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THE LONGEST JOURNEY

The Resettlement of Ethiopian and Eritrean Refugees in Auckland

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Abstract

This study examines the resettlement experiences of a group of Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees who had been resident in New Zealand for at least six to eighteen months. It was expected that such individuals would have passed through the initial stages of coming to terms with a culture totally alien to their own and would be established, to a greater or lesser extent, within their local areas. In documenting the refugees' experiences, the research focus was on the degree to which their requirements had been recognised and fulfilled. The research design actively involved the refugees in the identification of their resettlement needs, both long and short term. An assessment was also carried out as to the extent to which their requirements had been met by current service provision.

The major area of unsatisfied need was in the area of helping family, a traditional expectation. Providing assistance to family members takes two forms - the remittance of money to Ethiopia, Eritrea or the countries of first asylum, as well as the making of applications for family reunification. In reality, both these options have required that the resettled refugee be in receipt of his/her own income rather than welfare support or receive aid from sponsors or other family members in the United States. Most of the refugees involved felt shamed by their incapacity to fulfil these cultural expectations with regard to their family responsibilities. Associated with the desire to help one's family was the need to improve oneself - to learn English, to take courses in order to qualify for higher status, better paid job opportunities and so become independent of the unemployment benefit or other welfare support. This was a goal expressed by both men and women. For men, if married, the desire was to be able to provide their wives and children with the opportunities to have a good education and to live in peace and security.

In considering Zucker's (1983) framework for the problem areas in refugee resettlement, it appears that most of the refugees studied are coping reasonably well with cultural adjustment on a personal level. Most are operating independently within New Zealand society, they have come to terms with a new culture and to some degree most are starting to improve their social status. Only the most disadvantaged with regard to English language ability still have problems in this area. For the Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees, their major concerns with resettlement lie in the systemic management and philosophical areas. The lack of supportive Government policy towards the resettlement of refugees in this country, particularly in regard to the provision of access to English language classes and criteria and assistance for family reunification are reflected at community level by the fragmentation of services and a lack of resources.

Refugee policy presently seems to proceed on a piecemeal basis without strategic planning. To hasten and ease the adaptation of refugees to New Zealand society, the writer would urge the development of a comprehensive strategic plan which would address areas of need such as education and entry to the workforce, would have a commitment to cultural appropriateness, and which would include a range of formal and informal provisions.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The refugee problem is world-wide in dimension. There are currently in excess of 17 million refugees in the world, the greater percentage of these being women and children. These individuals have been forced by violent circumstance to abandon much of what they hold significant. They also suffer the destruction of the basis of their social identity. Their initial flight is only the first step on a long personal journey that can traverse cultures and continents.

Definition of Terms

The United Nations 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees defines a **refugee** as a person who... "*owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or owing to such fear is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country*".¹

¹ For the full definition of refugee status see Article 1 of the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (expanded by the 1967 U.N. Protocol) contained in the New Zealand Treaty Series, 1961 (No 2) and 1973 (No 21).

The 1969 African Convention subsequently extended the definition of the term refugee to include "every person who owing to the external aggression (sic) occupation, foreign domination, or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or whole of the country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality" (Nanda 1985:65).

Both these definitions of the term refugee use gender exclusive language, however, women who are deprived of the protection of the state and who are subject to persecution according to the above criteria may lodge successful refugee claims.

Refugee resettlement involves the permanent settlement of refugees in a country beyond the country of first asylum. It is regarded as the least desirable option because it removes refugees from their own countries and cultures and necessitates major readjustment on their part. Resettlement is considered as a last resort when neither voluntary repatriation nor local reintegration is possible (New Zealand Immigration Service 1994:11; Neuwirth 1988:27). The Office of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) seeks resettlement in only a small minority (approximately 1%) of the world's refugee cases (UNHCR, Assessment of Global Resettlement Needs for Refugees in 1993, 1993:4).

Resettlement is decided upon in several circumstances. It is regarded as a priority where

Resettlement is decided upon in several circumstances. It is regarded as a priority where the individual's safety is at risk in the country of first asylum due to a threat of deportation to his/her country of origin or where particularly vulnerable refugees are markedly in need of humanitarian protection. These groups include women at risk of sexual violence due to lack of family support (this category has existed since 1988 given that women have historically formed a very small percentage of those refugees who were accepted for resettlement), victims of torture and violence, the physically and mentally disabled as well as those refugees having medical needs that cannot be addressed in the countries of first asylum. Consideration is also given to the resettling of long term residents of refugee camps (New Zealand Immigration Service 1994:11).

The New Zealand Response to Refugees

The New Zealand Government has accepted refugees for resettlement since 1944. Total refugee arrivals to date are in excess of 20,000 persons (Refugee and Migrant Service 1993:5). Current resettlement policy provides for the selection of refugees under a quota system as well as assistance programmes on arrival. In 1987 the Government arranged for a review of the Quota Programme under which refugees were accepted. Since that time an annual quota of up to 800 refugees has been selected for resettlement by this country subject to the availability of community sponsorship (New Zealand Immigration Service 1994:23). Refugees upon arrival are granted residential status. This means that they are immediately entitled to all the rights of New Zealand residents in such matters as education, health, employment and social welfare (Crosland 1991:17; Refugee and Migrant Service 1993:1-3).

The approach for New Zealand to accept refugees normally comes from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) which presents refugee situations to the Government for consideration. Refugees are selected by New Zealand Immigration Service officials who carry out interviews overseas in the refugee camps. Special emphasis is placed on the humanitarian aspects of the various cases. The usual practice though is to select people who can be expected to adapt readily to the New Zealand way of life.

With regard to family reunification criteria, family members still living within the country of origin are not classified as refugees despite the oppression and hardship they may suffer. Reunification processes in such instances involve making special applications through the New Zealand Immigration Service for a visitors' permits at a cost of \$700 each, then paying airfares in addition. The applications must be accompanied by completed medical and x-ray certificates, police clearances, birth certificates and duplicate passport photos- all very difficult to obtain (Refugee and Migrant Service, December 1995). Subsequent to their arrival, an application can be lodged for permanent residency. These appear to take a substantial time to process in some cases and involve yet another fee. With regard to family members who are refugees in countries of first asylum, new settlers again have to make a formal application through the New Zealand Immigration Service. Relatives are interviewed in the camps and if approved arrive in New Zealand as part of the annual refugee quota. Unfortunately the refugees resident in New Zealand are expected to pay the airfares (RMS Refugee, December 1994; The New Zealand Herald 4 April 1995).

The Mangere Reception Centre

The New Zealand Government has responsibility for the Mangere Reception Centre which provides a six week initial orientation programme for refugees. The Reception Centre has been managed by the New Zealand Immigration Service since 1987 but other statutory and non-statutory agencies are also involved in the provision of services. Costs are met by various government departments including the New Zealand Income Support Service which pays a special emergency benefit to refugees for living expenses until they can find employment.

The Mangere Reception Centre's orientation programme is provided through the Auckland Institute of Technology's School of Refugee Education. English classes taught are based on assessed levels of competency. Over a period of six weeks the programme deals with the living and psychological coping skills necessary for adjusting to life in a new culture as well as providing information needed for day to day interactions. Visiting speakers cover relevant aspects of New Zealand life such as health services, transport, shopping, money matters, race relations, accommodation and work opportunities. This information is translated into the various languages required and written summaries of the talks are distributed for later discussion. Curricula vitae are developed for those intending to find employment. In addition, medical clearances which include x-ray and dental checks are carried out and any ongoing treatment is arranged. Other practical assistance is offered through the social workers attached to the Refugee and Migrant Service (Duncan 1992).

The Refugee and Migrant Service (RMS) was established in 1990 as a formal non-governmental agency; its forerunner was the Inter-church Commission on Immigration and Refugee Resettlement set up in 1975 to represent New Zealand churches in these areas. The Service has an important role in the resettlement process, working closely with government departments such as Immigration, Health and Education to provide practical assistance to refugees. Social work support is arranged (bilingual workers may be available) and the agency also establishes community sponsors to work with the refugees.

The New Zealand Income Support Service provides some initial assistance for the refugees as they leave the Reception Centre. As well as a recoverable grant for accommodation costs (bond money and a rent advance of up to \$800) there is also available to refugees a non-recoverable grant that may be used for household effects, essential appliances, the connection fees for telephone and power, and the cost of courses including English language classes. Up to \$1200 is provided, dependent on a means assessment. Only one of these grants is available per couple. The re-establishment grant is increased by \$100 for the third or subsequent child or children (Crosland 1994:22).

Little is available in the way of ongoing support from the Government apart from the usual welfare assistance and refugees are expected to be financed by family members already in New Zealand or by volunteer sponsors (New Zealand Immigration Service 1994:27; Crosland 1994).

The Role of Sponsors

Sponsors who are often church groups generally become involved in refugee resettlement as the orientation programme draws to an end. They have responsibility for settling refugees into local communities and to ensure that suitable accommodation is available for them on their departure from the Mangere Reception Centre. They are also expected to see to the provision of furniture and other household essentials required (Crosland 1994). Sponsors may assist the refugee in enrolling in courses or English classes, or in searching for employment, particularly an initial job placement.

Crosland (1994:2) considers that the role of sponsor consists of three essential responsibilities. *"The first responsibility is that of enabler, assisting the refugee with initial material needs and helping the refugee achieve economic self-sufficiency. The second is that of friend, providing the crucial support and guidance needed by the refugee to meet the challenge of overcoming great personal losses and making major adjustments to the new society. The third is that of advocate, ensuring just and decent treatment for the newcomer and providing respect for the cultural heritage and identity of the refugee".*

How sponsors interpret their role is an individual matter. They bring a varying degree of commitment, time and energy to their tasks. Sponsors receive assistance from the Refugee and Migrant Service social workers as required.

The Research Objectives

My interest in the area of refugee research arose from my experiences as a social worker on a three month placement in late 1994 with the Refugee and Migrant Service. For most of my time with that agency I was involved with the initial resettlement requirements and experiences of a group of Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees. I subsequently maintained my contact with this group, as well as later arrivals, due to the fact that they found accommodation in my neighbourhood. At the end of my placement, the Refugee and Migrant Service staff suggested that I undertake research into the experiences of the Ethiopians and Eritreans as they were concerned that the resettlement of groups of African refugees in New Zealand was a relatively new occurrence and that little was known about their processes of adaptation.

The intention of my study was to examine the resettlement experiences of those Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees who had been resident in New Zealand for at least six to eighteen months. It was expected that this group would have passed through the initial stages of coming to terms with a culture totally different from their own and would be established, to a greater or lesser extent, within their local areas. In documenting the refugees' experiences I have endeavoured to focus my research on the degree to which their requirements have been recognised and fulfilled by current service provision. Concern had been expressed by individuals and agencies working with the Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees that in some instances service provision in this country may ignore their real needs and perhaps also lack cultural appropriateness. As a

consequence the research has actively involved the refugees in the identification of their resettlement needs, both long and short term.

This study has also sought to investigate the effect on an individual's social and economic status of becoming a refugee. I saw value in comparing the resettlement experiences of the refugees in the sample with those of a small number of Ethiopian nationals who were not refugees and had entered New Zealand in recent years on either scholarships or training grants and had subsequently applied for permanent residence.

In outlining the context and purpose of my research into the refugee experience I have defined the terms refugee and resettlement and identified the research objectives together with the reasons for my involvement and interest in this area. I have briefly discussed policies and processes with regard to the resettlement of refugees in New Zealand. The next chapter presents a brief political history of Ethiopia and Eritrea over the past three decades. This background has contextual importance for the refugee journey begins in the country of origin. The following literature review focuses on a closer analysis of the concept of refugee resettlement and the surrounding issues. Most of the studies discussed derive from research carried out overseas as to date relatively little research has been undertaken in this country. The review also covers the theoretical aspects of undertaking research in this area. Chapter Four discusses the research methodology and process and comment is made on my experiences in the field. The following three chapters (Five, Six and Seven) address my findings under three major headings:- recollections of the refugees' lives in Ethiopia and Eritrea prior to flight; life in transition in the countries of first asylum, and their resettlement

experiences in New Zealand. In all three areas I investigate the needs of the refugees and the degree to which these were met. The final chapters draw conclusions from the findings and propose recommendations to improve New Zealand's response to the Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees in the areas of policy and service provision.

CHAPTER TWO

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Introduction

One of the most enduring refugee situations in the world has been that which exists for both Ethiopian and Eritrean nationals. Due to a number of traumatic events over the last two to three decades, thousands of refugees have fled from these countries. This brief political history of Ethiopia over the past thirty years serves to provide a contextual background for the experiences of the respondents in this study. Their stories of student oppression, the horrific abuse of human rights and the devastation and famine caused by war are brief vignettes to the broader picture of a nation immersed in turmoil and tragedy.

Their Countries

Ethiopia is a diverse nation covering 400,000 square miles. The current estimated population is about 55 million inhabitants spread amongst 72 different ethnic groups. This research study included representatives from a number of the various ethnic groups such as the Amhara, Oromo and Tigrayan. A number of these groups have sought, or are seeking, national independence. **Eritrea**, the northern province, achieved this status in 1991. Eritrea's population is about 3.5 million and consists of nine different language groups. Similar to Ethiopia, the population is almost equally divided between Muslim and Christians.

The Military Coup 1974

The coup which resulted in the deposition of Emperor Haile Selassie on 12 September 1974 after 58 years rule heralded the significant political metamorphosis of Ethiopia from a monarchist pre-capital state to a military dictatorship that professed socialist ideals and the promotion of socialist programmes (Tola 1989). The early 1970s had been marked by mutinies over poor pay and conditions in a number of Ethiopian Army Divisions. The ongoing and unresolved war against liberation forces in Eritrea heightened this resentment. Increasing concern on the part of workers and intellectuals with regard to a repressive feudalist economic and political infrastructure also contributed to the social unrest. Strikes became endemic but the factor that brought the final discreditation of the imperial regime was the widening public knowledge of the mismanagement of relief for the devastating drought and subsequent famine in the Wollo and Tigray provinces which had resulted in the deaths of many thousands of the rural populace. The screening of Jonathon Dimbleby's BBC documentary on the tragedy, *The Hidden Hunger*, provoked a bitter outcry from viewers in the urban areas.

The coup was carried out by a group of senior military officers and in the initial stages was relatively bloodless. A Co-ordinating Committee of the Armed Forces known as the **Dergue** (Council) was established by 28 June 1974. To all intents and purposes this group now had virtual control of the country as the Emperor was placed under house arrest. The **Dergue** took over formal leadership of the Government upon the death of Emperor Haile Selassie on 27 August 1975. Control of the **Dergue** was swiftly achieved

by Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam who systematically removed and executed all rivals. Mengistu became the Chairman of the **Dergue** in 1977.

This forceful appropriation of power by military leaders contravened a popular demand for government by the people. The dictatorship's determination to maintain control of the country led to human rights becoming increasingly eroded (Tola 1989:11). From late 1974, anyone who opposed the military government was considered a counter-revolutionary. Imprisonment, torture and summary execution were common instruments of state oppression (Markakis and Ayele 1986:156).

The **Dergue** became rapidly uneasy with the political demands of the radical intellectuals. Two prominent political student organisations existed in the early years of revolutionary change, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) and the All Ethiopian Socialist Movement (MEISON). Both were highly organised and Marxist in orientation (Tiruneh 1992). The EPRP developed strong links between students and workers, particularly in Addis Ababa the capital city, and became increasingly critical of the military's growing control of the State. The EPRP called for a People's Party and Government and also demanded the self determination of nationalities, including independence for Eritrea. MEISON, on the other hand was drawn to initial collaboration with the **Dergue** as it believed the latter had the necessary political and military strength to maintain control of the country. MEISON leaders demanded new political processes that were anti-feudal and anti-capitalistic but eventually forged a working relationship with the **Dergue** due to their rivalry with the EPRP (Tola 1989:20-23,41).

The Dergue's Reforms

In order to reduce political opposition the **Dergue** passed a decree in November 1974 promulgating the **Zemacha** (the Campaign of Development through Co-operation). This campaign required all students and teachers of Grades 10-12 (senior high school level) and all university students and professors to spend a year in rural areas to spread the revolution and to mobilise peasant support for the **Dergue**. It was believed that such support would be encouraged by the campaigners holding literacy classes, building roads, schools, and clinics, as well as organising peasant associations. Not only did the **Dergue** hope to gain increased rural support through the implementation of such a reform programme but the Council also hoped for some relief from the pressures of the intellectuals for more rapid radical change. The land reform programme was officially established in March 1975. Initially, students and teachers were reluctant to participate and only the thought of gaining support for their own revolutionary ideals gave them encouragement to be involved (Tola 1989:51).

Within a year radical transformations in rural areas had brought significant change to traditional peasant lifestyles (Lefort 1981:100). This change was not achieved lightly. Land reform opened up the antagonism between peasant and landlord classes. In addition language and cultural barriers proved difficult to overcome and the **Zemachs** (those implementing the reform programme) were often caught in clashes between the police and peasants due to the latter's resistance to collectivization. The **Zemachs** were not provided with protection and many were injured or killed (Moussa 1993:60). Disillusionment soon set in. When the **Dergue** extended the programme for another year

many of the **Zemachs** absconded, fled the country, or died in an effort to escape. On the completion of the official programme in July 1976, the military took over supervision of ongoing reform to maintain control of the countryside.

Reform was not confined to the rural areas. One of the first steps in the economic transformation of Ethiopia was the nationalization of much of both the commercial and industrial sectors. In July 1974 properties belonging to the Emperor were nationalized and early the following year banks, financial institutions, major insurance companies and many industrial and commercial firms were also subject to the same process. That year (1975) also marked the nationalization of urban housing properties and the imposition of rent controls. Ideological control of the urban areas was essayed through the restructuring of the informal neighbourhood associations into **Kebele** (district associations). The responsibilities of the **Kebeles** were the distribution of housing, the collection of rents and the oversight of welfare programmes as well as socialist education instruction. All **Kebele** members were required to attend weekly meetings of the associations. Youth and women's committees were also set up. Attendance was mandatory and those who failed to attend were subject to severe consequences as **Kebele** officials had delegated authority to imprison, torture or kill (Moussa 1993:61).

In tightening its control over the country the **Dergue** also turned attention to the workers' unions. The dissolution of the major workers' union occurred in December 1975. Key members were killed or executed and it was replaced by a new labour union, the All-Ethiopian Trade Union (AETU) which was fully under control of the **Dergue**.

The Eradication of Student Resistance

Radical student opposition to the **Dergue** was finally made ineffectual by the **Red Terror**, the government's campaign of attrition which officially lasted from February 1977 - January 1978. The ultimate objective of this repressive action was the annihilation of EPRP members (Lefort 1981:199). It is reported that Mengistu received MEISON support in perpetuating this outrage (Tola 1989:138).

