needs to be both flexible and stable, meaning that individuals must embrace both change and continuity at the same time. Families in cultural transition may need to develop new ways of retaining connectedness in order to open up the possibilities of creating new lives for themselves. Choices must be made within the family about how to affirm and retain meaning with regard to the heritage culture as well as adapting to the culture of the receiving society. The establishment or retention of a family identity, along with an attempt at preserving coherence within the family, leads to solidarity and resilience. Falicov (2005a) suggests that resilient families selectively and purposefully maintain some aspects of their culture while relinquishing others, as well as adding elements from the new environment. These families may be better equipped to restore a sense of continuity and connectedness into their lives and therefore face the experience of acculturation in a more positive way.

7.2 Policy

From the parents' perspective, language and employment were identified as significant issues, not only for themselves but also for their close-knit families. These issues have been noted across a range of studies (Henderson, New Zealand Immigration Service, 2004a; Trlin & Watts, 2001; White et al, 2002) and have received priority attention in New Zealand Immigration Service's (2004b) settlement strategy. Here, however,

we are concerned more with the implications of intergenerational issues that arise in the family context. These largely relate to the meaning and importance of family and the retention of cultural heritage over generations.

As a general approach, we believe that policy should be directed towards supporting the pre-existing strengths of immigrant families while also seeking to address problems in acculturation. In particular, it seems likely that all families coming to New Zealand possess the foundation of their home culture's beliefs, values and language. Policy, in our view, should not be designed to minimise or marginalise this foundation; rather, it should be structured to support the acquisition of an integrated identity. The findings from this study suggest that there is the possibility for a greater role for local government to facilitate the enhancements of the strengths in migrant families. Local councils are well positioned to access migrant and refugee communities and are able to target migrant families and provide information on social services and possible cultural, sporting groups and churches of interest in the community. Strengths-based family training programmes as well as interventions would be well placed at this level.

At a broader level, policies and practices that facilitate the retention of traditional language and culture should be combined with those designed to encourage participation in the wider society in order to encourage positive outcomes for all members of the family. How policy can effect a rapprochement between dissimilar cultures is not clear at present, but future work should be devoted to identifying how best to bridge the gaps.

Many immigrants to New Zealand leave behind members of their extended families and become not only disconnected with their homeland, but also their support networks. The extended family also provides a sense of cultural continuity. Policy changes that permit the entry of extended family members to New Zealand on temporary or more long-term visas would be welcomed by migrants and refugees.

7.3 For migrating families

Many families that immigrate to New Zealand have a clear conception of the nature of life in New Zealand and are psychologically prepared for the changes involved. Indeed, studies have shown that immigrants

are generally satisfied about the quality and accuracy of information available to them both before and after arrival in New Zealand (Mason & Lamain, 2007, New Zealand Immigration Service, 2004a;); however, this generally refers to practical information about housing, cost of living and employment opportunities. What some migrant families are less prepared for are the cultural challenges, particularly those that are the result of discrepancies between value systems of their ethnic culture and New Zealand society. There is no simple solution to the challenges raised by this issue, but there is reason to be optimistic, as only between one and four percent of the migrants in the New Zealand Immigration Service (2004a) survey indicated that they needed support due to family stress. Compatriot migrants may be best placed to provide this support, particularly if they have lived in New Zealand for a lengthier period and have experience dealing effectively with the issues. Community organisations may also be a good source of assistance. In any event, it will be important for new settlers to be aware that tensions arising over increased autonomy and peer group influence are normal developmental experiences in the New Zealand context.

7.4 For service providers

A general awareness of the significance of family as the fundamental social unit in many immigrant cultures is important for service providers. In many cases, service provision will be directed towards the family as a whole, rather than its individual members. The collectivist nature of many non-Western immigrant families also means that more traditional parents are likely to have different views about privacy than their more Westernised children. This may have important implications for therapeutic relationships, which should be dealt with in a culturally sensitive manner.

7.5 For research

More comprehensive research is needed to understand how to identify families that are likely to need assistance and to develop programmes to provide this assistance. A culture-sensitive approach to assistance is needed to ensure that the help given is appropriate and effective and does not exacerbate feelings of culture shock. Research should be directed towards evaluating efforts to assist immigrant and refugee families.

8. CONCLUSION

Immigrant and refugee families come to New Zealand with expectations about what life will be like in their new country. Many of these expectations will be borne out, but some will not. The present research highlights that parents and adolescents experience conflict and differ in expectations in a number of important domains (for example, privacy, trust and relationships), and although

normal developmental processes in families with adolescent children often involve these matters, they may be worsened by the acculturation process. Families possess considerable resilient tendencies, and it is argued that, if the families that experience significant conflict can receive culture-sensitive support, they are likely to weather the difficulties involved in raising an adolescent in a new and unfamiliar culture.

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APPENDIX A

Interview schedule

1. Where did you move from?
 - a. Were you born in that country?
2. How long have you lived in New Zealand?
3. What would you consider your ethnicity to be now?
4. How have things changed for you since you moved here?
5. What has stayed the same?
6. How have things changed for your family?
7. What has stayed the same?
8. There can be lots of things that families agree and disagree about. Can you tell me some of the things you agree and disagree about with your parents?
9. We have made up a list of some of the more common areas of agreement and disagreement in families. Do you agree or disagree about these things in your family?
10. Do you think there are some topics that we missed out in the list?
11. What is the most important topic that you and your parents agree on?
 - a. Can you describe the topic to me?
 - b. Why do you agree about this with your family?
 - c. Why do you think it is important to agree about things like this?
12. What is the most important topic that you and your parents disagree on?
 - a. Can you describe the topic to me?
 - b. Why do you disagree about this with your family?
 - c. Do you think the situation could be resolved and, if so, how?
 - d. How do you think the disagreement might end up; for example, would you end up doing what your parents wanted or what you wanted?
13. In general, how are you feeling about yourself?
 - a. What do you feel happy about?
 - b. What, if anything, do you feel unhappy about?
14. In general, how are you feeling about your family?
 - a. What are you happy about?
 - b. What, if anything, do you feel unhappy about?
15. What do you see for yourself and your family in the future?
16. Is there anything else you would like to say about the things we talked about today?

Issues checklist

1. Being clean (tidying, washing etc)
2. School (grades, getting there on time etc)
3. Clothes
4. Food and meal times
5. Manners
6. Fighting with brothers and sisters
7. Swearing
8. Money (what it is spent on, allowance etc)
9. Your friends
10. Relationships (having a boyfriend or girlfriend, going on dates, kissing etc)
11. Going places without parents
12. Smoking, drinking or using drugs
13. Lying
14. Obedience
15. Privacy
16. What you/your child does with their free time
17. Showing respect for others
18. Sacrificing your/your child's interests for the sake of the family
19. Practising religious activities
20. Practising ethnic traditions
21. The amount/kind of discipline that is enforced

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families commission kōmihana ā **whānau**

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