Amnesty International, the human rights monitoring organisation, reported in 1978 that the **Red Terror** campaign was marked by mass detentions and the use of systematic torture as a means of extorting confessions and information about others (Amnesty International 1978:48). Prisons became full. It was estimated during this period that one in every fifteen Ethiopians was incarcerated. At this time there were 335 prisons in Addis Ababa alone (Bekele 1979:4-5). Mass killings were the most horrific feature of the **Red Terror**. Tola (1989:146) describes the campaign as driven by a deliberate policy to destroy a whole generation. Thousands died. Peasants, townspeople, men, women and children were dragged from their homes or places of work and were shot in the streets. In one weekend alone 600-1000 students were summarily executed (Markakis and Nege 1986:168). Draconian decrees forbade grieving for the dead and customary mourning practices were prohibited. Family members bought the bodies of their dead by paying for the bullets used (Tola 1989:154). By mid 1978 the EPRP had been rendered ineffective. Most of the leaders and members had gone underground, had fled, or been killed. The excesses of the **Red Terror** spread fear and panic throughout Ethiopia. Many of those who came under suspicion of opposing the military regime took flight and became refugees.

"Thousands of young men and women left the country, the majority on foot, braving weeks and sometimes months of journeying through waterless and inhospitable areas to find refuge in neighbouring countries. Families sold property, even homes and jewellery to pay exorbitant fees to guides..." (Bulcha 1987:29-30).

The **Dergue** then shifted its attention to MEISON who had become more openly critical of the military council's refusal to shift towards a more revolutionary socialism. The discovery of a MEISON plot to overthrow the **Dergue** was the nemesis of the last of the radical Left. Members and leaders of MEISON were jailed or executed and the organisation's influence on political affairs was superseded by that of the **Abyot Seded** (the Red Flame), a pedagogical organisation staffed by military personnel who had returned from training schools in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and Cuba (Moussa 1993:65). This group was particularly loyal to Mengistu (Tola 1989:99-100).

These repressive actions on the part of the military government effectively stifled all resistance to their regime from the radical intellectual Left in Ethiopian society. An atmosphere of fear and suspicion compounded by the known existence of a network of informers contributed to the centres of higher learning becoming noticeably apolitical in nature from that time forward.

The Dergue and the Nationalist Liberation Movements 1985-1991

The rule of the military dictatorship was complicated by a number of struggles of national liberation. From 1985-1991 representatives of nationalist groups that sought

self-determination became the predominate victims of oppression. These conflicts were also a major contributory factor to the exodus of refugees from Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Although promising the right to self-determination for all nationalities in Ethiopia in their 1976 **Programme for a National Democratic Revolution**, the **Dergue** maintained an ongoing reluctance to relinquish any political control. Consequently, having virtually destroyed the radical intellectual and student movements, the **Dergue** then entered into conflict with both the Marxist-oriented liberation groups and Marxist Somalia (Moussa 1993:73-75). These wars further devastated the Ethiopian economic infrastructure. High taxation and forced "*contributions*" from the populace were used by the government to fund wars against the rebels. Conscription was introduced in 1983 for all men aged 18-30 years and six years later the minimum age was lowered to 13 years (Luckham 1984:17). By 1991 all able-bodied males were subject to conscription. Selective conscription on the part of the rural Farmers Association and the urban **Kebeles** brought further fear, corruption and the abrogation of rights (Fitzgerald 1989:9). Universities were closed and men were picked up off the streets or from work. Those who refused or attempted to escape were summarily executed. The effect of such policies was the intensification of the flow of refugees.

The main liberation conflicts occurred in Eritrea, Tigray and the Oromo-dominated provinces. (The Oromo were members of a large but disadvantaged ethnic group). With regard to the former region, the Eritrea Liberation Front (ELF) was established in 1961 to seek national independence through armed struggle. By 1974 the ELF had incorporated with the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) - a liberation group

with leanings towards socialist programmes - and had become involved in a war of attrition with the **Dergue**. In 1988 the Liberation Army gained control of most of the province with full power being seized in May 1991 on the collapse of Mengistu's government. An EPLF led Provisional Government took over control in Eritrea after the liberation of the country from Ethiopian rule in 1991. A referendum subsequently took place in 1993 and by popular consensus Eritrea became an independent state. This status was later recognised by the United Nations.

The long duration of the war (30 years) laid waste to the land and numerous inhabitants fled the region. The first major flow of refugees left Eritrea for Sudan in 1967 (Kibreab 1987:17-19). It has been estimated that over the whole period of the liberation struggle almost a third of the Eritrean population became refugees.

The Oromo were also disappointed by the **Dergue's** lack of commitment to self-determination. The Oromo Liberation Front was established in 1974 and over a period of time received some support from the Somali Government. Once again desolation of the countryside was the consequence of armed conflict. Many of the Oromo populace were held as political prisoners or executed under the regime of terror (Amnesty International 1981:42; *ibid* 1983:33; *ibid* 1986:3,5). Others became refugees fleeing to neighbouring Sudan or Somalia.

The Somali government, whilst supporting the liberation forces, had also become involved in a war with Mengistu's government on its own account over disputed territory. In September 1977 Somali forces invaded Ethiopia. Whilst the Ethiopian

Army was disadvantaged by having to fight wars on a number of fronts, the existence of Soviet and Cuban military assistance and the raising of a peasant army in late 1977, tipped the scales in Mengistu's favour. In January 1978 the Ethiopian Army launched an offensive against the Somalis that led to the latter's eventual defeat in March of that year. There were numerous casualties and the inability to plant and harvest crops due to the warring factions resulted in famine in vast tracts of the Ogaden region where the worst of the fighting had occurred.

The other major liberation struggle within Ethiopia occurred between Tigrayan nationalist forces and Mengistu's troops. Tigray, under Haile Selassie, had been the country's poorest province with a 90% illiteracy rate (Moussa 1993:85). Poverty within the region was compounded by repeated famines. During the 1970-1974 famine over 200,000 people died in the Tigray and Wello provinces. A similar number died of starvation in 1984 during the civil war years (Bennet 1983:100; Georgis 1989; Gill 1986; Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues 1985).

The Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) was yet another nationalist organisation set up in response to the **Dergue's** refusal to consider self-determination. Major conflicts ranged between 1975 and 1989 but in October of that latter year the TPLF had the entire province under its control. The TPLF then formed a coalition with the EPLF to become the Ethiopian People's Democratic Revolutionary Front (EPDRF) and the consequent joint Liberation Force set itself to consolidate gains. In May 1991, the EPDRF seized Addis Ababa and Mengistu, ceding defeat, fled the country.

The New Government

The Ethiopian People's Democratic Revolutionary Front (EPDRF) took charge of the government of Ethiopia on 28 May 1991 stating its intention to establish a multi-ethnic, multi-national nation based on democratic principles. A National Conference held in July of that year resulted in the establishment of an 87 member Council of Representatives to govern for a two year transitional period. Yet even at that time concerns were expressed with regard to the marginalisation of such groups as MEISON and EPRP. Early elections were held in mid-1992 to establish a provisional government but the process was criticised and a number of groups withdrew candidates. The government of the EPDRF was subsequently challenged as an agent of destabilisation and autocracy rather than a means for the development of a multi-ethnic and genuinely democratic Ethiopia. A political commentary of 1993 notes that:

"Not only have the various regions of the country been turned into ethnic entitlements under the current government but the right of Ethiopians to live anywhere in the country has also been violated. Violating the basic right of citizens to move freely or live anywhere in their national territory is, and is designed to be, a sure recipe for mounting inter-ethnic strife, leading to what has come to be called ethnic cleansing. Amharas have been the primary victims of that atrocity during the last two years. Amharas have been targeted not simply because of their ethnic identity but rather because they represent a demographic and political roadblock to the government's policies to balkanize Ethiopia" (Belay 1993:17).

The Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees whom I interviewed had all experienced political oppression and abuse of human rights. Some had spent long periods of their youth in prison due to their personal convictions. Family members had also been subjected to torture, imprisonment and death. These individuals saw flight as their only hope of survival.

Refugees are still continuing to flee Ethiopia because of ongoing repressive government policies. Many thousands of Ethiopians currently live in neighbouring nations, in particular, the Sudan and Kenya. Their life in these countries of first asylum is all too frequently one of deprivation and oppression. Life exists in a limbo. Only a fortunate few have an opportunity of resettlement and even that chance for a new life has inherent problems. Various issues and problems in the area of refugee resettlement are discussed in the following literature review.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

The area of refugee resettlement is a relatively new field of research. Only in the past two decades has the attention of researchers been drawn to seeking knowledge and understanding of this stage of the refugee experience. Knowledge is being sought on the possible long term psychological effects of the refugees' trauma as well as any consequences of prolonged confinement in the refugee camps of the countries of first asylum. The following is a discussion of the relevant literature. Comment is also made on the issue of appropriate research methodologies.

The refugee experience is marked by trauma and disempowerment. Loescher and Monahan (1989) have edited a collection of writings in this area which investigate how foreign policy concerns contribute to both the root causes of refugee flight and the international response. Loescher (1994:363) and Burkhead (1994:584) have both noted however, that in recent years major flows of refugees have been triggered by internal ethnic, communal, and/or religious conflicts fuelled by the increasing availability of arms as well as sharp socio-economic divisions and abuses of human rights. In such conflicts civilians are frequently used as targets and large scale population displacements have often comprised a political strategy in claiming control over territory.

By fleeing from their home countries refugees are forced to give up their customary social status and hence the basis for their social identity. Barton has identified a number

of relationships and institutions as confirming an individual's identity. These are role and status, family, education, health, friends, neighbourhood, acquaintances, religious or spiritual affiliations, home, work, language and country. Moussa (1993:27) considers that all these factors are linked by the thread of culture. When people become refugees they are stripped of all the structures which maintain these relationships. Such a loss *"represents a massive threat and challenge to the individual's coping and adaptive capacities"* (Barton 1983:1-2). As refugees in camps of the countries of first asylum, people have limited status as individuals but are subsumed collectively under the category of refugees with few social rights and obligations. They have little if any control over their lives and are dependent for their physical well-being on assistance from international and other agencies. In countries of resettlement this loss of status can have negative psychological effects as well as social and economic consequences (Neuwirth 1988:34).

Women refugees suffer greater disadvantage and disempowerment because of their gender. Moussa (1993:20-21) argues that the official definitions of the term "refugee" are discriminatory to women as they fail to recognise not only the systemic reasons for the perpetuation of violence against them but also the inequalities that exist between men and women in their countries of origin as well as the countries of asylum and resettlement. Such factors are regarded as contributing to the relatively small number of women who actually find sanctuary in a resettlement country.

Neuwirth (1988:28) suggests that as most refugees in recent years have come from the Third World researchers need to develop new theories that take cognisance of their

unique experiences and problems of adaptation. As such refugees often belong to racially defined ethnic or national groups these theories would also need to be sensitive to the fact that such refugees could be exposed to prejudice and discrimination upon resettlement especially in the areas of housing and unemployment. Relevant research is just starting to address such issues (McSpadden 1987; Moussa 1993).

To date many of the researchers involved in this area, for example Nyugen (1989), Crosland (1991), Williams and Berry (1991) have focused on South East Asian refugees who have fled from Vietnam, Laos or Kampuchea. In recent years however there have been increasing numbers of refugees from the African continent undergoing resettlement in Western nations. From a social justice perspective there is a necessity to develop understanding of their experiences so that their resettlement processes can be assisted in a positive manner.

Most of the literature reviewed for this study was written by researchers based overseas. As Crosland (1991) notes there has been very little research carried out in New Zealand with regard to refugee resettlement and apart from a small number of newspaper and journal articles (Campbell 1995; Fry 1989) I was unable to locate any local information on African refugees. McSpadden (1987) and Moussa (1993) have undertaken research on the resettlement of Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees in the United States and Canada and their respective studies provide a useful cross-reference for this present investigation.

The consensus amongst researchers in this field is that resettlement is a process undergone by refugees with varying degrees of success. There appears to be no set time frame for resettlement as the process is personal to each individual. Pittaway (1991:5) regards resettlement periods as dependent upon needs fulfilment. Her research indicates that if refugees' needs are not fulfilled in the short term, successful resettlement is unlikely to occur. This failure is often caused by a combination of both financial and social factors such as inability to speak the language of the host country, unemployment and a lack of social support. Nguyen (1989:80) suggests that Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1970) is a useful framework to work with in regard to research into refugee resettlement. The theory that human beings have basic biological requirements as well as a need for security, spiritual and self-fulfilment is particularly relevant for those who seek to establish a new life after flight from trauma.

The major services and resources that have been identified as essential for the successful resettlement of refugees are:

- orientation and information services
- facilities for learning the language of the host country
- income support
- secure affordable accommodation
- employment services
- childcare
- emotional support and therapy (Pittaway 1991:xii)

With regard to resettlement programmes the consensus is that they need to be of an ongoing nature (Stein 1979; Whyte 1986; Crosland 1991). Ideally programmes should

be "... flexible in time, location and personnel and...not just an arrival event" (Whyte 1986:13; Cox 1981:100). Programmes should include *"arrangements for sponsorship, reception, pre-migration and post-arrival information, counselling and orientation programmes, a means of finding an initial place to live and work within the community; facilities for mastering the local language and any other skills essential for integration; opportunities to continue or to recreate the socio-economic patterns of the past; assistance with any specific group or personal problems which might arise including those concerning relationships with the host society"* (Cox 1981:100).

Facility with the language of the host country is considered the major factor in successful readjustment. It is a priority not only for those intending to find employment but for all family members. Women and the elderly are greatly at risk of marginalisation otherwise. Unemployment, lack of social contact within the host community, diminishment of self-esteem and the development of a sense of isolation are but a few of the negative effects that can occur when language proves to be a barrier (Nguyen 1989:80).

Refugees commonly find initial employment in unskilled and low paying jobs which involve some degree of downward mobility. Those who are more able can eventually transfer their occupational skills or status from their country of origin to their country of resettlement. Stein (1979) views this process as taking a minimum of three years with often some degree of retraining or further education being involved. In his opinion, if refugees have not begun to retrain or pursue former careers at the end of this period it is highly unlikely that they will do so later because of increasing family obligations and/or waning determination.

Refugees by definition have been exposed to violence and trauma and a number of them may require psychological or psychiatric counselling or treatment. Refugees may also experience high levels of anxiety and depression and appropriate services may be required to respond to these (Crosland 1991:20; Jane 1995).

"Not all survivors need treatment or other professional services to live normal lives. Some are better able to cope, to mobilize their defences or to use their political commitments, education, current activities or past experience in managing stress to compensate for problems created by their trauma. Nonetheless most survivors, including those who claim they have no physical or psychological problems, have problems in some sphere of functioning that could be improved by assistance or treatment" (Randall and Lutz 1991:98).

Referring to the need for emotional support, Nyugen (1989:81) comments that the quality and quantity of social networks are important factors in the maintenance of good mental health. Such social supports buffer the impact of stress. One important aspect of these networks is the frequent development of self-help ethnic groups which can not only offer practical help to fellow nationals but also assist in the preservation of the cultural heritage; facilitate the integration of refugees into mainstream society and, through naturally operating community bonds, promote mental well-being (Nguyen 1989:85).

Recent research indicates that women and ethnic refugee minorities have special needs (Crosland 1991; Pittaway 1991, 1993; Cole, Espin and Rothblum [eds] 1992; New

Zealand Immigration Service 1994). Both of these groups may be doubly marginalised as they not only experience the general difficulties facing refugees but can also suffer disproportionately due to their social isolation and the small size of their communities. Women and children make up the greater number of refugees in the world but they are poorly represented in resettlement statistics. Single women, particularly those with dependent children, are generally discriminated against by the selection policies of resettlement countries as it is feared that they will take a longer period of time to become economically self sufficient and to adjust to their new environment (New Zealand Immigration Service 1994:35).

Refugee women have certain identifiable needs that are different from those of men. Women, especially in their childbearing years, have different and specific health needs. They are particularly vulnerable to physical violence, sexual abuse, intimidation, exploitation and on resettlement family violence (Moussa 1993). Whilst all refugees may experience stress in adjusting to new cultures and changed family roles, the evidence suggests that women experience greater problems in coming to terms with the new situation (Ferris 1989:29). In general the resettlement needs of women are the last to be attended to when refugees arrive in their host country. The needs of the husband as the traditional breadwinner are addressed first because of the requirement that he find employment. If work is obtained the husband has more opportunity to bring his ability in the national language of the new country up to a functional level and to become acculturised to the host society. Children are enrolled at schools where they quickly tend to become fluent as well as adapt readily to their peer groups. Women, on the other hand, have their initial focus on the establishment of a new home for the family. The

financial costs of language classes and quality childcare mean that facility in the host country's language is generally not regarded as a priority for refugee women.

Pittaway (1991:33) emphasises that proficiency in the language of the host country is the most important contributory factor in the resettlement process of women. In English speaking countries the level of English spoken has a direct and obvious impact on the ability of women to resettle and on the length of time that process takes. Women with dependent children are at definite risk of isolation and reduced settlement opportunities. Affordable and accessible childcare to allow such women to attend English classes is an urgent requirement in such cases.

If women find employment it is generally poorly paid and menial in nature. In addition, they frequently maintain the primary responsibility for the home and children which restricts their opportunities for either engaging in social activities with friends or attending courses to improve their language and employment prospects (Pittaway 1993:7).

Children have their own problems with regard to resettlement and attention is now beginning to be directed towards addressing their needs. Research indicates that the wellbeing of younger children is largely dependent on that of their parents. For school-aged children an important factor is a supportive educative environment. Family is vital for all children and they tend to feel more secure as extended families form through reunification (Elliot, Lee and Jane 1995:9).

Neuwirth (1988:40) drew attention to the findings that refugee resettlement problems tend to change over time from issues of economic survival and basic cultural adjustment to problems of equitable access to opportunity, structures, and consequent social integration. She indicated a need for studies comparing the refugees' social mobility and access to available opportunities with those achieved by, or available to, other immigrants and established ethnic groups. This research looks to make such a comparison with regard to both the experiences of the Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees and those of other Ethiopian nationals who originally entered this country on scholarships.

Resettlement in a new country gives refugees the opportunity to establish a new social status and social identity but, being generally unfamiliar with the culture and social traditions of the resettlement country, they may not fully know the terms on which status is conferred or achieved and a new social identity forged. Hence Neuwirth (1988:35) likens the initial resettlement period to a time of resocialisation during which refugees become familiar with their new way of life and learn the necessary economic and social skills required in order to gain a foothold in the yet unfamiliar social structures. Agencies and sponsors can have an important role in this process. Lanphier (1983:12-15) cautions that with relatively short term sponsorship arrangements, sponsors may direct attention to eligibility for cash assistance and other forms of welfare benefits rather than orient refugees to the acquisition of skills that would reduce their dependence on the welfare system. Hence for greater effectiveness, it would appear that the role of sponsor requires sustained attention.

In summary, Zucker (1983:182-5) sees three major problem areas relevant to refugee resettlement. First are those which he describes as systemic-management. These are issues which focus on the interrelationships of the actors in resettlement- the refugees, the agencies (both statutory and voluntary) and the national governments. Possible core issues here are the fragmentation of service provision and the low political priority accorded to refugee needs. An example of the latter is the lack of a culturally sensitive definition of family as it relates to family reunification criteria. Second are philosophical problems such as the degree of aid or assistance that is given to refugees and consideration as to the types of obligations which are involved. Third are refugee-specific problems where personal problems can involve a spectrum of acculturative and culture shock phenomenon as well as a range of physical and mental disorders.

Ethiopian and Eritrean Refugee Settlement

In common with all refugees Ethiopians and Eritreans have had the experience of flight, fear, dislocation and resettlement. According to Stein (1981:326-8) resettlement is a time during which initial coping strategies are developed, tried and altered if necessary. Special concerns noted for this period are the sense of loss with regard to absent family members, the challenges to ethnic identity and possible reduction in social status.

Research indicates that many of the Ethiopian refugees who have undergone resettlement have been generally urban or semi-urban in background, relatively well educated, and have typically fled their homeland for political reasons fearing imprisonment, torture or death (McSpadden 1987:799). McSpadden's study focused on

the psychological wellbeing of single male Ethiopian refugees who had been resettled on the West Coast of the United States. These were refugees in the second stage of resettlement, that is, they had been in the United States for periods ranging from six to eighteen months. As Stein (1981:326-8) notes this is a period in which "*... after the initial euphoria is past, refugees may come under the most stress and greatest confusion*". McSpadden interviewed 59 individuals, comparing those who had been settled by agencies with those who had been settled by church congregations. In a manner similar to the present research, McSpadden carried out intensive open-ended interviewing with the respondents exploring both the situation in Ethiopia which had led to the decision to flee and the specifics of their resettlement experience. The study was carried out with particular regard to variables of schooling, job-related opportunities, self-sufficiency, social networks and reference groups.

McSpadden's respondents, in her view, presented a combination of factors that put them at special risk in terms of their psychological wellbeing. They had high expectations but experienced rapid downward social mobility. She noted that Ethiopia was traditionally a status by ascription society. Individuals' social status was mostly determined by the occupation of their fathers rather than by any achievement on their own part. Consequently failure to achieve what was regarded as social standing in resettlement was strongly felt. Single and alone although from large extended families, their resident ethnic community was geographically scattered as well as fragmented by political, ethnic and linguistic differences. The reported high levels of depression and suicide amongst these refugees were regarded as direct consequences of ensuing severe psychological stress. In McSpadden's conclusion the role of sponsors was very

important in combating these severe negative effects. One of her recommendations was that sponsors should encourage the refugees' desire for higher education given that the opportunity to continue learning has, in cultural terms, positive implications for their perceptions both of self and social status (McSpadden 1987:817).

Moussa (1993) in her doctoral research undertaken between 1988-1991 studied the lives of sixteen women from different Ethiopian national groups who had resettled in Toronto, Canada. The respective periods of resettlement for these women varied from six months to ten years. Moussa is a feminist and her work theorizes the social and ideological construction of refugee women through their own experiences. Her analysis indicated that the refugee women concerned had been active shapers of their personal and collective lives, possessing strengths not just vulnerabilities.

Moussa and McSpadden (1993) subsequently collaborated in a joint analysis to compare and analyse the gendered experiences of male and female refugees from Ethiopia and Eritrea. Their research investigated the effect of the socio-cultural construction of gender in shaping the interpretation of, and the response to, the socio-economic transformations common to the refugee experience. Their contention was that a social and personal crisis, such as the refugee experience clearly was, provoked at a basic level of survival some changes in "*traditional*" gender roles and behaviour. Consistent and similar themes of respect and shame with regard to the refugees' self perceptions of identity emerged for each author. For both men and women the refugee experience in flight, asylum and resettlement had produced contradictions, conflicts and a resulting ambivalence in their sense of self. Not only was personal survival an issue but the

socio-cultural and gender basis of respect was also in danger. In resettlement the recognised way for the refugees to achieve self-worth was to succeed by their own efforts and to obtain good employment, frequently after a period of further education.

Research into refugees' experiences indicates that the process of resettlement has inherent difficulties and that appropriate support and assistance needs to be targeted to those areas where problems occur. Refugees bring with them from their social backgrounds their strengths and vulnerabilities and these factors affect their adaptation to a new society.

Research Methodologies

In recent years qualitative research methodologies have come to be recognised as valuable tools in researching the human experience. As Sarantakos (1993:45) emphasises, qualitative research tries to capture reality as seen and experienced by the respondents and therefore this approach has an advantage over quantitative statistical analysis. He states that using this methodology there is no disadvantage in studying a small number of respondents.

De Vaus (1991) states that the central role of qualitative social research is to attempt to answer two fundamental questions about society- **what is going on?** (descriptive research) and- **why is it going on?** (explanatory research). He states that the role of theories is to assist in the interpretation of the meanings of observations and patterns as well as to highlight their significance for the researcher. In de Vaus' view,

theory construction is a process which begins with a set of observations and then moves onwards to the development of theories. Such a process is also known as **grounded theory** because it is based on observation and not simply speculation.

Yin (1989:61-62) elucidates **grounded theory** as one *"that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. It also incorporates the context into its investigation because the boundaries of the phenomenon being studied may not be clear at the outset of the investigation"*. Ideally the researcher should have a good working knowledge of previous research literature in the topic but not have a closed mind to emergent categories. In grounded theory, the method is to identify emergent categories from field data by using qualitative data analysis methods (Sarantakos 1993:13-14). Because of the intention to avoid preconceptions, it is typical that the research question may simply identify the phenomenon to be studied (Silverman 1993:46-7). This approach is ideal in working with respondents from different cultures as it assists in the avoidance of the imposition of one's own cultural values, perceptions and solutions upon the target population.

Silverman (1993) has also warned that it is often unhelpful for researchers to begin their work on the basis of a *"social problem"* identified by either practitioners or managers. It is commonplace that such definitions of *"problems"* may often serve vested interests. Silverman's opinion is that if social research has anything to offer it is in a direction which can offer participants new perspectives on their problems.

"Paradoxically, by refusing to begin from a common conception of what is wrong in a setting, we may be most able to contribute to the identification both of what is going on

and, thereby, how it may be modified in the pursuit of desired ends" (Silverman 1993:184).

Where definitive groups of individuals represent the subjects of the research, the qualitative case study method has practical value. Yin (1989:21) has noted that the case study is an appropriate approach where the research to be carried out is explanatory or exploratory in nature as the case study does not represent a sample and the "*investigative goal is to expand and generalise theories not to enumerate frequencies*". Case study investigation frequently includes not only the interviews, the observational and documentary data but often impressions and comments from others collected over the research period.

Like any other investigation undertaken into disadvantaged and/or culturally different groups in society, research into the refugee experience requires special care and attention on the part of the researcher. Cultural and class awareness, together with a commitment to maintain the integrity of the subjects, are essential in such studies if personally biased assumptions and patronising attitudes are to be avoided. Crosland (1991:38) and Sarantakos (1993:21,23) have commented that it is not possible to observe another culture and maintain a value free stance. In their opinion various factors such as gender, class and cultural conditioning influence research processes. Researchers therefore have to acknowledge and take into account such biases.

Not only are there valid methodological reasons for consulting with members of target communities, there are also strong ethical arguments for such liaison with cultural

informants during both the developmental and research stages of a project. Such studies are more likely to be culturally and psychologically sensitive and to address more appropriately the needs of the communities concerned. Consultations with cultural informants can also provide essential research data and background information which strengthen and inform the findings of the research (Fitzgerald, McNamara, Silove, Barnett and Mitchell:1995).

In my research investigation I endeavoured to take into account the abovementioned methodological and ethical considerations. The following chapter covers both research methodology and process.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS

Introduction

This chapter details the objectives of the study, defines the research population and discusses the theoretical perspectives that governed the approach and method that I selected. The specific instrumentation used is described as well as my reflections upon the ethical questions and dilemmas that surround research into a cultural group different to one's own. I also comment on my experiences during the actual research process.

Research Objectives

The overall aim of this study was to increase the available knowledge and understanding of a group of Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees who have recently settled in Auckland. The intention was to examine the personal experiences of those refugees who were in the second stage of the resettlement process - having at least six to eighteen months residence in this country. The research was to cover the refugees' lives in their country of origin, the time spent in the country of first asylum, and their processes of resettlement. Throughout, the common thread was to be an ongoing analysis of the extent to which their needs were both recognised and met. To provide commentary and contrast to the refugee experience, Ethiopian nationals who had arrived in this country on scholarships and who later applied for permanent residency would also be

interviewed. Further, it was also intended to make recommendations for any necessary support and assistance that would lead to a more appropriate and satisfactory fulfilment of the refugees' needs.

As the research was centred on a definitive group of individuals I elected to use the qualitative case study method. Whilst use of the case study can be criticised as having limited generalisability or lacking external validity, Yin (1989:21) has pointed out that the case study does not represent a sample and that the research goal is to expand and generalise theories rather than gather statistical data.

Such an approach has value when the research to be carried out is explanatory or exploratory in nature. In the present study it allowed me to focus on important aspects of the refugees' lives as well situating their experiences within historical and cultural contexts. As a case study, the research investigation would include not only the interview, the observational and the documentary data but also impressions and comments from others collected over the research period (Patton 1980:303; Sarantakos 1993:259).

In undertaking this research project I was not looking towards quantitative statistical analysis as an end result but was seeking to develop such conclusions that could be drawn from the observation and analysis of patterns of social behaviour and response. As Sarantakos (1993:45) points out qualitative research tries to capture reality as seen and experienced by the respondents. In such circumstances, there is no disadvantage in studying a small number of individuals or using the grounded theory approach that I selected.

The Research Sample

The first group of Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees to be accepted for resettlement in New Zealand arrived in this country on 21 May 1994. Two subsequent groups of refugees (arrival dates 13 August 1994 and 4 November 1994) were also included in the sample. All of these individuals fitted the criteria that the refugees should be in the second stage of resettlement, that is, having spent at least six months in this country prior to interview. Within this criteria:

Group 1 (21 May 1994) consisted of nine women including one with two dependent children and three men. A total of 12 adults.

Group 2 (13 August 1994) consisted of one woman, seven men including one with a dependent son, one couple and two families (mother, father and two children in each). A total of 14 adults.

Group 3 (4 November 1994) consisted of eight men and two families consisting of parents and one child. A total of 12 adults.

The total of expected respondents amongst the refugees was 38 adults. Children were not included in the survey given that most of them were infants.

I also intended to speak to a small number of Ethiopian nationals who had arrived in this country as holders of scholarships or grants and who had subsequently applied for

permanent residence. This was in order to compare their experiences of settling in a new country with those of the refugees.

Instrumentation

I decided to use a structured interview guide (see Appendix I) rather than a set questionnaire as the former allows for flexibility and gives all parties concerned the opportunity to explore ideas and issues (Foddy 1993). Most of the questions were designed as open-ended. A decision was made to tape record interviews as this method of data collection was seen as being less intrusive. It would also be possible to "revisit" the taped interviews and further reflect on the content. Notes of my impressions and commentaries on the interviews would be written up as soon as possible afterwards.

It was planned to pre-test the interview schedule on three respondents prior to the research getting underway in order to check for suitability and cultural appropriateness. In addition, I recognised that there would be a need for interpreters but considered that this requirement would be best dealt with by each individual making their own decision as to whether one would be necessary and whom they would prefer to utilise.

The interview schedule covered questions in the following categories derived from Ritchie and Spender (1992:178-192):

1. Contextual questions which sought to identify the form and nature of the realities that existed for the refugees, the attitudes held and the nature of their experiences and needs.
2. Diagnostic questions which were used to examine the reasons for or causes of those

particular realities. In short, what factors governed particular attitudes or perceptions and why had particular needs arisen?

3. Evaluative questions which were used to appraise the effectiveness of what existed and what affected the success or otherwise of programmes or services.

4. Strategic questions that were used to help in the identification of the type of services required to meet needs, to identify what actions were needed to make programmes and services more effective and how could systems be improved or addressed?

Ethical Considerations

The ethical dilemma of studying a cultural group vastly different from one's own, especially with regard to issues of power imbalance and possible exploitation of the respondents, is acknowledged. I was aware of the need to recognise my own cultural, gender, class conditioning and bias, and the fact that all of these aspects would influence the research process that I undertook. I also accepted that it is not possible to observe another culture and claim a neutral value free stance (Crosland 1991:38; Sarantakos 1993:21-23). Researchers who adopt strong theoretical perspectives need caution on this account. It was this factor that led to the decision to utilise a grounded theory approach.

In the initial stages of this study I arranged to work in conjunction with a consultative group of the Ethiopians. This group comprised both refugees and former holders of scholarships. These individuals were not only involved in the development of the research proposal and the design of the interview schedule but provided ongoing consultation as well as a critique of the final report. I was very fortunate in that I also

had opportunities to liaise informally with various members of this group as issues, concerns and confusion arose. In addition, I considered that the inclusion of focus group forums in my study would allow for the collection of a range of opinion and information that could strengthen the findings. As this research was not designed to be gender-specific due to the smallness of the sample and consequent concerns about keeping confidentiality, I intended to have one meeting of all the refugee women. I believed that such an opportunity for discussion would help ensure that their special needs were not overlooked. I intended to hold these forums after the completion of the interviews.

A difficulty that exists in research about refugees is that the researcher needs to find ways to obtain information without causing undue pain to the respondent through the revival of memories of past trauma. Concerns may also arise on their part that family members still in the country of origin may suffer repercussions. The researcher therefore needs to allow respondents the opportunity to either decline to answer questions or to refuse to participate further in the study (Moussa 1993:41). I decided to follow that guideline in undertaking this research project.

In addition to the need to be sensitive as to the type and amount of information that the respondents wished to share, anonymity and confidentiality had to be assured. As a consequence, I decided that I would not focus on individual data but use only general demographic information set out in tables or anonymous quotes. As Moussa (1993:41) noted in her research with 16 refugee women there is a necessity to focus on the context and issues raised rather than personalizing the data. In addition, any information used would be carefully selected so that the identity of the informant would not be revealed.

Each respondent would be informed of this approach at the beginning of every interview.

I believed that my previous contact with a number of the Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees through the provision of support and friendship helped to establish some degree of credibility and trust in myself and my research intentions. For those with whom I was not so well acquainted I arranged a pre-interview meeting in order to assure them of the purpose of my research and my commitment to respecting confidentiality. In all my dealings with the group I intended to ensure that their dignity and contributions were acknowledged and respected.

Data Analysis

It was proposed that the data obtained would be analysed under three headings dealing respectively with the refugees' life in their country of origin prior to flight, their life in transition (the country of first asylum) and their resettlement in New Zealand. As Moussa (1993:50-51) warned in her analysis of the data that she had obtained from her sample of Ethiopian and Eritrean women:

"As much as I tried to be faithful to how and what I transcribed of their experiences, feelings and thoughts however, I recognised that I was the one both telling and interpreting their story. I had to learn to listen in such a manner that I could represent the women's voices as accurately as possible and to listen critically so as to be able to identify how the women made meaning of their life experiences".

I knew that I would face a similar demand in my work with the Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees. I would need to be constantly aware of distinguishing my own interpretations of their experiences from their understandings. The difficulty would lie in retaining my critical and analytical faculties throughout the research process.

The Research Process

This section incorporates the demographic profile of the sample of Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees together with a commentary on my experience of the research process. I was fortunate in that matters proceeded relatively smoothly. There were a number of refugees to interview and their willingness to co-operate was greatly appreciated.

The Demographic Profile

I interviewed only 35 of the 38 Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees as one refugee had moved to Wellington a few months after arrival, one became too seriously ill to interview and another died prior to the study getting underway. I was able to obtain comment and reflection from two Ethiopians, one male and one female, both of whom had arrived in New Zealand on educational scholarships in recent years. These respondents live in Auckland and have had additional study experience followed by employment opportunities in this country. They also have had ongoing contact with the Ethiopian and Eritrean refugee community.

With regard to this demographic profile I included ethnicity, age, gender and relationship status as all these basic variables have pertinence in discussions of human requirements.

Age and Gender

There were 24 male respondents. Their average age was 34.45 years. There was a noticeable grouping in the 35-40 age bracket (13 such individuals).

There were 11 female respondents. The average age was 26.5 years. (Seven individuals were aged in their 20s).

Ethnicity

Six ethnic groups were represented in this study. It is noted that many of the individuals interviewed considered themselves as "*Ethiopians*" in the first instance rather than giving their ethnic identity first priority.

Table 4.1 Ethnicity of Respondents

<u>Ethnicity</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Amhara	8	7
Oromo	9	1
Eritrean	-	3
Tigray	1	1
Gurage	2	-
Sidama	1	-

Two individuals claimed joint ethnicity - Amhara/Oromo and Amhara/Tigray. There were no Eritrean males but there were three Eritrean women. Whilst two of the women

strongly identified themselves as Eritrean, the other considered herself as "Ethiopian" having been born and raised in the capital Addis Ababa. Despite the differences in national identity there are strong cultural correlations between the Ethiopian and the Eritrean refugees so it was decided, with the agreement of all concerned, to include these women in the study.

Religion

The religious division amongst both the Ethiopian and Eritrean populations is roughly fifty-fifty between Christians (mainly Orthodox) and Muslim. Both nations have a historic tradition of harmonious relations between different religious groups. The Muslims are not fundamentalist in belief.

Table 4.2 : Religious Affiliation of Respondents

<u>Religion</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Christian (Orthodox)	3	6
Christian(other)	7	3
Muslim	4	2

Relationship Status

The research population included five couples. Two of these relationships have subsequently dissolved. Eight other refugees who came to New Zealand as lone individuals have subsequently reunited with partners. A similar number still have partners overseas either in Ethiopia, another country of resettlement, or in the country of first asylum. Another eight refugees have single status.

Given that two individuals came in as single parents (one and two children respectively) and that two relationships have since collapsed, there are four single parent families involved in the current study.

Apart from three of the younger children who were born in New Zealand last year, the others were born in the countries of first asylum - Sudan (six children) and Kenya (two children). Four of the respondents have children living with relatives in Ethiopia or the Sudan. The separation from partners and children continues to be an ongoing source of anxiety and grief.

The Interviews

Prior to the research proper, a pilot interview schedule was tested on three individuals to check the applicability of the research design. This test was carried out to determine cultural appropriateness - were the questions understood, could they be criticised as insensitive? The schedule had previously been discussed with the consultative group. At this stage I found that minimal changes were required. From these initial interviews I also realised the appropriateness and usefulness of using probing questioning techniques as well as the practice of rephrasing questions so that they were fully understood by the respondents.

Where it was necessary individuals chose their own interpreter. The decision to have such assistance was left to each respondent. Most regarded their proficiency in English to be of a sufficient standard to cope with the questions asked. Two of the women asked that their partners interpret, three other individuals selected close friends and another two had the company of siblings. It is important in interviewing of this nature that the interviewee and the interpreter have a relationship of trust.

The actual interviews took place over the last few months of 1995. For various reasons I was unable to complete the interviews as quickly as I had wished - many of the refugees had study or exam commitments at Polytechs or University, others had work commitments. I therefore had to await my opportunity to speak with those individuals concerned. In addition some interviews that had been arranged had to be subsequently postponed, in two unfortunate instances because of family bereavements overseas. At such times friends gather to comfort the bereaved and to sit with them so they are not alone.

Time and place of interview venue were negotiated with each respondent. In all cases the interviews were held at their home addresses where the refugees obviously felt more comfortable discussing matters that were likely to arouse strong emotional responses. Naturally this meant that freedom from interruption could not be guaranteed. I frequently arrived to find visitors already there or found that a number of friends would arrive during the course of the interview. The interview would be suspended whilst hospitality was provided. As Moussa (1993:47) commented in regard to these intrusions:

"I realised for instance, that members of their community were trying to continue their strong cultural tradition of informal visits to friends and family. This tradition is very much a part of the social and recreational life in their country".

Fortunately, due to my own experiences of their warm hospitality over the past year, I was well aware of this custom and had allowed for such possibilities in structuring my time commitments.

At the beginning of each interview I established guidelines that no names would be used, that all information given would be regarded as confidential, and that the tapes would only be held until transcription was completed. I acknowledged that they might experience strong emotional reactions during the course of the interview and that if they wished not to answer a question or to stop the process, there would be no problem in doing so. In the event there was only one occasion where an individual felt that a reply could not ^{be} made to one of the questions because of the strong feeling it aroused. Many of the respondents obviously found it an emotional experience to recollect their memories of past trauma particularly when they were well aware that friends and family are still suffering such oppression. One could only acknowledge and empathise with their feelings and be there for them and offer them support. At such times I was thankful that the interview was taking place at a stage where, to varying degrees, rapport and a relationship had already been established through my previous contact with the individuals concerned. It became very noticeable that respondents were only willing to share what was important for them when they felt confidence and trust in the interviewer.

The interviews were carried out in a casual, relaxed, style. If required questions were reworded for clarity. The need for this was governed by language proficiency and the advantages gained by a less formal verbal approach. As recent studies in ethnographic research show:

"Even when people are literate they like having the material presented to them verbally...People like to be able to discuss and clarify the meaning of the written, and generally formal words" (Fitzgerald et al 1995:4).

The interview schedule also allowed for flexibility and spontaneity. Digressions could be followed as normally ample time was normally allocated for the interviews to take place. Where there was insufficient time due to circumstances such as visitors or other commitments, arrangements were made to call again on another occasion. The time taken for interviews ranged from one and a half to four hours.

Group Forums

Two focus group forums were held, one involving all the women, the other involving six of the male respondents as well as another individual who had recently arrived in the country as a refugee. The women's group also incorporated three relatively recent arrivals who were not part of the research population but it was thought that they could have comments from their recent experiences that they would wish to contribute. I thought it appropriate to meet with the women on their own as this research was not designed to be gender-specific and I had a concern that their issues could be overlooked. This meeting held at the completion of the interviews involved a great deal of planning as it was held at my home to return hospitality. Transport for fourteen women and a number of younger children had to be co-ordinated. The discussion group went well, few new points were raised but debate and comment reinforced my perception and understanding of their situations as refugee black women.

Similarly, the focus group forum with the men also proceeded well. It was held on the completion of the interviews and again at my home in order to return hospitality. Those individuals who attended were some of the more articulate and tertiary educated refugees. By this time I had completed further supplementary reading around my

research topic, in particular with reference to the political history of Ethiopia. My understanding of many of the political events of the past two decades to a large extent had been governed by a detailed background history provided in Moussa's text **Storm and Sanctuary** (1993). My informants commented upon the inaccuracies and misinterpretations within that text with regard to the actions and political ideology of their political association, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party. They described the information given as government propaganda and referred me to an alternate text **To Kill A Generation. The Red Terror in Ethiopia** (Tola 1989) that was collated from eyewitness accounts of the human rights abuses carried out or sanctioned by the military government.

As part of the research process I subsequently obtained comment from two of the Ethiopians who had originally come to New Zealand on scholarships. My conversations with these individuals provided an opportunity to discuss their experiences both in Ethiopia and in New Zealand and, given their ongoing involvement with their fellow nationals, provided an opportunity to contrast their experiences with those of the latter group.

Data Analysis

At an early stage, given the grounded theory approach which I had adopted, I familiarized myself with the material gathered from the interviews, the commentary and critique thereof, and listed key ideas and recurrent themes. This initial identification of key issues provided a framework around which the material was sorted. I was continually aware of the dichotomy "*between the need to narrow down analysis through*

category construction and to allow some possibility of reinterpretation of the same data"

(Silverman 1993:41). The use of tapes to some extent allowed me some flexibility.

The data was analysed under three general headings dealing respectively with the refugees' life in their country of origin prior to flight, their life in transition (the country of first asylum) and their resettlement in New Zealand. In all three areas the focus soon became the recognition of their needs and the degree to which they were appropriately satisfied. I increasingly found Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs referred to in the literature review as particularly pertinent as a framework in my analysis of the collected data. Maslow has proposed that all human beings have needs that they seek to address or resolve and that these needs range from the basic requirements for food and shelter to emotional and psychological needs such as a wish for security and wellbeing.

This chapter has been a discussion of the methodological approach used and an account of my experiences of working with the refugees during the actual research process. Comment was also made on the method of data analysis utilised. These findings are presented in the following three chapters and are grouped into three broad areas- the refugees' recollections of life in Ethiopia and Eritrea prior to flight, their experiences in the countries of first asylum and finally their resettlement in New Zealand. In all these areas, the focus was on the recognition of the refugees' needs and the extent to which they were satisfactorily and appropriately addressed.

CHAPTER FIVE

RECOLLECTIONS OF LIFE IN ETHIOPIA AND ERITREA PRIOR TO FLIGHT

Introduction

The initial phase of each interview centred on the respondents' lives in their own countries. The questions asked were focused on how both basic biological needs as well as more complex requirements were met for each individual in areas such as healthcare, education, employment and social and emotional supports. It was noted that the responses obtained were illustrative of the cultural values and understandings held by the respondents.

Residence

Unlike McSpadden's (1987) sample, the greater percentage of whom were highly educated urban dwellers, almost half the refugees in this present study (16 individuals) came from a rural background. Many of these lived in extreme isolation or in small villages numbers of kilometres from the nearest town. Public transport was generally non-existent and the most frequent modes of transport were by foot, horseback or horse and cart. Fifteen individuals were brought up in small to large towns and four of the refugees were raised in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa.

Place of residence has an influential bearing on educational and employment opportunities, consequent socio-economic status and access to health care. Both Ethiopia

and Eritrea are Third World countries. Almost eighty percent of both populations live in rural areas and suffer disadvantage with regard to the fulfilment of social and personal needs. It was quite noticeable, in my interviewing of the refugees, that the urban dwellers had a sophistication derived from education and family social background that was denied to the rural inhabitants.

Those who resided in the country areas usually lived in the more traditional dwelling which consisted of one large room with kitchen facilities. Sleeping rooms were separate and clustered around the main building giving the effect of a compound. Such establishments often housed a number of extended family members. City and town dwellers described their homes as similar in structure to those of New Zealand though of different construction, being fabricated from adobe or concrete rather than wood. Most respondents had been happy with their living accommodation in their own country.

The majority of the respondents had been brought up by their parents or in a few cases where the mother was deceased, a grandparent. It was customary in Ethiopia and Eritrea for children to stay in their parents' house until marriage, apart from the time spent boarding by some individuals during their high school years. Most of the respondents lived with their parents up until the time they fled their country. A few had left home earlier due to their incarceration as political prisoners and the fact that both they and their families were subsequently subjected to continued harassment when they were released.

Healthcare

With regard to health and medical care, rural dwellers were distinctly disadvantaged. In these areas there was a necessary reliance on traditional methods of healing, for

example a massage technique for fractures. Vast distances to travel and the lack of transport were the greatest problems in accessing medical care. The sick had to travel by horse and cart (if available) or a wooden stretcher. An informant noted that western medicines could often be bought from itinerant traders.

Rural clinics were established by the military government. These provided elementary medical care but were limited in number. Clinics were also available in the small towns but were described as generally offering poor quality medical care and as having long queues for treatment. The larger towns and cities had hospitals. Whilst care was heavily subsidized or free for the poor, other patients were charged at various levels according to income. Little private medical care existed.

In the view of one of the respondents, with regard to healthcare Ethiopia was a "*culture in transition*" with a growing demand for Western medical practices "*that could unfortunately ignore the benefits of traditional skills*".

The access to medical care for the respondents was governed by place of residence. Rural dwellers had few facilities available to them and had counted themselves fortunate that they had not required intensive or urgent treatment. City dwellers, on the other hand, had ready access to such assistance. It was noticeable that all the refugees commented on the increased demand for medical services created by the years of warfare and that the military had priority for treatment over the civilian population.

Parents' Occupation

Besides being economically underdeveloped both Ethiopia and Eritrea have continued as very traditional societies. In discussing their parents' occupations, I found that most

of the refugees described their mothers (if still alive) as housewives. There were four exceptions. One woman owned a store, one attended a market, and one (post separation) owned a hotel. All three continued to have responsibility for household tasks in addition to their employment. The fourth woman had been a teacher for a lengthy period of time but after having a number of children she had relinquished that position to care for her family. There was seen to be a strong traditional delineation between male and female responsibilities as exemplified by the following comments from the respondents.

"Boys after the age of seven years, they are not allowed in the kitchen".

"In Ethiopia a man does not go into the kitchen".

Cities and larger towns, however, were regarded as somewhat more liberal in regard to the role of women (Pankhurst 1995:183). One of my contacts who was not a refugee had graduated from University as an engineer. She commented, however, that she had been somewhat of a pioneer in her efforts during the late 1980s and that her family had not really approved of her career choice.

"It was not a woman's job but I wanted to be different".

From discussions I learnt that it was common practice that the women of the wealthier classes had servants to carry out their domestic duties and that rural women were not confined within their homes but assisted in caring for both livestock and crops or gardens. However, with the exception of paid housekeeping help, housework was universally seen as the exclusive realm of female family members.

People's achievements in life, particularly in economically disadvantaged countries, are often governed by their social background and their educational opportunities. Given that McSpadden (1987:816) had described Ethiopia as a status by ascription society, I was interested in ascertaining the social background of each respondent, in particular through the father's occupation. It would be usual that the status of this parent would be reflected in the expectations surrounding the education and employment prospects of their children.

Table 5.1 Occupation of Respondents' Fathers

Fathers' Occupation	Number of respondents
Merchant/businessman	7
Farmer	14
Military Office	2
Councillor/manager	2
Nurse/priest	2
Machinist/mechanic/driver etc.	6

(One other dead, one other occupation unknown).

Tebeje (1989:9) has described of Ethiopian urban areas in particular:

"Education was coming to be highly valued in Ethiopia. Since the end of the Italian occupation of Ethiopia in 1941, there has been an historical process increasing the value placed on Western type schooling as a vehicle for increased social mobility and status for self, family and nation".

Schooling particularly in urban areas offered an opportunity not only to fulfil class and family expectations but also a chance to increase privilege, status and responsibility (Levine 1965: 109, 115, 190). The children of city dwellers, especially those of higher occupational status, reported strong parental and family encouragement for them to achieve highly at their school and university studies (if undertaken) as well as any subsequent careers.

"From every corner of my family, my parents and brothers were all for me to have further education...that was my ambition".

One woman was strongly encouraged by her father to work hard at her studies...*"to be first in class"*.

On the other hand rural dwellers were fortunate if they had opportunity for more than a rudimentary education, particularly those who lived in isolated circumstances. The expectations for these individuals were that they would maintain the family tradition of working the land.

Level of Education Achieved

In investigating how the need for educational opportunity was met in Ethiopia and Eritrea, there is a noticeably sharp division between those of urban and rural backgrounds. Individuals from isolated areas were often unable to access education and remained largely illiterate in their own language. For those who lived in a larger village or small town there was a generally an opportunity for elementary education whilst

those from the larger urban areas had access to both elementary and high school education.

Women in the more remote rural areas were still subject to the prejudice against education for women. The discussion groups commented that although the legal age of marriage in Ethiopia was 16 years, it was not unknown for girls to be married at ages as young as nine or ten in rural areas. In the cities, young women were encouraged to become educated despite the continuance of the traditional expectation that marriage and motherhood were the most appropriate goals for women.

The respondents estimated that approximately ten percent of the Ethiopian population completed high school and, of these students, another two percent passed entrance exams and were accepted for university. They said that in comparison to New Zealand, Ethiopians generally start and finish their education at a later age - the latter about the age of 18 or 19 years. Grade 12, the final year was viewed as the equivalent of the New Zealand sixth form. A similar education system existed in Eritrea.

It was quite common for the high school students to live in boarding or flatting situations with friends, siblings or extended family members during those school years, either for convenience or for access to more suitable courses.

Overall, it was those respondents who lived in urban areas who attained either the higher grades at school or entrance to tertiary education. Their achievements had some congruence with the occupational positions held by their fathers. McSpadden (1987:803) has noted in her research that in a country such as Ethiopia with sharp distinctions

between economic and professional groups and with access to secondary and higher education related to these status differentials, the occupations of the fathers is an excellent predictor of the education likely to be achieved by their offspring.

Table 5.2 Level of Education Achieved by Respondents

Level of Education achieved	Male	Female
Nil schooling	1	2
Elementary schooling only	2	3*
High School to Grade 10	4	1
High School to Grade 11	1	-
Grade 12 achieved/completed	14	7

* One woman did not complete her elementary schooling

Five individuals (male) attended vocational or teachers' training colleges and gained qualifications; one individual attended but did not complete. Five men began university degree courses but only one individual completed his course. One female respondent attended but failed to complete. All these failures to complete their education were ascribed to the existing repressive political situation.

Students commanded influence and respect in both Eritrean and Ethiopian society. All these individuals had expectations that on the completion of a good education they would obtain high status employment and would be able to help their family as well as work for the good of their country (Moussa 1993:110). For all too many of the respondents in this study, these desires were unfulfilled. Almost every individual

experienced disruption to his/her schooling or further education. Some who were high school students were imprisoned for a number of years because of their involvement with the EPRP, some were unable to continue with their studies because of security police harassment of themselves and other family members. For others, the atmosphere of terror and fear made it impossible for them to continue with their learning.

Facility with the English language

English is treated as a school subject throughout the elementary school years in both Ethiopia and Eritrea. It is the medium of instruction in all educational institutes from high school level onwards. All students have to pass an examination testing English language facility prior to entering high school and again at University level.

The respondents reported that whilst English is spoken in schools, Amharic is used for everyday communication. Those who do not go on to further education (university or vocational college), or fail to find employment where English is required, quickly lose their ease of communication in this language. Only a small number of the refugees interviewed had experienced further opportunities to utilise their skills in English. The two refugees who had been brought up in Eritrea had little command of either Amharic or English but were fluent in the language of their own ethnic group.

Employment

The respondents' hopes and needs for gainful and fulfilling employment were disrupted by the country's repressive political situation. Only two individuals spent any lengthy

period of time within an occupation. Most of those who did find employment entered work areas far below what their educational achievements would have normally entitled them.

The situations of the respondents on completion of their education are noted in the following table:

Table 5.3 Post-Education Situations of Respondents

Stayed home briefly before fleeing the country	5
Teacher	3
Other professions	4
Unskilled	6
Farmer	5
Got married	1
Conscripted	1
Imprisoned	2*

*(NB other imprisoned individuals returned to finish schooling)

Other respondents left their country of origin either direct from educational institutes or were still children on departure.

Emotional needs

Respondents were asked whom they turned to if they had problems or concerns. Almost all of the refugees said that they looked to their parents in the first instance. Parents

provided the major financial, practical and emotional support to their children backed up by members of the extended family.

"If you have any problems you ask your family".

"The family is very important. In my country there is some assistance from the State for school fees and university fees, for example, but personal expenses come from your family".

In return individuals had obligations towards their families. The respondents commented that Ethiopians learned very early the cultural value that family members take responsibility for each other. For example, once older children completed their education they were expected to assume responsibility for their younger siblings. Moussa (1993:97) has noted that the responsibilities involved varied according to the different social class positions of the family and whether they lived in an urban or rural area.

"You are very unfortunate if you have no family. Ethiopia is not a social welfare state. If you have a job and good salary you are expected to look after your family, to give them a job, money...It is an extended family situation".

Neighbours also held an important place in Ethiopian culture and many of the respondents recalled the support that they received before fear and suspicion became rampant.

"In my country everybody helps each other, neighbours help neighbours, children help parents. If you are away from home, neighbours are the best people to help you".

Traditionally, neighbours had coffee together, helped each other when illness or disaster occurred and if people moved home, they assisted in the settling in process.

"In four to six months neighbours are like family...they come and visit you a lot...they help with your children...you will learn their language".

"They are very helpful in our area when you get sick or have an accident. Neighbours will come and help the family".

A number of refugees also cited friends as part of their emotional support system particularly those friends with whom they had flatted during their high school years.

"It is a good life, everything is shared".

With these friends they would talk about life, their studies and politics. Throughout the 1970s many of the Ethiopian youth had become involved in idealist political activity through being introduced to ideological philosophies by their siblings and older friends. More than half the respondents were involved directly or indirectly with the EPRP and most of these had received knowledge of this political association from siblings or student friends whilst still in high school.

Social Activities

In reflecting upon the social and cultural activities that they and their families engaged in, most respondents thought back to the period of time before the terror of the military regime. Social activities for the respondents centred around their family, extended family and neighbours. Meeting each other for coffee was a traditional and frequent social event.

"To drink coffee with each other is a sign of intimacy" (Moussa 1993:100).

Life's rites of passage - births, marriages and deaths were marked by celebrations and gatherings often involving a large number of people but everyone contributed towards the festivities. Religious observance in Ethiopia is approximately fifty-fifty between Christian (generally Orthodox) and Muslim. Many colourful and traditional religious festivals are observed. Besides participating in these observances, some individuals amongst the respondents also joined church and youth group activities.

A number of the respondents said that they became involved in student movements as political pressures increased. Over half had some involvement with the EPRP either directly or by association through family members. Those who fled their countries later said that they had avoided political activity or association through fear.

"When I am in Ethiopia, when we are studying we are not allowed to talk about the government or politics".

Those Ethiopians who arrived in New Zealand on scholarships or grants also stated that they had avoided political comment or involvement in their own country because politics were "*confused*" and "*dangerous to become involved in*".

Some individuals had little time for other pursuits especially where reduced family circumstances meant there was a need to combine work commitments with study. Others yet again became too afraid to become involved in any extra activities in case it drew unwelcome attention.

The Personal Effects of Oppression

For many of those refugees interviewed, the advent of the military government was a watershed that separated the peace, happiness and security of their youth from the repression, terror and carnage of the post-revolutionary years. Similarly to the respondents in Moussa's earlier study (1993:93), the Ethiopians and Eritreans that I interviewed recollected with a deep yearning the love, stability, support, trust and intimacy of the time before the military government. In hindsight their earlier life was viewed as a golden era where they lacked for nothing, either physically or emotionally.

"Before the revolution, I was happy with my life".

As noted earlier, respondents had commented on the existence of close family ties and the values of caring and supporting each other that had been learnt within both their nuclear and extended families. After 1974 their homes were no longer places offering

security or a centre for family gatherings, celebrations and sharing. Homes were frequently ransacked by the police, Kebele officials or security forces, and family members were frequently forcibly seized and taken away for interrogation, imprisonment or execution. Entire families were persecuted either physically or psychologically because a family member was suspected of being a counter-revolutionary.

"I was very happy at home with my family before the military government took over. My family was well off, my father travelled for his business. His stores were nationalized. He got very angry. I am always scared for him. My eldest brother was known to be in politics, they arrested him...he escaped. Other family members were arrested and tortured".

Respondents were torn with fear for their families. All of those whom I interviewed talked movingly about an atmosphere of fear, mistrust and suspicion and how it had affected their lives and those of other family members. Freedom of movement, thought and opinion were all denied.

"I did not want to be away from my family but I was forced to leave my home because of my opinion".

"If you are suspected of being in a political group, you are killed. I like my country, but there is no peace...it is too difficult to talk about. I was put into prison just on suspicion...no court, no rights. Hundreds and thousands of people have been killed. My

friends aged 17 were killed. They dug holes inside the prison, after they finished digging they stood around then the guards opened up with automatics".

Under such a repressive regime most of the respondents had little opportunity to complete their education, to take up desired employment or to maintain their livelihood in farming areas if rural dwellers. Terror and despair affected motivation.

"The country is in so much trouble. The war is ruining the countryside, destroying villages, killing off so many of the new generation...you are powerless to do anything".

As the Dergue's war efforts intensified, more and more of the population were conscripted into fighting fellow Ethiopians.

"Without peace you cannot do anything. Everything is to the war...all the young to the military".

For many flight was the only option.

CHAPTER SIX

FLIGHT AND COUNTRIES OF FIRST ASYLUM

Flight

Refugees are forced to flee from their country because of imminent danger or persecution. As Moussa (1993:145) has noted, secrecy and planning were the key elements in arranging flight from the country. This caution was reinforced by a 1982 decree of the **Dergue** which stated that fleeing the country was an act of treason, the punishment for which was 5-25 years imprisonment and hard labour. In some instances, the death penalty could be invoked (Humana 1986:89). Deciding to leave the country therefore involved real risks, not only for the individual concerned but also for family members left behind who could be accused of complicity in illegal acts against the state. Often the refugees would not notify their family of their intentions in order to offer them some protection.

"When you are forced to flee from your country, when there is civil war, sometimes you are not able to take all your family members with you...so you have to leave them, cannot even tell them".

With regard to their reasons for leaving, I asked the refugees to consider their perceptions of their lives in Ethiopia - what had been their hopes for the future, had these still been attainable, and what had been the major factor which influenced their decision to leave?

The reasons for leaving generally encompassed the following areas: immediate personal danger including the fear of conscription; no hope for the future; depression about any ability to achieve education qualifications or employment; and a wish to escape the dangers of war. For all of the respondents there were diminishing opportunities to meet their basic human requirements. All these reasons must be considered against the backdrop of terror and devastation that characterizes a nation at war with itself.

In summary, the main reasons given by the refugees for their decision to leave were as follows:

Table 6.1 Respondents' Reasons for Flight

Reason	Number of mentions
In danger due to association with EPRP	18
Personal safety (other than above)	10
Fear of conscription	3
Following husband	3
Famine	1

Often individuals mentioned more than one reason for their flight but my focus was on the specific circumstance that had led to their decision to leave.

Departure of refugees from Ethiopia and Eritrea

The years of departure for this particular group of refugees ranged from 1980 to 1992.

The following table lists the year of departure, the number and ages of the refugees concerned and their country of destination.

Table 6.2 Departure of Respondents

Year of

Departure	Number	Ages*	Destination
1980	2	17,18	Sudan
1981	2	18,25	Sudan
1982	1	26	Sudan
1983	1	20	Sudan
1984	4	22,24,24,31	Sudan
1985	5	13,21,23,24,25	Sudan
1988	3	19,22,33	Sudan
1989	2	20,30	Sudan
1990	7	17,18,19,25,30,30,31	Sudan(1) Kenya (6)
1991	6	17,18,18,22,26,26	Sudan(1) Kenya (5)
1992	2	20,24	Sudan

* Some of the ages given are approximations as memory has been affected by the stress and trauma of the refugee experience.

The youth of these refugees is noteworthy as it reflects the circumstance that many were involved in, or affected by, politics at high school age. At the time of departure fourteen refugees were aged 20 years or less, twelve were aged 21-25 years, six were aged 26-30 years and three were aged 31-33 years.

The majority of the refugees (24 individuals) went to the Sudan as their country of first asylum. Most of these refugees had affiliation to the EPRP. Of the later departures (1990 onwards), 11 refugees went to camps in Kenya. These individuals were from the Oromo ethnic group which had become subjected to harsh repression by the military government in an effort to eradicate nationalist liberation patriots.

Thirteen of the refugees left with a friend or a group of friends, eleven left by themselves, seven departed with family members and four travelled with a partner.

All of the refugees described their flight journey as a long dangerous venture. In the first instance they had to secretly get themselves near a border area then liaise with local guides for the final part of the journey. Those with EPRP connections generally received assistance from Party guides. Other refugees had to pay for private guides (\$US100 appeared to be the going rate, a staggering sum given that the average gross annual income in the country was substantially less).

The journeys took anything from ten days to one month walking only at night to avoid army and security patrols. Throughout there was the continual fear of being apprehended. The land they travelled through was difficult and dangerous with little available water. Wild animals, poisonous insects and human predators abounded. There was always a concern as to whether the guides were trustworthy, traitors or thieves. Several of the men commented that the flight journey was particularly dangerous for women because of their vulnerability to rape by the guides or by soldiers, police and security forces at the borders. Men were also at risk of imprisonment and ill-treatment when they sought political refuge.

Fleeing their country involved many risks for the refugees but all had come to accept that remaining in their homeland was a certain death sentence. Moussa (1993:162) has pointed out that the decision to leave has high personal costs - the separation from family and friends and the fear that their flight could have serious repercussions on those left behind. The refugees fled a country where terror and repression were rampant, where they could foresee no future or even a continuing existence for themselves had they remained. Many of the more educated and politically aware refugees hoped that in their country of first asylum they would be able to continue to work towards the establishment of peace and democracy in their homeland, particularly through their links with the EPRP. They also hoped to make known internationally the frightening extent of human rights abuse that was occurring both in Ethiopia and Eritrea. Most noticeable in listening to their stories was the courage, determination and decisiveness with which they acted.

Countries of First Asylum

Twenty-four of the refugees fled to the Sudan, the other eleven individuals found their initial sanctuary in Kenya. Their experiences in these two countries of first asylum were markedly different. It is interesting to compare how, and to what extent, their basic and secondary level needs were met during the transition periods.

Asylum Experiences in the Sudan

The refugees' duration in asylum in the Sudan ranged from two-fourteen years. Of the 24 refugees who found asylum in the Sudan only four remained in the refugee camp

sited near Gederef for any length of time (one and a half, two, three and 13 years respectively).

"The conditions in the camp were very bad, there was only little water, sometimes no food. There was a lot of sickness, malaria..."

There was little medical care available and overcrowding and lack of sanitation only aggravated the poor conditions.

Most refugees in this study stayed in the refugee camp for a period of time sufficient enough to obtain (with bribes) a refugee identity card and travel permit. Then taking advantage of the Sudanese Government's leniency with regard to restrictions, they sought more advantageous surroundings such as the town of Gederef, Khartoum the capital of the Sudan, or various agricultural worksites.

Ahmed Karadawi (1983:539) has noted that approximately 60% of African refugees are self-settled in that they do not have residence in refugee camps and are not in receipt of aid, being dependent on either their own ability to get employment, traditional African hospitality or ethnic links across borders. The two former factors were important for the dispersal of this study's refugees from the Gederef camp.

Employment of one form or another was a necessary prerequisite to the freedom to live outside the camp. The cost of living was very high. Respondents described food and rent as exorbitant. The latter frequently resulted in the overcrowding of rental accommodation (Smock 1982:262 and comment from respondents). Knowledge of

Arabic was necessary for working with or for the Sudanese. A few individuals were fortunate in obtaining employment with foreign companies or international relief agencies. These refugees were generally able to maintain fluency in their English language ability.

The range of employment opportunities taken up included farm work, cleaning, assistant farm management, secretarial work, electronic repair work, security guard, mechanical repairs and hairdressing.

A number of refugees both male and female with EPRP affiliation worked full or part-time for the Party. Some received financial support, others worked voluntarily. A few individuals who had other employment elected to work part-time in order to devote energy to the cause and to assist fellow refugees. Throughout the earlier period of the asylum years spent in the Sudan, the EPRP was treated favourably and was allowed to exist as a political organization with offices, party membership and equipment. Members also enjoyed a freedom to travel within the country on Party business.

Unlike Moussa's respondents (1993:166) who all saw their stay in the country of first asylum as temporary until they could find a country where they could be assured of permanent residence and work or study possibilities, many of the EPRP members believed that they were still working towards the establishment of democracy in Ethiopia and an eventual return to their own country. For a long period of time therefore, they considered that their lives in this country of first asylum had purpose and objectives and they nursed hopes that their period of exile would not be of long duration.

Living within the Sudanese Community

There was a variety of opinion on the degree to which their needs were answered as refugees resident in the Sudan. The physical conditions in the Sudan were very arduous.

"Life was hard in Sudan...it was very hot. My whole body cannot cope and I reacted badly to the sun".

"It is very hard and difficult to be a refugee. You are exposed to a new people and a new culture".

Living in this fundamentalist Islamic nation required a cultural readjustment on the part of the Ethiopians and Eritreans, the majority of whom were Orthodox Christian. Whilst the ban on alcohol affected both men and women, cultural alienation was expressed more strongly by the women as they were subjected to the social construction of the role of women that prevailed in Sudanese society (Moussa 1993: 174).

"It is hard living as a Christian in a Muslim country. It is very hard for a woman. If your head is not covered the Police will take you to their station...it is very expensive to buy the cover for your head".

It was extremely difficult for single women to operate independently in such a society. Some of those who lacked partners were fortunate to have the support and protection of other EPRP members. Others within the refugee community also provided great emotional support. Newcomers received assistance from those who had been in

residence for a longer period particularly with regard to housing, employment, permits, and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees' bureaucratic processes relating to resettlement applications. These longer term residents were described as being a source of comfort and mutual aid.

"We shared whatever we had including food and a place to stay".

Whilst the refugees thought that the Sudanese Government created problems for them, they all agreed that the Sudanese people were *"very good, very kind"*. They were described as friendly neighbours who helped you and extended hospitality. The South Sudanese Christian Church also provided assistance to the more greatly disadvantaged such as women managing on their own with children. For many of the refugees:

"Life in Sudan before the troubles was not too bad".

Moussa (1993:177) has noted that the reception that refugees experience in asylum countries is largely dependent on: state refugee policies; the relationship of the host country to the refugee-producing country; the economic situation of the host community in relation to its ability to accommodate refugees, and the attitudes of its citizens towards refugees. An influx of numerous refugees can have a negative effect on the host country's resources and economic infrastructure (Nanda 1985:61). The Sudan, as one of the 25 poorest countries in the world, was particularly vulnerable to such pressures. The worsening economic situation in the Sudan in the late 1980s led to outbreaks of resentment towards refugees. Some of the respondents described the refugees as having been made scapegoats for the country's political and economic problems.

Matters were to get worse. In the early 1990s the political situation for most of this study's refugees living in the Sudan changed detrimentally. In 1991, with the tacit approval of a new Sudanese government, several of the EPRP members living in the Gederef area were kidnapped by Ethiopian security forces and were taken back to their own country where they were held in prison and tortured or killed. The Sudanese government subsequently declared the EPRP an illegal organisation, closed its offices and confiscated all of its equipment and vehicles. Fearing for their safety, members were forced into hiding, unable to carry out their political work or to use their permits to travel.

Faced with persecution and restriction once again, the EPRP made applications on behalf of its members to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees requesting resettlement as Protection cases. Applications accepted under this definition are regarded as priority cases because it is believed that the refugees concerned are at risk of either incarceration, refoulement (forced return to the country of persecution) and/or death. The refugees were eventually interviewed by a representative of the New Zealand Immigration Service during the period 1993-1994. They were accepted as Protection cases and arrived in this country later that year.

Before the hardening of attitude on the part of the Sudanese Government, the refugees had lived a lifestyle that had allowed for a degree of freedom as well as the ability to provide for some of their basic practical and psychological needs. In addition some refugees formed relationships with other refugees. Twelve new relationships were established in the Sudan but due to various circumstances only three couples eventually came to New Zealand together.

For a period of time these refugees had believed that they could still work towards positive change in their own country. The loss of the opportunity to be independent and the return of fear and oppression were causes both of despair and the consequent decision to apply for resettlement.

Asylum Experiences in Kenya

Life in Kenya as the country of first asylum was a vastly different experience for those refugees involved. Eleven individuals sought sanctuary in this country- the periods of refuge ranged from three to four years. These refugees also underwent hardship and fear on their journey from Ethiopia. For most of the members of this small group, flight first involved travel to a border region then a two to three week walk through waterless dangerous bush with the fear of apprehension foremost in their minds. Their reception at the border by Kenyan police or security guards was often violent and abusive.

"There are many refugees in Kenya. It is not very good, especially for the women. There are a lot of problems. The Kenyans are brutal, they beat up people".

Living circumstances in Kenya were vastly different from that of the Sudan. Refugees were confined to residence in the camps. Only two individuals managed to avoid this restriction for an extended period of time. Most of the refugees passed through four of the Kenyan camps - Marsabit, Olgaia, Tika and Utange - being moved on by camp closures. In their experience, the further the camps were from the cities, the worse the conditions were for the refugees.

Conditions at Marsabit, the initial camp, were described as very primitive. There was little food available, the inhabitants were rationed to one meal per day (one cup of grain) for which they queued for two to three hours. One individual said he possessed one set of clothes for the whole period of time that he spent in that camp, about 12 months. Lack of sanitation contributed to sickness but there was little medical help available. Violence was endemic in the camp and many refugees were subject to beatings by the police.

The second camp that the refugees were shifted to was the desert camp at Olgaia. Conditions there were described as insufferably hot. There, the informants stated, refugees were persistently robbed by bandits and as Christians suffered persecution from Muslims. Tika and Utange refugee camps both less remote were apparently somewhat of an improvement although many refugees still suffered from illness and disease, particularly malaria. They continued to live in tents in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions.

There was little of a positive nature in the relationships of the refugees with the inhabitants of the host country.

"The Kenyan people, sometimes they don't like us. They make a fire to our tent. The United Nations give us tents. We make the tent like a home then they burn it down".

There were few opportunities for gainful employment. Refugees recollected months and years of inactivity.

"I can do nothing. I just sit and think".

One individual was employed for a short period of time through missionary contacts. He and another individual also busied themselves with positions of responsibility within the camp as Ethiopian Committee members. Another refugee took advantage of a small business opening within the camp environs. There were no opportunities, however, to learn new skills or to maintain previously achieved standards in their English language ability. Most of the refugees learnt some Somali and Kenyan to communicate with others in the camp.

With regard to emotional and psychological supports, the refugees said that they were constantly in a state of anxiety because due to their restricted circumstances they were unable to communicate for many months at a time with partners or family in Ethiopia. Three refugees eventually arranged for their wives to travel to Kenya from Ethiopia-one has since followed to New Zealand. One wife is still in a refugee camp (she was unfortunately at another camp at the time when the resettlement interviews took place) and another had returned to Ethiopia from Kenya. One individual met and married his wife in Kenya. The men concerned are seeking reunification with their wives.

The Ethiopian refugee group formed a community committee in the camp to represent their interests and to provide support to their compatriots. With the extreme degree of deprivation that existed however, there was little that could be done to improve their circumstances with regard to basic living requirements. Photos of the camps that I have sighted illustrate the poor living conditions of those resident. They also show that, despite their emaciated physical condition, the refugees were infused with an indomitable spirit and will for survival.

Because of the harsh nature of asylum in Kenya and the restrictions they endured, all these refugees said that they had sought resettlement from the early days of their arrival

in the camps. They had undergone unsuccessful interviews with Canada but were accepted by New Zealand in 1994. These refugees arrived in this country in November of that year.

With regard to their resettlement applications to New Zealand all of the refugees interviewed expressed appreciation that they had received quick if not immediate notification of approval of their case and that travel arrangements had followed within a few months at the most. They felt that the fact that they had been provided with early information as to the success of their applications gave them some recognition as individuals in their own right.

The respondents, in fact, had been very fortunate as Ethiopian and Eritrean resettlement world wide has generally proceeded on a modest and limited scale hindered by small quotas and, in many instances, bureaucratic exit and entry regulations that have inhibited the speedy departure of resettlement cases from countries of first asylum. The arrival of the Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees in New Zealand owed much to one individual, Sue Elliott, Head of Department of the Auckland Institute of Technology's School of Refugee Education. A chance meeting with a compatriot of theirs at a conference in the United Kingdom had alerted her to the refugees' hazardous existence in the asylum countries. She subsequently lobbied both the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and the New Zealand Immigration Service over a period of more than two years to have a number of these refugees accepted as Protection cases.

The Refugee Identity

For all refugees there is a time when they realise how much they have lost. This is especially true for those who can envisage no return to their own country in the near

future. It is at this time that they may internalise the identity of "refugee". For some refugees this time of realisation may be postponed, particularly if they have had serious involvement in ongoing political activity and dreams of repatriation to follow. Indeed, perhaps for many of the EPRP members, there had been a sense of pride in their exile for they had struggled and were still continuing to struggle for the political freedom of their country.

In discussing Moussa's perspectives of refugee identity with the men's focus group, I found that they all identified strongly with the tremendous sense of loss and powerlessness experienced by the women in that study. Moussa (1993:168) had commented with regard to her respondents that:

"The comparable term for the word refugee in the language of these women is sedet and the individual refugee is called a sedetagna. The term is used for a displaced person, someone who has lost everything by moving away from their home or who is in exile. The word, they said, evokes a deep feeling of sadness because 'you have lost everything that is dear to you'".

All of the refugees, including the women, with whom I discussed this concept clearly identified with this description. All stated that the knowledge that there would be no return to their own country, that they were to embark on a long journey to sanctuary and resettlement amongst people so different to their own culture- these facts brought home to them the realisation that they were refugees.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RESETTLEMENT IN NEW ZEALAND

Introduction

Acceptance for resettlement is just the first stage in what is most often a long process of re-adjustment. In the following sections I record and comment on the response of the group I studied. The areas addressed are the orientation programme, the assistance of the Refugee and Migrant Service, sponsorship, the provision of English language classes, education, employment, finances, housing, reunification and social support systems. The questions in this part of the interview schedule were directed towards ascertaining how effectively the refugees' practical, emotional and psychological needs were met during resettlement both through their own efforts and through the support of both statutory and non-statutory service providers.

Expectations

Very few of the refugees had any knowledge of New Zealand prior to their interview with the representative from the New Zealand Immigration Service. Most of the respondents recollected being told that New Zealand was a small, sparsely populated peaceful country, not too hot, but green like Ethiopia and with a democratic government.

After these interviews most individuals made some effort to acquaint themselves with other facts about their intended country of resettlement. They talked to friends and listened to the BBC and the Voice of America (Amharic Service) radio programmes.

Unfortunately very little commentary on New Zealand was heard through these sources. Those who had access to written materials such as books, atlases and encyclopaedias used those opportunities to increase their knowledge.

Given their varying degrees of prior knowledge, I asked the respondents what expectations they had harboured with regard to their intended resettlement in New Zealand. A few stated that they had no real expectations of this country before their arrival. They were just grateful to leave behind the hazards and risks of the countries of first asylum. Most of the expectations held centred around New Zealand's reputation as a peaceful democratic nation.

"I looked forward to living in a peaceful green country with human rights, equality, the freedom to do what one wishes and no persecution".

Such remarks were often expanded by the additional comment that the refugees had found it hard to believe in such a sanctuary because of the hardships and repression which they had endured. Given the aridness and heat of the countries of first asylum, all looked forward to a country similar in temperate climate and green vegetation to their country of origin.

Many of the respondents had hopes in regard to employment and educational opportunities. For a few, there were some unrealistic expectations about the economy of New Zealand which had been influenced by their impressions of the United States.

"I thought Auckland would be a big city with big buildings and good jobs. That it would be easy for me. Now it is good...the first few months were very difficult".

The Mangere Reception Centre

Refugees stay in the hostel at the Mangere Reception Centre for approximately six weeks. Overall there was unanimous approval for the orientation programme. The hostel was seen as providing:

"A good transition period, a place to repair psychologically. All have been through trauma, leaving family, children behind".

Other descriptions given of the time spent in the orientation programme reflect the terror and hardship left behind.

"Peace. That is our main thought".

"We did not have to think about how to survive"

Although it was laughingly commented by one group that the appearance of the Mangere Reception Centre was reminiscent of the refugee camps in the Sudan, people generally expressed satisfaction with their physical surroundings and the personal assistance they were given. Only the food received unfavourable comment and that was by the first intake. They did not consider it the problem of the hostel but only a matter of taste.

"It is not the fault of the hostel but it is our culture to like our food spicy. African people are not all the same".

This group said that they survived on fruit, bread and milk. Subsequent intakes indicated that they had no difficulty with the food supplied.

Given that at the time of interviewing it had been at least one year since some of the refugees had been in the Centre, and almost 18 months for others with intervening resettlement experiences in between, some gentle reminding was frequently required to gauge the different aspects of the orientation programme. Most of the refugees considered that the information given to them through the programme was extremely useful.

"It is necessary to know about this country (New Zealand), the way of life. Before someone joins this society, they need to know the culture, the social conventions".

"The orientation was very important for us as we were the first (Ethiopians). We had no friends to help us".

Programme areas mentioned specifically and favourably were the introduction to New Zealand society and Maori culture, the visits by New Zealand Income Support and New Zealand Employment Service with information about banking and benefit entitlements and the English language classes. For those with some ability in English, the latter were regarded as good revision; for those with poor or no English and incapacitated by a lack of literacy skills in their own language, the classes gave an initial boost of confidence.

The respondents were also glad of the provision of medical and dental checks. They were aware that long term physical and emotional deprivation in the camps or other

substandard living conditions, together with poor nutrition and exposure to disease and injury, could have had negative effects on their wellbeing. For some, the waiting for results was a time of stress.

"What disease would they find? Would they send us away"?

Overall the respondents viewed the orientation programme as an essential part of the resettlement process and they were very satisfied with the quality of the material presented and the tutors involved. Concerns expressed related to the more disadvantaged amongst the refugees, those with little or no English ability who were often further detrimentally affected by lack of literacy skills. The programme was viewed as too brief for these individuals.

The Refugee and Migrant Service

All of the refugees were aware of the support and variety of assistance offered to them by the Refugee and Migrant Service (RMS) social workers. They knew that the Service also linked sponsors and refugees and would provide similar help in addressing resettlement needs in the interim if an appropriate sponsor was not available. They were pleased that such assistance was now more accessible to them, due to the opening of a subsidiary office in the central suburb where most of them reside.

Comments obtained from the respondents ranged from *"RMS helped me with information"*, *"to get a job"*, *"to enrol at University"*, *"to get my husband here"*, *"to get a Housing New Zealand house"* and *"to set up an Ethiopian Community Committee"*.

They have appreciated the interest and encouragement of the Refugee and Migrant Service staff in assisting them with both practical and emotional needs.

Whilst five individuals have said that they have had no contact with the Refugee and Migrant Service since leaving the Mangere Reception Centre, a number of refugees have sought assistance from the agency with regard to family reunification applications. Given the number of successful family reunions that have occurred to date, most respondents regarded the Service as being very effective and helpful in this area of need. Besides helping with the somewhat confusing paperwork involved, the agency on occasion, has apparently also assisted with contributions towards the required airfares (by way of loans or by acting in the capacity of guarantor). Only one individual expressed dissatisfaction. In his opinion the Refugee and Migrant Service was powerless to help him circumvent the bureaucratic delays that beleaguered his application to bring his wife to New Zealand.

Sponsorship

McSpadden (1987) has described sponsorship provided by community groups as an integral factor contributing towards positive resettlement experiences and psychological wellbeing. All but one of the refugees were linked with sponsors by the time they left the Mangere Reception Centre or shortly thereafter. That individual moved to Wellington almost immediately on his departure from the hostel. He was eventually matched with a sponsor on his return to Auckland.

The concept of sponsorship was viewed as being very important by the refugees. There was acknowledgement of how beneficial it had been to them to have had help in fulfilling the basic needs surrounding their resettlement - to have had support in obtaining accommodation and furniture, being shown where to register with New Zealand Employment Service and New Zealand Income Support, being shown how to enrol at libraries and courses, and to be given advice of the best places to shop.

"Sponsors show you the New Zealand way to do things".

Such assistance was not viewed just in practical terms. The refugees appreciated the fact that during their early months in this country they had someone to turn to for support, advice and encouragement. The knowledge that such help was there if they required it was seen as alleviating some of the stress of the initial acculturation process.

"If I am sick she comes and looks after me. She will look after the children, take me shopping".

"Psychologically, it is also good to have a sponsor, to know someone is looking after you".

For most of the refugees the dependency on such assistance eased after several months as they gained familiarity with their local areas and the agencies and institutions with which they needed to have contact. Strong links have developed with support people within their own community and the respondents generally turn to them in the first

instance if problems arise. The more able and articulate refugees were determined to be self-sufficient, acknowledging the busy lifestyles of most New Zealanders. Those refugees from rural backgrounds and single women with young children have required their sponsors' practical support for a far longer period. These individuals are disadvantaged because of their lack of fluency in English.

It was noted that in a number of cases, given the length of time since the initial resettlement, the relationship with the sponsor has changed. The role of sponsor for many of the refugees in the study has come to be regarded more and more as that of a friend, a family member or a neighbour.

"My sponsor and me, and her child and my child, are like family, she is like my sister".

Concerns of the refugees with regard to sponsorship generally centred around the earlier stages of the relationship where the focus was still on the fulfilment of practical basic needs. Such a concern was voiced by one individual who unusually had relatively little support elsewhere:

"Sometimes she says she is busy so I try my best not to bother. The sponsor needs to realize that I don't call unnecessarily but just when I need help".

Two other individuals who impressed as being independent and capable but who had somehow missed out on essential information commented that:

"We understood that they are busy but for eight months we stay home, we don't go to class, we don't know where to go, we don't know the culture. We just walked around".

An individual who arrived with no English complained:

"The difficulty is language. If I talk wrong she laughs at me".

The refugees expressed hopes that sponscers would provide greater assistance in the area of work opportunities and family reunification. These two areas are discussed in detail in following sections.

Ability in the English language

Respondents were asked to retrospectively self-assess their ability in the English language upon their arrival in this country and to comment on where they placed themselves with regard to level of competence with regard to classes attended.

Table 7.1 Level of English Ability and Class Attendance

<u>Level of English</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Very good	13	1
(No class attendance)		
Intermediate	6	3
(attended some classes)		
Basic English	4	4
(elementary classes)		
No English	1	3

Eight men and three women at the higher ability level attended the Self-Learning Centre, at the Unitec Institute of Technology, for English revision. There is frequently a delay between departure from the Mangere Reception Centre and enrolment in a language course due to such factors as semester starting dates, waiting lists and costs. The ability to use such a facility as the Self-Learning Centre gives a head start to those individuals who have some knowledge of English.

A number of the refugees have attended English classes of one kind or another since their arrival in New Zealand. The range of opportunities undertaken, as reported by the refugees, is listed below.

Table 7.2 Types of English Tuition and Number Attending

<u>Type of Tuition</u>	<u>Number of persons attended</u>
Home Tutor	4
Church group	6
Private language school	2
(free lessons)	
Secondary school	2
(continuing education)	
Polytechs Part-time semesters	9
Full-time semesters	7
TOPS English for Trades etc.	11

The above figures refer to the number that attended each course; certain individuals have attended more than one tuition opportunity.

Women with young children were the most disadvantaged with regard to accessing classes. Two women have Barnardos' day care set up to allow them to attend part-time English language classes. Both of these situations have been operating well. One other woman experienced difficulties with an initial Barnardos' care arrangement and did not pursue that option further. This family and another are seeking childcare placements for 1996 so that the women concerned can undertake English language courses. Another family with both parents heavily involved in tertiary studies received welcome support from the Mangere Reception Centre pre-school centre teachers whilst waiting for the creche to open at the beginning of the University term.

The overall quality of the courses caused occasional concern especially when the fees paid were substantial. One respondent was quite disappointed with several aspects of a secretarial course incorporating English language revision.

"For me, for one year I didn't learn. The course was too short...too many holidays and not enough depth".

Many of those refugees who did have access to classes experienced difficulties in studying due to ongoing stress and concern about partners and other family members still subject to hardship and oppression either in the country of origin or as refugees in asylum.

"I have wasted a whole year. I could not study. Always I worried about my family. I got headaches all the time".

What became noticeable during my research was that those respondents who had little opportunity to converse in English were seriously disadvantaged with regard to developing fluency in the language. One of the questions that I asked during the interview was whether the refugees experienced much social contact with New Zealanders. Women with young children suffered the most isolation, generally being limited to occasional contact with a sponsor and sometimes a weekly visit from a home tutor for English language lessons. For most of the other respondents, their opportunities to discourse in English were enhanced by work and study opportunities, and sometimes by church affiliations. Many of the refugees recognised that confidence and linguistic skills were greatly improved by social contact with New Zealanders.

"To speak fluently, one needs immersion".

"Our problem is that we live together, we speak our own language and do not develop our English".

Training and Educational Courses

The refugees did not only have to make a decision with regard to the level of English language ability they should achieve before seeking employment, there was also a decision to be made with regard to taking advantage of further training in order to obtain more skilled and highly paid positions. To date a number of the refugees have taken courses, or are studying to improve their prospects. Five TOPS (Training Opportunities) courses have been completed as well as two business studies options,

three computer courses and a counselling and self-awareness programme. Two individuals will be attending Bible College in 1996 and another is still waiting for a nursing qualification to be assessed for equivalency with regard to New Zealand standards.

Seven of the refugees are undertaking tertiary studies - one has enrolled for business studies, another for law and five are studying for the New Zealand Certificate in Engineering. Given McSpadden's (1987) comments in regard to status, I queried each of these respondents as to whether they were satisfied with the quality of the courses they were undertaking, and the level within which they had been placed, since all had previous university or higher education experience in Ethiopia. Most of the refugees involved in tertiary study were granted at least one year's credit on the courses that they undertook. All said that they were happy with the decisions made in their individual cases as it had been some years since they had participated in full-time study, some had not completed their courses, and they had experienced much trauma in the intervening period. One individual commented that he was unable to get a specialist qualification recognized as the cost of the relevant assessment in this country was prohibitive in comparison to his current financial circumstances.

Employment

Those who were seeking employment, whether full-time or part-time, expressed a willingness to undertake any sort of work. The refugees believed that as Ethiopians and Eritreans they have a strong work ethos and all expressed discomfort at being dependent on income support from the Government.

"We all want to work. In Ethiopia we have responsibility to provide for our parents, our family, as the government does not provide. All the time we try to get jobs to provide for our family, not just ourselves. In Canada some Ethiopian refugees work two to three jobs".

Some respondents have experienced greater difficulty than others in obtaining employment. The failure to obtain work has had a negative psychological effect on their sense of self-worth.

"Work seems easier to get in other countries...Canada and the United States. Everyday I look for work. There are many problems, distance, driver's licence, youth rates. There are many reasons..."

McSpadden's (1987:816) research noted that in no case did any Ethiopian refugee find employment without personal assistance. Accordingly, I checked with those respondents who were working, or had been working, as to how they had obtained their employment. Six individuals were working in or had been employed in full-time jobs. Two of these were women who had employment respectively as cleaner and as a housekeeper in a hotel. Three men had factory work and one had a job in a department store. Four respondents found work through a friend at church, one found employment through Workbridge, and one through the assistance of a sponsor.

Nineteen individuals had part-time employment, some holding one or more such positions. This employment covered areas such as nursery work, supermarket assistant,

pamphlet delivery, nurse/nurse aide, cleaner/ filter cleaner, casual painting, factory worker, and computer laboratory assistant.

In ten instances the positions were located through friends, sponsors assisted with four part-time positions, the Refugee and Migrant Service social worker assisted with one, and four refugees gained employment through "work experience" after completing training courses.

Finances

Apart from the few individuals who have full employment, most of the refugees are on limited incomes, either unemployment benefits or student allowances. They are all appreciative of such financial support given their past hardships and live restrained and frugal lifestyles. As one individual comments:

"I have only enough for myself. I can't help my family. I don't eat or drink at anyone's house, their benefit is not enough".

Having full-time work, however, is no guarantee of financial security. Some refugees in their first job are subject to poor award rates and say they earn little more than the unemployment benefit.

The refugees are grateful for the initial assistance provided by New Zealand Income Support, especially the Re-establishment grant. However, the refugees find the fact that

this grant can only be accessed by obtaining quotes from retail staff/shopkeepers to present to New Zealand Income Support for approval as patronising and disempowering to themselves. They consider that they are forced to pay higher prices for household effects as they have to buy through second-hand shops rather than from private sellers.

The traditional cultural obligation to give support to family members and friends overseas is one area that causes problems in financial management.

"Difficulties arise from the expectations of our friends and family in Ethiopia and elsewhere. Friends in the United States have plenty of opportunity to work and send money back. We have had great difficulty getting work".

Expensive toll bills are also cited as a cause of financial hardship. Most refugees maintain contact with friends and family for mutual support. One individual however was too afraid to make that verbal contact due to fear of financial cost.

"I never make contact with my parents because maybe if I hear my parents' voices I will never stop. It has been ten years...I just write to them".

Extra costs such as doctor's fees, school uniforms and course expenses can cause increased stress upon the respondents. Some refugees have part-time work to cope with these costs. They say that their situation has been helped by the fact that part-time workers are now eligible to earn an increased amount before their benefit is abated.

Housing

As the refugees left the reception centre they were placed in accommodation arranged for them by the Refugee and Migrant Service social worker or their sponsors. Though necessarily limited to lower income accommodation, every endeavour was made to have the refugees settle into the same locality for mutual support and a degree of cultural solidarity. As events turned out the Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees have lived mostly within walking distance of each other for much of the time that they have been in this country. Such proximity has strengthened their community support network and the maintenance of cultural identity. This network is also encouraged by the fact that all have telephones and are in frequent contact with each other.

Houses and flats were frequently described as "*peaceful and quiet*". These comments were indicative of the sense of security experienced by the refugees. More than one individual commented that back in Ethiopia they froze with fear whenever they heard the sound of a dog barking as such a noise heralded a raid by government security forces.

Some of the refugees have moved over the past year, most frequently as a result of family reunification. When partners arrive in this country, the couple seem to prefer to live in their own establishment despite higher costs. Four of the refugee group have obtained tenancies to Housing New Zealand properties. They see such tenure as offering greater security, being better for the children and allowing an opportunity to plant gardens. Another family has been on the waiting list for over a year and is quite

disappointed with the lengthy delay because their present rental situation is quite inappropriate for children. In most instances, as the individuals or groups have made their second or even third move, they have located the accommodation and have made all the associated arrangements themselves.

The cost of housing was frequently mentioned as too expensive relative to limited incomes. Most individuals are in receipt of a benefit or student allowance. One group had to move when their rent increased by \$80 per week. Individuals in shared flatting situations (three or more individuals) find the costs of accommodation manageable but it is very difficult for families and couples to cope with both rent and the associated living costs such as power, groceries and telephone rental.

The higher rental costs in the central areas have influenced a recent slow drift towards the outer suburbs. There is a concern expressed as to whether this change will be counter-productive with slightly lower rents being offset by increased transport costs and greater social isolation particularly for the women concerned.

Domestic Responsibilities

In the countries of origin, given the traditional patriarchal nature of their respective societies, all household tasks were relegated to women. I discussed the issue of domestic responsibilities with the respondents to ascertain whether any changes had occurred within traditional gender roles and responsibilities since their arrival in New Zealand. My intention was to discover if women were given encouragement and support by their

partners, friends or siblings in order to have opportunities to address their own specific needs as women. Almost all of the refugees noted a change in attitude to housework on the part of both men and women. This change, they said, first became apparent in the country of first asylum.

The attitudinal difference was not just seen by most of the refugees as a consequence of the need to earn a living to survive. They said that there was also a strong sense of awareness of equality issues amongst EPRP members whose Party's commitment to democracy encompassed a recognition of the rights of women.

"In the culture never, but being in the Party (EPRP) we shared household tasks and still do. In Sudan women worked, in Ethiopia they stayed home".

"In Sudan I did the cooking. In New Zealand I go to school and take the children to school. I help look after the children. If I had time I would cook". (Comment from a married man).

Most of the men in relationships with young children said that their own urgent need to learn English in order to find work so they could support their family resulted in less equality of opportunity for their wives.

In flatting situations with both male and female flatmates domestic responsibilities are shared though one woman commented with some asperity that equality of household duties took some effort to maintain vis-a-vis the men.

Health

All the refugees are linked with family doctors by their sponsors shortly after leaving the Mangere Reception Centre. Those who do seek medical treatment appreciate this continuity of care. In general, treatment was regarded as readily accessible apart from specialist consultations as these doctors often had long waiting lists. One individual who was accepted on humanitarian grounds as a medical case is still awaiting necessary surgery more than a year later. Medical care, however, was viewed as being of good quality.

A parent of a young child was impressed at the level of care and assistance offered to babies through the Plunket Society.

The Ethiopians and Eritreans did not see language as a barrier to accessing appropriate medical services. Those with limited English would normally take friends along with them to translate the necessary information. Whilst one or two individuals were dealt with sympathetically by their General Practitioners in regard to costs, those who attended more frequently for a variety of ailments found the fees involved prohibitive even with a Community Services card. Seven refugees found the cost of their medical care difficult to budget for within their limited incomes. Twenty individuals stated that they had not used the health system or had found no problems with the minimal contact that they had experienced to date.

Family Relationships and Social Supports

Most of the refugees came from large families of origin and had numerous siblings. Strong bonds to extended family members also existed. Although some refugees were fortunate to arrive in this country with another family member or partner, or as part of a family group, many mentioned feelings of isolation and disadvantage through lack of kin support. Nine individuals have been reunited with a family member through subsequent refugee intakes. Five respondents have no family members in New Zealand.

Quite often partners or siblings would provide emotional support for each other. Nine refugees said that they discussed matters of concern with family members in Ethiopia via telephone, to the detriment of their budget.

Positive links within families and the refugee community all contribute to psychological and emotional wellbeing. Given the strong family and neighbourhood support links that had existed for them in their homeland, I was interested in analysing those support networks to which the refugees linked themselves within their community.

From my observations of the Ethiopians and Eritreans over the past year, it is apparent that they are divided into two distinct groups - those refugees who came via Kenya as the country of first asylum and who are of Oromo ethnic origin, and the larger group that came via the Sudan and who generally have some association with the EPRP. Whilst there is some interaction between the two groups, particularly at times of celebration or sorrow within the refugee community, there is not the frequency and

familiarity of contact that is involved between members of the latter group. The two main family groupings amongst the Oromo find support from other family members. (One woman however cites some isolation and a wish to have contact with the other refugee women). Most of these individuals maintain strong links with their sponsors who are all church ministers and appear to address emotional and spiritual as well as practical needs.

For the members of the group that came via the Sudan, the bonds forged during the times of hardship and duress in that country are still strong.

"We knew each other...we helped each other in Sudan. We are all one family. Their homes are like my own to me".

The refugees view each other as extended family. They are frequent visitors to each other's homes, sharing hospitality and enjoying coffee. At times of loss, friends gather to support the bereaved. In a recent tragic instance, all contributed to the cost of sending the body of one of their number back to Ethiopia for burial by her family. Financial assistance was also given to two family members to come from Canada for the last weeks of their sister's illness.

Not surprisingly, a lack of strong links within the community can have negative psychological effects. A sense of isolation can detrimentally affect the wellbeing and integration of those concerned. One individual appeared particularly disadvantaged in this regard.

"I am alone in New Zealand. I have no family, no friends. How can a person without family or friends be comfortable...most of the time I suffer depression".

Reunification

The refugees in New Zealand are well aware from their own bitter experiences of the risks and hazards that affect their relatives and friends, in either their own country or the country of first asylum. There is a constant fear with regard to the latter that the camps will be closed and the refugees forcibly repatriated.

"I would like to get my family here. I have heard that the Sudanese government has ordered all refugees to be repatriated. I had a letter the other day...a number of our friends have vanished".

The wellbeing of family members in Ethiopia is also a source of concern. According to traditional cultural values, Ethiopians have obligations and responsibilities to their siblings and parents.

"I am the eldest son in my family and have all sorts of responsibilities for my ageing parents and brothers and sisters. I have two sons there also. As they are not refugees I may not be able to get them to come to New Zealand. My parents are getting old. My family in Ethiopia suffer because of my political opinion...they are under all sorts of pressures".

Family reunification, the bringing of family members to New Zealand, is a process that brings great emotional stress to those who make such applications. The new settlers are expected to pay the airfares of those family members even if they are accepted under the refugee Quota Programme. As one respondent despaired:

"How can we pay...it is a big problem. We need a loan but who can give this loan to us. We are still new, there are no family to help us".

The refugees suffer a sense of hopelessness and powerlessness that affect their health and their ability to cope well with resettlement.

"Everything is too hard. I can't work here yet. I have a brother in Sudan. He is married and has children. How can I get the airfares? All the time I worry. I can't study".

"I tell my friends, day and night I worry for you. I pray for you. One day I will help but I cannot at the moment".

To date individual refugees have financed airfares for family reunification by a variety of means - loans from sponsors, their own efforts at part-time work combined with very frugal living, church support and the assistance of friends and relatives living in Canada and the United States. For those who wish to bring in more than one family member, the costs are exorbitant. Currently one woman requires \$8,000 for airfares for her parents and three younger siblings who live in the refugee camp at Gederef. She is a single parent still attending English classes and lacks employment.

Delays in the reunification process can be a cause of agitation especially for those refugees with family members in Kenya where camps are closed with brutal and oppressive regularity.

"I feel that in other countries it would have been quicker. I cannot understand. This is a peaceful country, there are democratic human rights. Everything is good. I have a job...peace. I have tried my best. They are now closing the camp and I have lost contact with my wife".

The wife in this case had been interviewed and approved by the New Zealand Immigration Service but there was apparently ongoing delays with the processing of paperwork through the New Zealand High Commission in Zimbabwe.

Refugees have also pointed out (RMS Auckland meeting 31/8/95) that it is not only the safety of close family members that cause concern. Culturally, extended family members and friends and neighbours who have been bound by the suffering of oppression and a commitment to a common cause are seen as *"brothers and sisters"* and *"as family"*. One individual gets many letters from friends who have expectations of him. He says that he cannot bear to open or read those letters for as a student he has no income and no ability to put pressure on current government policy.

This chapter has described and commented on the Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees' reflections on their experiences during their initial months of resettlement in New Zealand. The responses to the interview questions illustrate the extent to which the

refugees considered that their basic practical as well as emotional needs had been addressed. In the following chapter these findings are summarized and discussed.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Introduction

The research undertaken has been a qualitative case study of the resettlement in Auckland of a group of 35 Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees. To date, there has been a paucity of indepth qualitative or quantitative research into the resettlement of refugees in New Zealand and this project was an attempt to add to the knowledge and understanding of the experiences of refugees and, in particular, those of two ethnic groups from the African continent. In this chapter I discuss the findings presented previously.

As the research is based on a qualitative case study approach, it is acknowledged that generalisability to the wider Ethiopian and Eritrean refugee community is necessarily limited, however, cross-referencing with similar research undertaken in the United States and Canada on Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees shows a significant number of commonalities.

This research has canvassed the extent to which the refugees' needs were met during the early stages of resettlement. Pittaway (1991:5) has observed in her research on refugees in Australia that successful resettlement depends on needs fulfilment. As a theoretical framework I used Maslow's hierarchy of needs, investigating how the

refugees' needs were addressed at both elementary and secondary levels. I also found it appropriate to consider Zucker's framework for the three areas of refugee resettlement where problems may arise. These three areas are - (i) the systemic management area which covers the interaction between refugees, various agencies and the government; (ii) the philosophical area where problems centre around the degree of aid and assistance that should be provided to refugees; (iii) the refugee-specific area which may involve issues surrounding cultural adjustment as well as the meeting of needs.

All of the refugees were asked to comment on the particular factors which in their view had contributed most positively towards their resettlement in New Zealand. It was expected that many of their responses would centre around the satisfactory fulfilment of needs. The respondents gave a range of replies but the factor that they obviously regarded as having greatest importance for them was the peace and security that they have experienced since their arrival in this country. Of almost equal importance was the knowledge that they now have the ability to set goals and plan for their future.

"There is peace and democracy in New Zealand. There is no fear or suspicion".

"We know we have freedom coming to this country. We have safety which is very important. Now we can start thinking about our future".

The refugees said they enjoyed the informality of the New Zealand lifestyle and the lack of racial, ethnic or religious discrimination.

The following are the factors considered by most of the respondents as highly significant for successful resettlement. It is not surprising that this study identified these factors as important as they are common to all successful programmes designed to assist refugees through the initial stages of the resettlement process (Pittaway 1992; Cox 1981). These critical factors were:

- the orientation programme
- having facility with the English language or having access to English language classes
- eligibility for welfare benefit payments and training allowances
- having opportunities to attend educational and training courses
- secure housing
- the assistance of sponsors
- the support of other refugees

Other positive factors commented on by some of the refugees to whom these were relevant were:

- the ability to get work
- the unrestricted opportunity for children to have a good education
- the opportunity to be reunited with family members

The respondents, asked to comment on areas of the resettlement process that had created difficulty for them, and to make suggestions as to how these services could be improved or be made more culturally appropriate, repeatedly emphasised that they were grateful to live in a peaceful country and to have the opportunities and support that they had received from the Government and people of New Zealand.

Crosland (1991:120) has pointed out the dichotomy that exists both for refugees and for those working within the field of refugee resettlement. Whilst attention does need to be and should be focused on associated problems, there is always a concern that such actions may draw a reactionary response from those who have political and decision-making power.

"It may have the effect of provoking a political response in reducing the annual quota of refugees in order to cut expenditure. It may produce a negative reaction from sections of the community who resent the use of public funds for refugee resettlement. It may further stigmatise refugees who frequently confront negative stereotyping because of their ethnic minority status. Refugees themselves may be reluctant to express their concerns publicly about inadequate resettlement services and how these may be improved for fear of causing offence or appearing ungrateful!"

The refugees have described themselves as still adjusting to New Zealand society, *"It has been little more than a year since we arrived"* and as coming to terms with a vastly different culture and lifestyle. In working and talking with the Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees, one is struck by the prevailing moods of optimism, strength and purpose that exist, despite the trauma of the past and the vicissitudes of the present. In individual and group discussion, however, some concerns were expressed. Some of these concerns relate to the fulfilment of basic practical needs, other difficulties lie in the area of psychological and emotional requirements. Often though, there is an overlap.

English Language Ability

All of the refugees were well aware that language was the key to employment opportunities and social integration. The amount of time needed to acquire adequate language skills varies according to individual ability, educational background and the degree of literacy achieved in the first language. Full-time intensive language training for several months may be required before a person is able to function with some competence and confidence in the community. The brief English language component of the six week orientation programme is not sufficient to meet the language needs of most of the refugees who pass through the Reception Centre and a number require further education in this area. Amongst the Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees, those from the rural areas and mothers of young children have noticeably less fluency in English and were consequently disadvantaged with regard to integration into New Zealand society.

A concern expressed by those refugees so affected was their continuing lack of fluency in English which had been aggravated by delays in enrolling for classes.

"To leave the hostel and find a delay until the next semester for classes is very discouraging for our people. They lose confidence".

The rise in course fees for 1996 has caused much hardship and an inability to attend full-time. Refugees have commented that the cost of English language courses at Unitec have risen by 50 per cent and substantial deposits have been required at short notice. Most refugees cannot afford to pay the usual fees required for ongoing language tuition

(the first course is subsidised by 50 per cent) and part-time students are not eligible for student loans and allowances (RMS Refugee, August 1995:2). In addition, attendance at part-time courses, although they are less costly, is not regarded by the refugees as a practical and effective answer to learning English.

For some of the women issues of childcare, especially pre-school care requirements on the part of those wishing to attend classes and courses, were a cause for anxiety. Women with older children, and the single male parent, commented that in Ethiopia or Eritrea they could have relied on family or neighbours for childcare whenever it was required.

Comments on the quality of the courses undertaken showed varying degrees of satisfaction. Those who attended the free lessons arranged by the private language schools were happy with the quality of the course content and the teachers. Reaction to the Polytech courses was mixed. Some individuals found their classes satisfactory. A number of the women expressed unhappiness at less than optimum learning conditions given the difficulty of understanding fellow students' different accents and the latter's frequent use of their own language, rather than English, within discussion groups. Pittaway (1993:42) in her study of refugee women's experiences in Australia has reported similar findings. There may be value in further research being undertaken to investigate gender differences in the learning processes for refugees studying English language skills.

The refugees' inability to attend full-time courses due to cost, childcare or other commitments, and the delays in being accepted for classes were all seen as detrimental

to progress. Pittaway (1991) has observed that a lack of facility in English can have negative effects on confidence, particularly for women. This absence of self-confidence in situations involving the use of English language was obvious with regard to those amongst the refugees who were disadvantaged in that skill.

A recent change in Government policy with regard to refugees attending TOPS courses may prove to be of some benefit as some of these courses incorporate tuition in English, for example, the English for Trades modules. Refugees are now eligible to attend such courses within one year of leaving the Mangere Reception Centre if they are registered with the New Zealand Employment Service. The registration period does not necessarily have to have been the standard 26 weeks of unemployment (Training Opportunities Update 4 December 1995). This policy change should help future intakes of refugees.

Employment

A number of the refugees, both men and women, mentioned a lack of work opportunities and/or an inability on their part to find initial employment. Such a concern was usually associated with both the need to earn money to pay the costs of air fares for family members whom they hoped to bring to New Zealand, and to provide some financial support to family and friends suffering hardship overseas. Some advocacy with employers was regarded as necessary to overcome the lack of previous work experience in New Zealand. McSpadden's (1987) research showed that where sponsors were proactively involved in assisting refugees to access employment there was a noticeable reduction in their psychological stress levels.

Crosland (1994) regards such encouragement to achieve independence as integral to the role of sponsor as enabler. In contrast, the non-refugees interviewed were notable self-achievers. This description is not surprising in view of the fact that only a few of the small number that gain entrance to University would be selected for scholarship opportunities. Such individuals would have swifter access to social mobility.

In Canada and the United States the emphasis is upon rapid self-sufficiency. Resettlement policies and procedures in these countries push the Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees towards immediate employment at whatever job is accessible. McSpadden (1987) noted in her research that these pressures for rapid self-sufficiency, without consideration of status, forced those men who did not have individual sponsorship into any available job and left them to fend for themselves. These refugees found themselves in situations which provided no real access to the tools for upward mobility. Consequently, they were more noticeably vulnerable both in economic terms and in their perceptions of their sense of manhood. In contrast, her research found that those young men who combined a low-status job with further education had markedly greater psychological wellbeing as they could see themselves as being involved in a process of gaining effective socio-economic tools. Similar findings were apparent in my investigation. Those who were involved in education had a long term positive view of their prospects despite holding present concerns about the wellbeing of family members still in the country of origin or the country of first asylum.

Stein (1979) has commented that refugees take at least three years before they start to achieve social mobility. Most of the respondents in this present study would appear to have taken initial steps to improve or regain social status through attending English

language classes, Polytech courses or through enrolment in tertiary education. Every refugee had been involved in, or was continuing, some form of educational course for self-improvement. In contrast to McSpadden's (1987) respondents, there was an overall air of positive determination.

Financial Concerns

Financial management is difficult for individuals living on their own and for families. Those living as part of a group in a flatting situation, with shared expenses, seem to cope better and to be under less strain. Families are put under great pressure by the high cost of accommodation in central Auckland. One refugee noted that he and his wife paid 65% of their unemployment benefit as rent. This individual had arrived in New Zealand some months after his wife. He commented that she was better off as a single parent as they only received \$20 more per week since they were reunited. A further concern was the rise in the cost of living, particularly with regard to food prices, and the lack of any corresponding increase in unemployment benefits or student allowances to compensate. To some extent, the refugees are critical of the Government's policies with reference to low income earners. Such policies are seen as discriminatory to families in particular, and as contributing to the breakdown of the family unit through associated financial pressures. The refugees are dismayed by what they regard as an ambivalent attitude to families on the part of the Government's social policies.

"Refugees, especially from Africa, have a strong consideration for the family and are really affected by the government's position on the family and the lack of support for them".

Refugees, as lower income earners or beneficiaries, are in a position similar to that of many of the New Zealand population who are in the lower socio-economic strata. They all suffer adversities and difficulties imposed by prevalent conservative political policies that eulogize market forces and "*user pays*".

Also associated with concerns about straitened financial circumstances is the anomaly surrounding the re-establishment grant, a non-recoverable, special needs welfare grant designed to help refugees with initial set-up costs. Whilst single individuals are entitled to their own grant, married couples share one payment between them. Given that a common use for part of this grant is to pay the costs of English classes where required, and given the necessary focus that the male breadwinner needs priority in obtaining such a skill, lack of their own grant is recognised as particularly disadvantageous to women. As these women have young children, they are in danger of isolation and delayed integration to New Zealand society. Ferris (1989) has noted that the needs of refugee women are generally the last to be attended to on resettlement.

Whilst the receipt of the re-establishment grant is gratefully acknowledged, the method of payment causes concern. Refugees have to provide quotes for the goods or services that they wish to obtain, then if the purchase is approved by New Zealand Income Support Service staff, payment is forwarded to the provider. The refugees are critical of this system which is not only time-consuming and cumbersome but also forces them to purchase goods from second-hand dealers rather than buy more cheaply from private sellers. They find such a process patronising and disempowering.

Emotional Supports

Health

Refugees can suffer a variety of ailments and illnesses and the longer the period spent in the harsh deprivation of the refugee camps, the greater the adverse effects may be on their physical and psychological wellbeing (Mollica et al 1989). Due to the relatively small size of the sample and the need to maintain confidentiality and to avoid any possibility of stigmatisation, I did not delve deeply into the degree of trauma the refugees had personally suffered. At the present time, most of the refugees have achieved satisfaction of most of their basic needs and have moved to addressing the anxiety about families and friends. It is expected that any need to undertake counselling for their own trauma and grief may not be recognised or attended to until these other issues are dealt with. Such a requirement would also depend on the personal strengths and support systems of the individual concerned.

Trauma counselling services are a relatively recent innovation. A Refugees as Survivors Centre was opened in Auckland in February 1995. It is a national centre for refugees who have suffered trauma and torture and provides an assessment, counselling, referral and support service for such refugees. Bilingual support workers are employed so that, within limitations, services can be delivered in full consideration of the culture, beliefs and experiences of those utilizing the service (Disley 1995:4).

Sponsors

The concept of sponsorship was acknowledged as very important in the resettlement process. McSpadden (1987) has described such support as integral to the successful resettlement of refugees. For most of the Ethiopians and the Eritreans, the sponsors' assistance played a major role in fulfilling their basic needs during their early months of resettlement. Some sponsors have maintained only that role as enabler and are now only infrequently contacted by the refugee(s) whom they helped. Other sponsors have developed strong links of friendship, indeed, the refugees often described them as "*family*", a "*mother*" and a "*father*". It would appear that this development of a more personally intensive style of sponsor-refugee relationship which is more long term in nature may help in addressing some of the cultural and personal needs of the refugees (Lanphier 1983:12-15; McSpadden 1987:818; Crosland 1994). Such descriptions should not be seen as indicative of a dependent relationship as it can be more aptly described as an attempt by the refugees to recapture the patterns of their own culture. Most of the refugees are operating independently at this stage to fulfil their own needs. Where required, the refugees may call on sponsors to act as advocates, to ensure they receive just and proper treatment (Crosland 1994). These cases are relatively rare as the tendency amongst the refugees is to seek support from the Refugee and Migrant Service in such instances.

A few of the refugees did express concerns with regard to a lack of understanding on the part of the sponsor in the sponsor-refugee relationship. Also commented on was the need for assistance from sponsors in obtaining employment, as well as support in

applying for family reunification. The Refugee and Migrant Service staff have sought to address such areas of concern by holding meetings with proposed sponsors, and with refugees and sponsors, since late 1994 in order to air refugee concerns as well as to discuss the responsibilities of sponsorship. The findings in this present study may help clarify some of the areas causing difficulties.

Relationships

McSpadden and Moussa (1993:205) comment that in countries of asylum and resettlement the traditional social and cultural fabric is rent apart in unpredictable ways and a likely consequence is a shift in the previously experienced and expected power hierarchy and power differentials. *"Our contention is that a social and personal crisis such as the refugee experience clearly is, provides often at a basis of survival, an experimentation with "traditional" gender roles and behaviour"*.

Despite statements made by the refugees with regard to the recognition of the equality of women, in reality many of the women living in New Zealand, especially those in relationships with young children, carry out most of the household tasks. This unequal division of responsibilities is due to the study and work commitments of their partner who is, or will be, the major breadwinner in the relationship. From various comments made and from my observations, it would appear that in these situations the major support offered to the women is assistance with childcare whilst they attend English language classes (usually part-time) or shop.

There also exists amongst the families in this study a strong and obvious commitment on the part of both parents to establish a sense of stability and security due to the destabilising experiences they have undergone in recent years. This commitment can be regarded as an attempt to re-establish the traditional value of the family as a source of permanence and support (Moussa 1993:237). Because of these cultural factors and the emphasis on the integrity of the family system, none of the Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees whom I interviewed had any strong identification with Moussa's feminist perspective.

Despite an avowed commitment to a belief in equality for women, there did appear to be some ambivalence on the part of some individuals. This ambivalence centred around concerns with regard to breakdowns in relationships. A number of the men considered that the greater freedom for women in New Zealand society, and the knowledge of the availability of state financial support for women post-separation, were stresses that negatively affected de facto or marital relationships amongst the Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees and contributed to their failure. In contrast, some of the women and observers commented that relationships established in the country of first asylum could experience difficulties in resettlement not least due to unrealistic expectations harboured by one, or both, partners. It was said that such problems were often aggravated by the men concerned responding by the imposition of an unacceptable degree of "patriarchal" control over their partners rather than by providing them with support and encouragement.

Family Reunification

When asked what it was they missed most about their own countries, the almost universal reply was:

"Family, friends, culture, the land itself!"

Without family there is an incredible sense of isolation and loss:

"My family. Always I dream...I dream".

"I miss my family, especially at times of celebrations and holidays. I really miss the spiritual and social side of our life, the singing and dancing in the streets, having friends come around to drink coffee and eat. Rituals. I am expected to ring my family at such times".

Family reunification was regarded as the major problem in their life for many of the refugees. It was a source of ongoing psychological and emotional stress that affected their studies, employment and home life, and which caused some individuals to postpone definitive decisions about their future. Without qualifications, the work that the refugees can obtain is relatively poorly paid but if they study with the intention of seeking more remunerative positions in the future, they suffer remorse and guilt from their inability to help family members. Throughout this year of research, I have witnessed a number of family reunions. The immense positive changes in the emotional wellbeing of the individual or individuals concerned were most marked.

Whilst the Refugee and Migrant Service can give assistance with the necessary paperwork, as a small non-governmental agency, it is unable to contribute loan monies to refugees in all but a few instances. In 1990-1991 the Government stopped funding refugee travel to New Zealand and gave the Refugee and Migrant Service a one-off amount of \$170,000. This money has been loaned to refugees to bring family to New Zealand. It takes most of them years to repay the loan. The financial pressures on the Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees have only aggravated their concern and worry. They are uncertain as to where they can seek support and hope for more assistance from their sponsors. The lack of a sympathetic Government policy was regretted.

Whyte (1986:12) and others, for example Nguyen (1989:91), have observed that readjustment and mental health problems are less prevalent where extended family networks have started to form. Other research indicates that refugees adjust more easily to life in a new country when they are settled with others of the same culture in reasonably large groups. Nguyen (1989:19), for example, has recommended that between 100 to 300 families should be regarded as a minimum for the establishment of a viable community. The Refugee and Migrant Service has suggested that at least 300 to 400 people should be considered as a minimum population when establishing a new and culturally different group of refugees in this country (**RMS Refugee** 1995:22). Not only are such sized populations better placed to demand and access goods and services but they are also able to derive necessary emotional support through contact with members of their own community. They also have a stronger ability to maintain aspects of their culture and traditions. At the present time there are approximately 150 Ethiopians and Eritreans in this country and the refugees have concern for the growing younger generation who are alienated from their homeland.

"Children as blacks and Africans will have a difficult time to integrate into New Zealand society. Accordingly we need to develop a strong sense of community and culture to help them. We have to worry about how to shape our future, our society, for our children".

The refugees believe as a consequence of their concern about the ongoing viability of their micro-community that the opportunities for family reunification should be broadened and encouraged.

Social Networks

Nearly all the refugees commented on the culture shock involved in adjusting to New Zealand society. The reserve of New Zealanders, particularly neighbours, was contrasted with their memories and past experiences of Ethiopian and Eritrean societies with their values of friendliness and support. Feelings of isolation can develop in the face of a lack of neighbourly friendliness.

There is a system of informal networking operating amongst the refugees similar to the neighbourhood networks that existed in their own country. As Moussa (1993:220) has commented such a system continues to provide for all refugees, particularly the more isolated women with young children, support and reinforcement in their cultural and gender identity. The respondents regarded the strength of their network as a means of maintaining their cultural identity.

For both the Ethiopians and Eritreans, the home is the centre of all hospitality and it is important that they can receive visitors. The limitations of hostel accommodation

sometimes used by single individuals is that it is difficult to have friends call and impossible to have them stay. Whenever I visited the refugees over the past year or so, friends were always dropping in or just leaving.

An important part of the development of social supports within a refugee community is the formation of self-help ethnic groups. These can give support to fellow nationals as well as assisting in the strengthening of cultural identity.

With Refugee and Migrant Service support, leaders amongst the Ethiopian refugees have set up a community committee which will help in that latter goal. There are tentative hopes of working towards the establishment of a school for the increasing numbers of children so they will be able to learn about their own culture and maintain links with their homeland.

Conclusion

Refugees, because of their circumstances, will have some unrequited needs. Not surprisingly, most of these centre around their alienation from their countries of origin. For most of the refugees, their memories were of the happiness that existed for them prior to the outrages of the military government. They all experienced an intense homesickness, heightened by the belief and knowledge that for all of them there was no return home in the near future. They are people who come from a traditional culture that values the concept of family and strong social bonds within the community and they feel their separation and alienation from their land and all that is important to them like an unhealing wound. This sense of alienation is aggravated by the fact that there is a

dearth of information with regard to their home countries. There is only sparse and infrequent mention in the news media due to the relative lack of interest in African affairs throughout the Pacific region. This omission is especially frustrating to those who have had intense commitment to political change in the past.

The respondents indicated that as they move from the initial phase of resettlement which has focused on the fulfilment of basic practical needs, they are ready to address issues that relate to security and emotional support systems as well as to future goals. Such a process is congruent with Maslow's theoretical proposals surrounding the fulfilment of human needs.

The major area of unsatisfied emotional need was in the area of helping family, a traditional expectation. A number of the respondents were the eldest son in the family and were hence subject to cultural obligations to care for their parents and siblings. Providing assistance to family members takes two forms - the remittance of money to Ethiopia, Eritrea or the countries of first asylum, as well as the making of applications for family reunification. In reality, both these options have required that the resettled refugee be in receipt of his/her own income rather than welfare support or receive aid from sponsors or other family members in the United States. Most of the refugees involved felt shamed by their incapacity to fulfil these cultural expectations with regard to their family responsibilities. Stein (1981:326-8) notes that such issues frequently come to the fore at this second stage of resettlement.

Associated with the desire to help one's family was the need to improve oneself - to learn English, to take courses in order to qualify for higher status, better paid job

opportunities and so become independent of the unemployment benefit or other welfare support. This was a goal expressed by both men and women. For men, if married, the desire was to be able to provide their wives and children with the opportunities to have a good education and to live in peace and security. Such sentiments were similar to those expressed by the respondents interviewed by both Moussa and McSpadden (1993:220).

In considering Zucker's (1983) framework for the problem areas in refugee resettlement, it appears that most of the refugees studied are coping reasonably well with cultural adjustment on a personal level. Most are operating independently within New Zealand society, they have come to terms with a new culture and to some degree most are starting to improve their social status. Only the most disadvantaged with regard to English language ability still have problems in this area. For the Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees, their major concerns with resettlement lie in the systemic management and philosophical areas. The lack of supportive Government policy towards the resettlement of refugees in this country, particularly in regard to the provision of access to English language classes and criteria and assistance for family reunification are reflected at community level by the fragmentation of services and a lack of resources.

Moving from the familiar to the unfamiliar is always difficult but research has shown that it is even more arduous under the conditions of refugee flight. Refugees may face tremendous problems in adjusting to a new language, food, patterns of thought and custom and re-establishing self worth and social status. Years of hardship and deprivation in refugee camps may have affected their health and wellbeing. Studies

analysing the resettlement process have shown that such difficulties can be eased by targeting appropriate assistance and support. The concluding chapter proposes recommendations for improvement to the resettlement process.

CHAPTER NINE

RECOMMENDATIONS

As the researcher in this investigation into the resettlement experiences of a group of Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees in Auckland, I would suggest the following recommendations in order to make the resettlement process a more positive experience for those concerned. These recommendations are made following discussion with the Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees. Comments by staff of the Refugee and Migrant Service and the Auckland Institute of Technology School of Refugee Education are also included.

1. The Orientation Programme

One year or more after the completion of the orientation programme and as a result of their experiences in the meantime, the refugees could look back and offer advice in regard to improving aspects of the course.

For those who came from rural areas, lacked English and often lacked literacy in their own language, it was thought that a six week orientation programme lacked depth and was not sufficiently long enough. It was recommended that such refugees should have their stay at the Mangere Reception Centre extended and that their programmes should incorporate intensive language work, preferably with bilingual teachers. Alternatively it was suggested that a teacher might be contracted in to carry out intensive coaching with these individuals. It was considered that the additional costs involved would be offset by the result that these refugees in gaining swifter facility in English language

would be more readily employed. Reliance on welfare benefits would be correspondingly reduced. In addition, such tutoring would be a way for the refugees to circumvent the escalating costs of English classes in the community.

Other suggestions made were that it would be advantageous if there were at least two bilingual workers at the hostel to assist in the refugees' orientation and that a handbook in their own language (Amharic) be prepared for them to take with them on departure for referral purposes. A number of the refugees commented on being overwhelmed by new impressions during their early weeks and said they would have appreciated written information that they could have referred to later.

With reference to orientation programmes, some resettlement countries do provide extended periods of time in reception centres: France 6 months; Germany 2-12 months; and Australia up to 6 months.

2. English Language Classes.

The refugees commented that there was often a considerable delay between departure from the hostel and the ability to enrol in classes elsewhere. This time lapse was seen as particularly disadvantageous for those who have little or no English and are illiterate in their own language.

A staff member of the School for Refugee Education commented that for these refugees the brief weeks of classes at the hostel were designed to give confidence in approaching formal classwork. Such confidence is negatively affected by lengthy delays. Dismay was

expressed that the School's application for extra funds to extend the refugee programme had recently been declined.

It was also suggested that it would be helpful if subsidized childcare was more freely available to allow women with young children, who are frequently the most disadvantaged in the process of resettlement, to attend classes and improve their skills in English.

The Refugee and Migrant Service recommends that all refugees should be entitled to 800 hours of free English language tuition with provision for a wide variety of delivery mechanisms and also advocates that adequate childcare should be available for those for whom it is necessary.

"The long term rewards gained from providing the initial support in English language development can only be beneficial both to the refugee and the wider New Zealand community. Having chosen to accept refugees to New Zealand, the Government must also rise to the moral obligations and responsibility that such a decision demands...There must be provision made to equip refugees with the language skills necessary for independence and personal wellbeing and participation in the wider community life that follows. Without English language, refugees will remain people who are displaced, disempowered and alienated from the community" (RMS Newsletter 1995:2).

3. Financial Difficulties

With regard to financial difficulties, there was a plea that income support be linked to the rise in the cost of living. It was also recommended that the anomaly surrounding the Re-establishment Grant be redressed and that couples each be made eligible for a grant. From the refugees' viewpoint, it was strongly advocated that they be recognised as adults and be given the grant in cash to spend at their own discretion. The present system was regarded as patronising and disempowering.

4. Family Reunification

In the area of family reunification it was recommended that a system of government backed loans be established. It was thought that the Government should consider the development of a policy change that would incorporate long term loans to the refugees so that they would be enabled to apply for reunification. No problems were envisaged with regard to the repayment of these loans. An alternative suggestion was that sponsors be encouraged to explore fundraising options with the refugees and to support them in such activities. It was also urged that members of extended family systems be eligible for entry to New Zealand on humanitarian grounds.

The Refugee and Migrant Service has advocated that all travel costs of refugees be met either by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees or the New Zealand Government (RMS Dec 1993).

5. Enhanced Employment Opportunities

The refugees noted with concern that problems existed in finding initial employment in New Zealand and recommended that sponsors, the Refugee and Migrant Service, and other agencies give priority to assisting refugees obtain suitable work. Advocacy with employers was regarded as necessary to overcome the lack of previous work experience in New Zealand.

It was also suggested that provision of assistance, both financial and non-financial, be made in order to encourage the utilisation of refugees' skills in the development of small businesses. Such an initiative could prove to be a path of achievement for those individuals lacking in educational qualifications and consequently limited to lower income unskilled employment. It would also assist those with disabilities to undertake meaningful occupations.

Conclusions

Experience with this investigative study into refugee resettlement has reinforced the point for the writer that qualitative research involves the development of personal relationships and that the quality of the research is dependent on this occurrence. Such relationships, according to Claudinin and Connolly (1994:422) are akin to friendship, being based on mutual respect and trust. I have found that over the past year my links with the Ethiopian and Eritrean refugee community have deepened and strengthened.

Resettlement is a process that can offer hope or disillusionment for the refugees concerned. The newcomers hold expectations which are both practical and unrealistic. They are, however, generally highly motivated to seek independence and to provide for their own and their families' requirements through participation in the culture and the economy of their new country.

Overall the refugees have readily settled into New Zealand. After their experiences in the countries of first asylum they enjoy the freedom and informality of the lifestyle and most importantly, the opportunity to live in peace without the spectre of fear. At this stage in their resettlement their basic practical needs have been met through their own resources and efforts and those of sponsors and agencies such as Refugee and Migrant Service. Whilst most of the refugees suffer present financial disadvantage, they have generally a pragmatic approach to their situation, are thankful for the assistance they receive and are determined to move speedily towards personal independence.

There is a strong community ethos and a commitment to maintain elements of their own cultures. Networks amongst the refugees provide emotional support and reinforce their sense of security. In the second phase of their resettlement process the refugees are now looking forward to addressing concerns with regard to family members still at risk overseas as well as making decisions about their own future prospects. Social mobility is affected by the need to assist those in less fortunate circumstances and this factor creates dilemmas for the refugees.

The Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees in this study have commended this country for giving them a safe haven with hopes for the future. The suggestions that they have made

for improvements to the services provided are done with a good will and the intention to smooth the path for those who follow. Comment from others who have an interest in refugee affairs have also focused on the same areas of unsatisfied needs.

Refugee policy presently seems to proceed on a piecemeal basis without strategic planning. To hasten and ease the adaptation of refugees to New Zealand society, the writer would urge the development of a comprehensive strategic plan which would address areas of need such as education and entry to the workforce, would have a commitment to culturally appropriateness, and which would include a range of formal and informal provisions.

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APPENDIX I**INTERVIEW GUIDE****Personal Profile**

Age

Male/ female

Where were you born?

What is your ethnic group?

What is your religion?

Are you single?

Living with partner?

How many children do you have?

Were any born in the refugee camp/country of first asylum/ New Zealand?

In Ethiopia

Family

Did you live with your parents or other relatives?

What about after marriage/ establishing a relationship?

Residence

Did you live in the countryside /town / city?

What sort of house did you live in?

Did you move at any time? Why?

Support Networks

In your daily life how much contact did you have with relatives?

What did you talk about with them eg health, personal matters, work etc?

How much contact did you have with friends? What did you talk about with them?

Schooling

Did you go to school?

What age were you when you left?

What grade of schooling did you reach before you left?

Did you go to vocational school? university?

Did you get qualifications?

Did you study English at school/ elsewhere?

Occupation

What did your parents do (work at)?

What did you do after you left school?

Were you working? What did you do?

Home Activities

Who looked after the children in your family?

Who did the housework? Cooking? Looked after the money?

Activities outside the home

Were you involved in any other activities beside work that is cultural/ social/ sporting/religious/ political?

Health

If a family member was sick, what did you do?

How accessible was medical care? Was it expensive?

Were your children born at home or in hospital?

Perceptions of life

Were you happy with the way things were?

Did you have needs that were not being met?

Did you wish that your life was different?

Did you have goals for the future?

Transition/ Refugee Camp

Who decided to leave Ethiopia?

Why did you decide to leave?

When did you decide to go?

What age were you then?

Who did you leave with?

Did you go to live in a refugee camp/ elsewhere?

What were the conditions in the camp/ other situation like?

Were you exposed to violence in the camp/ elsewhere?

Could you live together as a family? or separately?

Who did the work around the place you lived? Who looked after the children?

Did you have an opportunity to learn English / other skills? Did anyone else in the family have those opportunities?

Did you have the opportunity to work in the camp/ elsewhere?

Were you only in one camp? Did you move? Where did you move to?

How long were you in the camp?

What was it like getting your official refugee paper? What was it like to arrange for resettlement in New Zealand?

In New Zealand

What had you heard about New Zealand before your arrival?

What did you think it would be like?

Did you stay at the Mangere Reception Centre?

How long did you stay there?

What was good about your stay there?

What could have been better?

Family

Did you already have family members in New Zealand?

What family members travelled with you?

Do they live with you? Do they live nearby?

What do they do?

Domestic responsibilities

Who does the cooking? housework? shopping? cares for the children? looks after the money?

Has that changed since you have come to New Zealand?

Social supports

If you have problems now, who do you talk to?

Do you rely mostly on family for support and advice or friends? or both?

Do you have much contact with people from your own country?

What contact do you have with New Zealanders?

What social activities do you have?

Is child care available to allow you to attend classes? work?

Sponsor

Did you have a sponsor when you left the hostel (Mangere Reception Centre)?

Did you get a sponsor later?

Is your sponsor an individual or a group?

Have you changed your sponsor?

Do you still have a sponsor? Has your relationship with your sponsor changed?

What were the good things about having a sponsor?

What could have been better?

What support would you have liked a sponsor to provide?

Refugee and Migrant Service

What were the good things about RMS?

What could have been better?

Housing

Where did you move to when you left the hostel?

Who do you live with? Was it easy to find accommodation? Did you have any help?

Have you moved again? Why did you move? Is the new place better?

Language

What opportunities have you had to learn English?

Where did you attend English classes?

Did you get any other help in learning English?

What were the good things about the classes that you went to? What could have been better?

What problems have been caused by difficulty with English?

How would you rate your level of English now?

Education

Are you studying at other educational institutes?

What are you studying? Why are you studying it?

Will it help with future employment?

What recognition was given to qualifications gained in your own country? How long did this take to happen? Did you bring any papers with you?

Do any children attend pre-school? How has that been?

Employment

Are you working, part-time or full-time?

How did you find your work?

Did you have help?

What type of work is it?

Is it local work?

How do you get to work?

Are you able to get the type of work you want? If not, what do you think are the reasons?

Health

What do you do now if you or a family member fall sick? Do you ask the advice of friends or relatives (or both)?

Do you visit the doctor? hospital?

Do you have any problems in visiting the doctor? or hospital? (eg transport or cost or language)

Finances

Are you on a limited income?

What are the difficulties you find on a limited income?

How do you manage on a limited income?

Have you had budgeting help?

Reunification

What have been your main problems in regard to reuniting with family members?

How could it have been better for you? (Process, other refugees)

What are the things that have helped you most in settling in New Zealand?

English classes/ orientation/ income support/ accommodation/ employment services/ childcare/ emotional support and therapy.

What were some of the most difficult things to get used to in settling in this country?

What do you think are the biggest problems experienced by refugees when they first settle here?

What services do you think should be provided for refugees to help them settle in this country?

What do you most want or wish for?

What do you miss about Ethiopia?